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THE EARLY POEMS

OF

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

EDITED WITH A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION. COMMENTARIES AND NOTES,
TOGETHER WITH THE VARIOUS READINGS,
A TRANSCRIPT OF THE POEMS TEMPORARILY AND FINALLY SUPPRESSED
AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY

JOHN CHURTON COLLINS

PREFACE

A Critical edition of Tennyson's poems has long been an acknowledged want. He has taken his place among the English Classics, and as a Classic he is, and will be, studied, seriously and minutely, by many thousands of his countrymen, both in the present generation as well as in future ages. As in the works of his more illustrious brethren, so in his trifles will become subjects of curious interest, and assume an importance of which we have no conception now. Here he will engage the attention of the antiquary, there of the social historian. Long after his politics, his ethics, his theology have ceased to be immediately influential, they will be of immense historical significance. A consummate artist and a consummate master of our language, the process by which he achieved results so memorable can never fail to be of interest, and of absorbing interest, to critical students.

I must, I fear, claim the indulgence due to one who attempts, for the first time, a critical edition of a text so perplexingly voluminous in variants as Tennyson's. I can only say that I have spared neither time nor labour to be accurate and exhaustive. I have myself collated, or have had collated for me, every edition recorded in the British Museum Catalogue, and where that has been deficient I have had recourse to other public libraries, and to the libraries of private friends. I am not conscious that I have left any variant unrecorded, but I should not like to assert that this is the case. Tennyson was so restlessly indefatigable in his corrections that there may lurk, in editions of the poems which I have not seen, other variants; and it is also possible that, in spite of my vigilance, some may have escaped me even in the editions which have been collated, and some may have been made at a date earlier than the date recorded. But I trust this has not been the case.

Of the Bibliography I can say no more than that I have done my utmost to make it complete, and that it is very much fuller than any which has hitherto appeared. That it is exhaustive I dare not promise.

With regard to the Notes and Commentaries, I have spared no pains to explain everything which seemed to need explanation. There are, I think, only two points which I have not been able to clear up, namely, the name of the friend to whom the 'Palace of Art' was addressed, and the name of the friend to whom the 'Verses after Reading a Life and Letters' were addressed. I have consulted every one who would be likely to throw light on the subject, including the poet's surviving sister, many of his friends, and the present Lord Tennyson, but without success; so the names, if they were not those of some imaginary person, appear to be irrecoverable. The Prize Poem, 'Timbuctoo', as well as the poems which were temporarily or finally suppressed in the volumes published in 1830 and 1832 have been printed in the Appendix: those which were subsequently incorporated in his Works, in large type; those which he never reprinted, in small.

The text here adopted is that of 1857, but Messrs. Macmillan, to whom I beg to express my hearty thanks, have most generously allowed me to record all the variants which are still protected by copyright. I have to thank them, too, for assistance in the Bibliography. I have also to thank Mr. J. T. Wise for his kindness in lending me the privately printed volume containing the 'Morte d'Arthur, Dora,' etc.

INTRODUCTION

I

The development of Tennyson's genius, methods, aims and capacity of achievement in poetry can be studied with singular precision and fulness in the history of the poems included in the present volume. In 1842 he published the two volumes which gave him, by almost general consent, the first place among the poets of his time, for, though Wordsworth was alive, Wordsworth's best work had long been done. These two volumes contained poems which had appeared before, some in 1830 and some in 1832, and some which were then given to the world for the first time, so that they represent work belonging to three eras in the poet's life, poems written before he had completed his twenty-second year and belonging for the most part to his boyhood, poems written in his early manhood, and poems written between his thirty-first and thirty-fourth year.

The poems published in 1830 had the following title-page:

"Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, by Alfred Tennyson.
London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1830".

They are fifty-six in number and the titles are:--

Claribel. •
Lilian. •
Isabel. •
Elegiacs.”
The "How" and the "Why".
Mariana. •
To----. Madeline.
The Merman.
The Mermaid. •
Supposed Confessions of a second-rate sensitive mind not in unity with
itself. ”
The Burial of Love.
To--(Sainted Juliet dearest name.)
Song. The Owl. •
Second Song. To the same. •
Recollections of the Arabian Nights. •
Ode to Memory. •
Song. (I'the the glooming light.)
Song. (A spirit haunts.) •
Adeline. •
A Character. •
Song. (The lint-white and the throstle cock.)
Song. (Every day hath its night.)
The Poet. •
The Poet's Mind. •
Nothing will die. ”
All things will die. ”
Hero to Leander.
The Mystic.
The Dying Swan. •
A Dirge. •
The Grasshopper.
Love, Pride and Forgetfulness.
Chorus (in an unpublished drama written very early).
Lost Hope.
The Deserted House. ”°
The Tears of Heaven.
Love and Sorrow.
To a Lady Sleeping.
Sonnet. (Could I outwear my present state of woe.)
Sonnet. (Though Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon.)
Sonnet. (Shall the hag Evil die with child of Good.)
Sonnet. (The pallid thunderstricken sigh for gain.)
Love.
Love and Death. •
The Kraken. ”
The Ballad of Oriana. •
Circumstance. •
English War Song.
National Song.

The Sleeping Beauty. •
Dualisms.
We are Free.
The Sea-Fairies. ”°
Sonnet
to J.M.K. •
[Greek (transliterated): oi rheontes] •

• Of these the poems marked • appeared in the edition of 1842, and were not much altered.

” Those marked ” were, in addition to the italicised poems, afterwards included among the 'Juvenilia' in the collected works (1871-1872), though excluded from all preceding editions of the poems.

”° Those marked ”° were restored in editions previous to the first collected editions of the works.

In December, 1832, appeared a second volume (it is dated on the title-page, 1833):

"Poems by Alfred Tennyson. London: Moxon, MDCCCXXXIII."

This contains thirty poems:--

Sonnet. (Mine be the strength of spirit fierce and free.) ∞
To--. (All good things have not kept aloof.) ∞
Buonaparte. ∞
Sonnet I. (O Beauty passing beauty, sweetest Sweet.)
Sonnet II. (But were I loved, as I desire to be.) ∞
The Lady of Shalott. •”
Mariana in the South. •”
Eleanore. •
The Miller's Daughter. •”
[Greek: phainetai moi kaenos isos theoisin hemmen anaer] •
none. •”
The Sisters. •
To--. (With the Palace of Art.)
The Palace of Art •”
The May Queen. •
New Year's Eve. •
The Hesperides.
The Lotos Eaters. •
Rosalind. ∞
A Dream of Fair Women •”
Song. (Who can say.)
Margaret. •
Kate.

Sonnet. Written on hearing of the outbreak of the Polish Insurrection.
Sonnet. On the result of the late Russian invasion of Poland. ∞
Sonnet. (As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood.) ∞
O Darling Room.
To Christopher North.
The Death of the Old Year. •
To J. S. •

- Of these the poems marked • were included in the edition of 1842;
- ” those marked ” being greatly altered and in some cases almost rewritten,
- ° those marked ° being practically unaltered.
- ∞ To those reprinted in the collected works ∞ is added.

In 1842 appeared the two volumes which contained, in addition to the selections made from the two former volumes, several new poems:--

"Poems by Alfred Tennyson. In two volumes. London: Edward Moxon, MDCCCXLII."

The first volume is divided into two parts:

- (1) Selections from the poems published in 1830, 'Claribel' to the 'Sonnet to J. M. K.' inclusive.
- (2) Selections from the poems of 1832, 'The Lady of Shalott' to 'The Goose' inclusive.

The second volume contains poems then, with two exceptions, first published.

INTRODUCTION

The Epic.
Morte d'Arthur.
The Gardener's Daughter.
Dora.
Audley Court.
Walking to the Mail.
St. Simeon Stylites.
Conclusion to the May Queen.
The Talking Oak.
Lady Clara Vere de Vere.

Love and Duty.
Ulysses.
Locksley Hall.
Godiva.
The Two Voices.
The Day Dream.
Prologue.
The Sleeping Palace.
The Sleeping Beauty.
The Arrival.
The Revival.
The Departure.
Moral.
L'Envoi.
Epilogue.
Amphion.
St. Agnes.
Sir Galahad.
Edward Gray.
Will Waterproofs Lyrical Monologue, made at the Cock.
Lady Clare.
The Lord of Burleigh.
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere.
A Farewell.
The Beggar Maid.
The Vision of Sin.
The Skipping Rope.
Move Eastward, happy Earth.
"Break, break, break."
The Poet's Song.

Only two of these poems had been published before, namely, 'St. Agnes', which was printed in 'The Keepsake' for 1837, and 'The Sleeping Beauty' in 'The Day Dream', which was adopted with some alterations from the 1830 poem, and only one of these poems was afterwards suppressed, 'The Skipping Rope', which was, however, allowed to stand till 1851. In 1843 appeared the second edition of these poems, which is merely a reprint with a few unimportant alterations, and which was followed in 1845 and in 1846 by a third and fourth edition equally unimportant in their variants, but in the fourth 'The Golden Year' was added. In the next edition, the fifth, 1848, 'The Deserted House' was included from the poems of 1830. In the sixth edition, 1850, was included another poem, 'To--', after reading a Life and Letters', reprinted, with some alterations, from the 'Examiner' of 24th March, 1849.

The seventh edition, 1851, contained important additions. First the Dedication to the Queen, then 'Edwin Morris,' the fragment of 'The Eagle,' and the stanzas, "Come not when I am dead," first printed in 'The Keepsake' for 1851, under the title of 'Stanzas.' In this edition the absurd trifle 'The Skipping Rope' was excised and finally cancelled. In the eighth edition, 1853, 'The Sea-Fairies,' though greatly altered, was included from the poems of 1830, and the poem 'To E. L. on his

'Travels in Greece' was added. This edition, the eighth, may be regarded as the final one. Nothing afterwards of much importance was added or subtracted, and comparatively few alterations were made in the text from that date to the last collected edition in 1898.

All the editions up to, and including, that of 1898 have been carefully collated, so that the student of Tennyson can follow step by step the process by which he arrived at that perfection of expression which is perhaps his most striking characteristic as a poet. And it was indeed a trophy of labour, of the application "of patient touches of unwearied art". Whoever will turn, say to 'The Palace of Art,' to 'none,' to the 'Dream of Fair Women,' or even to 'The Sea-Fairies' and to 'The Lady of Shalott,' will see what labour was expended on their composition. Nothing indeed can be more interesting than to note the touches, the substitution of which measured the whole distance between mediocrity and excellence. Take, for example, the magical alteration in the couplet in the 'Dream of Fair Women':--

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

into

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

Or, in the same poem:--

What nights we had in Egypt!
I could hit His humours while I cross'd him.
O the life I led him, and the dalliance and the wit,

into

We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which outburn'd Canopus.
O my life In Egypt!
O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife.

Or, in 'Mariana in the South':--

She mov'd her lips, she pray'd alone,
She praying, disarray'd and warm
From slumber, deep her wavy form
In the dark lustrous mirror shone,

into

Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load".
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.

How happy is this slight alteration in the verses 'To J. S.' which
corrects one of the falsest notes ever struck by a poet:--

A tear Dropt on my tablets as I wrote.

A tear Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

or where in 'Locksley Hall' a splendidly graphic touch of description is
gained by the alteration of "droops the trailer from the crag" into
"swings the trailer".

So again in 'Love and Duty':--

Should my shadow cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for their peace, so put it back.
For calmer hours in memory's darkest hold,

where by altering "so put it back" into "remand it thou," a somewhat
ludicrous image is at all events softened.

What great care Tennyson took with his phraseology is curiously
illustrated in 'The May Queen'. In the 1842 edition "Robin" was the name
of the May Queen's lover. In 1843 it was altered to "Robert," and in
1845 and subsequent editions back to "Robin".

Compare, again, the old stanza in 'The Miller's Daughter':--

How dear to me in youth, my love,
Was everything about the mill;
The black and silent pool above,
The pool beneath it never still,

with what was afterwards substituted:--

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Through quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still.

Another most felicitous emendation is to be found in 'The Poet',
where the edition of 1830 reads:--

And in the bordure of her robe was writ
Wisdom, a name to shake
Hoar anarchies, as with a thunderfit.

This in 1842 appears as:--

And in her raiment's hem was trac'd in flame
Wisdom, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power--a sacred name.

Again, in the 'Lotos Eaters'

Three thunder-cloven thrones of oldest snow
Stood sunset-flushed

is changed into

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow.

So in 'Will Waterproof' the cumbrous

Like Hezekiah's backward runs The shadow of my days,

was afterwards simplified into

Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days.

Not less felicitous have been the additions made from time to time. Thus
in 'Audley Court' the concluding lines ran:--

The harbour buoy,
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself.

But what vividness is there in the subsequent insertion of

"Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm."

between the first line and the second.

So again in the 'Morte d'Arthur' how greatly are imagery and rhythm improved by the insertion of

Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,

between

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time,

and

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought.

There is an alteration in none which is very interesting. Till 1884 this was allowed to stand:--

The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, _and the cicala sleeps_.

No one could have known better than Tennyson that the cicala is loudest in the torrid calm of the noonday, as Theocritus, Virgil, Byron and innumerable other poets have noticed; at last he altered it, but at the heavy price of a cumbrous pleonasm, into "and the winds are dead".

He allowed many years to elapse before he corrected another error in natural history--but at last the alteration came. In 'The Poet's Song' in the line--

The swallow stopt as he hunted the _bee_,

the "fly" which the swallow does hunt was substituted for what it does not hunt, and that for very obvious reasons. But whoever would see what Tennyson's poetry has owed to elaborate revision and scrupulous care would do well to compare the first edition of 'Mariana in the South', 'The Sea-Fairies', 'OEnone', 'The Lady of Shalott', 'The Palace of Art' and 'A Dream of Fair Women' with the poems as they are presented in 1853. Poets do not always improve their verses by revision, as all students of Wordsworth's text could abundantly illustrate; but it may be doubted whether, in these poems at least, Tennyson ever made a single

alteration which was not for the better. Fitzgerald, indeed, contended that in some cases, particularly in 'The Miller's Daughter', Tennyson would have done well to let the first reading stand, but few critics would agree with him in the instances he gives. We may perhaps regret the sacrifice of such a stanza as this--

Each coltsfoot down the grassy bent, Whose round leaves hold the
gathered shower, Each quaintly folded cuckoo pint, And silver-paly
cuckoo flower.

II

Tennyson's genius was slow in maturing. The poems contributed by him to the volume of 1827, 'Poems by Two Brothers', are not without some slight promise, but are very far from indicating extraordinary powers. A great advance is discernible in 'Timbuctoo', but that Matthew Arnold should have discovered in it the germ of Tennyson's future powers is probably to be attributed to the youth of the critic. Tennyson was in his twenty-second year when the 'Poems Chiefly Lyrical' appeared, and what strikes us in these poems is certainly not what Arthur Hallam saw in them: much rather what Coleridge and Wilson discerned in them. They are the poems of a fragile and somewhat morbid young man in whose temper we seem to see a touch of Hamlet, a touch of Romeo and, more healthily, a touch of Mercutio. Their most promising characteristic is the versatility displayed. Thus we find 'Mariana' side by side with the 'Supposed Confessions', the 'Ode to Memory' with Greek['oi rheontes'], 'The Ballad of Oriana' with 'The Dying Swan', 'Recollections of The Arabian Nights' with 'The Poet'. Their worst fault is affectation. Perhaps the utmost that can be said for them is that they display a fine but somewhat thin vein of original genius, after deducing what they owe to Coleridge, to Keats and to other poets. This is seen in the magical touches of description, in the exquisite felicity of expression and rhythm which frequently mark them, in the pathos and power of such a poem as 'Oriana', in the pathos and charm of such poems as 'Mariana' and 'A Dirge', in the rich and almost gorgeous fancy displayed in 'The Recollections'.

The poems of 1833 are much more ambitious and strike deeper notes. Here comes in for the first time that Greek[spondai_otaes], that high seriousness which is one of Tennyson's chief characteristics--we see it in 'The Palace of Art', in 'none' and in the verses 'To J. S.' But in intrinsic merit the poems were no advance on their predecessors, for the execution was not equal to the design. The best, such as 'none', 'A Dream of Fair Women', 'The Palace of Art', 'The Lady of Shalott'--I am speaking of course of these poems in their first form--were full of extraordinary blemishes. The volume was degraded by pieces which were very unworthy of him, such as 'O Darling Room' and the verses 'To Christopher North', and affectations of the worst kind deformed many, nay, perhaps the majority of the poems. But the capital defect lay in the workmanship. The diction is often languid and slipshod, sometimes

quaintly affected, and we can never go far without encountering lines, stanzas, whole poems which cry aloud for the file. The power and charm of Tennyson's poetry, even at its ripest, depend very largely, often mainly, on expression, and the couplet which he envied Browning,

The little more, and how much it is,
The little less, and what worlds away,

is strangely applicable to his own art. On a single word, on a subtle collocation, on a slight touch depend often his finest effects: "the little less" reduces him to mediocrity, "the little more" and he is with the masters. To no poetry would the application of Goethe's test be, as a rule, more fatal--that the real poetic quality in poetry is that which remains when it has been translated literally into prose.

Whoever will compare the poems of 1832 with the same poems as they appeared in 1842 will see that the difference is not so much a difference in degree, but almost a difference in kind. In the collection of 1832 there were three gems, 'The Sisters', the lines 'To J. S.' and 'The May Queen'. Almost all the others which are of any value were, in the edition of 1842, carefully revised, and in some cases practically rewritten. If Tennyson's career had closed in 1833 he would hardly have won a prominent place among the minor poets of the present century. The nine years which intervened between the publication of his second volume and the volumes of 1842 were the making of him, and transformed a mere dilettante into a master. Much has been said about the brutality of Lockhart's review in the 'Quarterly'. In some respects it was stupid, in some respects it was unjust, but of one thing there can be no doubt--it had a most salutary effect. It held up the mirror to weaknesses and deficiencies which, if Tennyson did not care to acknowledge to others, he must certainly have acknowledged to himself. It roused him and put him on his mettle. It was a wholesome antidote to the enervating flattery of coteries and "apostles" who were certainly talking a great deal of nonsense about him, as Arthur Hallam's essay in the 'Englishman' shows. During the next nine years he published nothing, with the exception of two unimportant contributions to certain minor periodicals.[1] But he was educating himself, saturating himself with all that is best in the poetry of Ancient Greece and Rome, of modern Italy, of Germany and of his own country, studying theology, metaphysics, natural history, geology, astronomy and travels, observing nature with the eye of a poet, a painter and a naturalist. Nor was he a recluse. He threw himself heartily into the life of his time, following with the keenest interest all the great political and social movements, the progress and effects of the Reform Bill, the troubles in Ireland, the troubles with the Colonies, the struggles between the Protectionists and the Free Traders, Municipal Reform, the advance of the democracy, Chartism, the popular education question. He travelled on the Continent, he travelled in Wales and Scotland, he visited most parts of England, not as an idle tourist, but as a student with note-book in hand. And he had been submitted also to the discipline which is of all disciplines the most necessary to the poet, and without which, as Goethe says, "he knows not the heavenly powers": he had "ate his bread in sorrow". The death of his father in 1831 had already brought him face to face, as he

has himself expressed it, with the most solemn of all mysteries. In 1833 he had an awful shock in the sudden death of his friend Arthur Hallam, "an overwhelming sorrow which blotted out all joy from his life and made him long for death". He had other minor troubles which contributed greatly to depress him,--the breaking up of the old home at Somersby, his own poverty and uncertain prospects, his being compelled in consequence to break off all intercourse with Miss Emily Selwood. It is possible that 'Love and Duty' may have reference to this sorrow; it is certain that 'The Two Voices' is autobiographical.

Such was his education between 1832 and 1842, and such the influences which were moulding him, while he was slowly evolving 'In Memoriam' and the poems first published in the latter year. To the revision of the old poems he brought tastes and instincts cultivated by the critical study of all that was best in the poetry of the world, and more particularly by a familiarity singularly intimate and affectionate with the masterpieces of the ancient classics; he brought also the skill of a practised workman, for his diligence in production was literally that of Sir Joshua Reynolds in the sister art--'nulla dies sine lineâ. Into the composition of the new poems all this entered. He was no longer a trifler and a Hedonist. As Spedding has said, his former poems betrayed "an over-indulgence in the luxuries of the senses, a profusion of splendours, harmonies, perfumes, gorgeous apparel, luscious meals and drinks, and creature comforts which rather pall upon the sense, and make the glories of the outward world to obscure a little the world within". Like his own 'Lady of Shalott', he had communed too much with shadows. But the serious poet now speaks. He appeals less to the ear and the eye, and more to the heart. The sensuous is subordinated to the spiritual and the moral. He deals immediately with the dearest concerns of man and of society. He has ceased to trifle. The the [Greek: spondai_otaes,] the high seriousness of the true poet, occasional before, now pervades and enters essentially into his work. It is interesting to note how many of these poems have direct didactic purpose. How solemn is the message delivered in such poems as 'The Palace of Art' and 'The Vision of Sin', how noble the teaching in 'Love and Duty', in 'Oenone', in 'Godiva', in 'Ulysses'; to how many must such a poem as 'The Two Voices' have brought solace and light; how full of salutary lessons are the political poems 'You ask me, why, though ill at ease' and 'Love thou thy Land', and how noble is their expression! And, even where the poems are less directly didactic, it is such refreshment as busy life needs to converse with them, so pure, so wholesome, so graciously human is their tone, so tranquilly beautiful is their world. Who could lay down 'The Miller's Daughter, Dora, The Golden Year, The Gardener's Daughter, The Talking Oak, Audley Court, The Day Dream' without something of the feeling which Goethe felt when he first laid down 'The Vicar of Wakefield?' In the best lyrics in these volumes, such as 'Break, Break', and 'Move Eastward', 'Happy Earth', the most fastidious of critics must recognise flawless gems. In the two volumes of 1842 Tennyson carried to perfection all that was best in his earlier poems, and displayed powers of which he may have given some indication in his cruder efforts, but which must certainly have exceeded the expectation of the most sanguine of his rational admirers. These volumes justly gave him the first place among the poets of his time, and that supremacy he maintained--in the opinion

of most--till the day of his death. It would be absurd to contend that Tennyson's subsequent publications added nothing to the fame which will be secured to him by these poems. But this at least is certain, that, taken with 'In Memorium', they represent the crown and flower of his achievement. What is best in them he never excelled and perhaps never equalled. We should be the poorer, and much the poorer, for the loss of anything which he produced subsequently, it is true; but would we exchange half a dozen of the best of these poems or a score of the best sections of 'In Memoriam' for all that he produced between 1850 and his death?

[Footnote 1: In 'The Keepsake', "St. Agnes' Eve"; in 'The Tribute', "Stanzas": "Oh! that 'twere possible". Between 1831 and 1832 he had contributed to 'The Gem' three, "No more," "Anacreontics," and "A Fragment"; in 'The Englishman's Magazine', a Sonnet; in 'The Yorkshire Literary Annual', lines, "There are three things that fill my heart with sighs"; in 'Friendship's Offering', lines, "Me my own fate".]

III

The poems of 1842 naturally divide themselves into seven groups:--

1. STUDIES IN FANCY.

'Claribel'.

'Lilian'.

'Isabel'.

'Madeline'.

'A Spirit Haunts'.

'Recollections of the Arabian Nights'.

'Adeline'.

'The Dying Swan'.

'A Dream of Fair Women'.

'The Sea-Fairies'.

'The Deserted House'.

'Love and Death'.

'The Merman'.

'The Mermaid'.

'The Lady of Shalott'.

'Eleanore'.

'Margaret'.

'The Death of the Old Year'.

'St. Agnes.'

'Sir Galahad'.

'The Day Dream'.

'Will Waterproof's Monologue'.

'Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere'.

'The Talking Oak'.

'The Poet's Song'.

2. STUDIES OF PASSION

'Mariana'.
'Mariana in the South.'
'Oriana'.
'Fatima'.
'The Sisters'.
'Locksley Hall'.
'Edward Gray'.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES

'A Character'.
'The Poet'.
'The Poet's Mind'.
'The Two Voices'.
'The Palace of Art'.
'The Vision of Sin'.
'St. Simeon Stylites'.

4. IDYLLS

(a) Classical.

'none'.
'The Lotos Eaters'.
'Ulysses'.

(b) English

'The Miller's Daughter'.
'The May Queen'.
'Morte d'Arthur'.
'The Gardener's Daughter'.
'Dora'.
'Audley Court'.
'Walking to the Mail'.
'Edwin Morris'.
'The Golden Year'.

5. BALLADS

'Oriana'.
'Lady Clara Vere de Vere'.
'Edward Gray'.
'Lady Clare'.
'The Lord of Burleigh'.
'The Beggar Maid'.

6. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

'Ode to Memory'.

'Sonnet to J. M. K'.

'To-----with the Palace of Art'.

'To J.S.'

'Amphion'.

'To E. L. on his Travels in Greece'.

'To-----after reading a Life and Letters'.

"Come not when I am Dead'."

'A Farewell'.

"Move Eastward, Happy Earth'."

"Break, Break, Break'."

7. POLITICAL GROUP

"You ask me."

"Of old sat Freedom."

"Love thou thy Land."

'The Goose.'

In surveying these poems two things must strike every one--their very wide range and their very fragmentary character. There is scarcely any side of life on which they do not touch, scarcely any phase of passion and emotion to which they do not give exquisite expression. Take the love poems: compare 'Fatima' with 'Isabel', 'The Miller's Daughter' with 'Locksley Hall', 'The Gardener's Daughter' with 'Madeline', or 'Mariana' with Cleopatra in the 'Dream of Fair Women'. When did love find purer and nobler expression than in 'Love and Duty?' When has sorrow found utterance more perfect than in the verses 'To J. S', or the passion for the past than in 'Break, Break, Break', or revenge and jealousy than in 'The Sisters?' In 'The Two Voices', 'The Palace of Art' and 'The Vision of Sin' we are in another sphere. They are appeals to the soul of man on subjects of momentous concern to him. And each is a masterpiece. What is proper to philosophy and what is proper to poetry have never perhaps been so happily blended. They have all the sensuous charm of Keats, but the prose of Hume could not have presented the truths which they are designed to convey with more lucidity and precision. In that superb fragment the 'Morte d'Arthur' we have many of the noblest attributes of Epic poetry. 'none' is the perfection of the classical idyll, 'The Gardener's Daughter' and the idylls that follow it of the romantic. 'Sir Galahad' and 'St. Agnes' are in the vein of Keats and Coleridge, but Keats and Coleridge have produced nothing more exquisite and nothing so ethereal. 'The Lotos* Eaters' is perhaps the most purely delicious poem ever written, the 'ne plus ultra' of sensuous loveliness, and yet the poet who gave us that has given us also the political poems, poems as trenchant and austere dignified in style as they are pregnant with practical wisdom. There is the same versatility displayed in the trifles.

But all is fragmentary. No thread strings these jewels. They form a

collection of gems unset and unarranged. Without any system or any definite scope they have nothing of that unity in diversity which is so perceptible in the lyrics and minor poems of Goethe and Wordsworth. Capricious as the gyrations of a sea-gull seem the poet's moods and movements. We have now the reveries of a love-sick maiden, now the picture of a soul wrestling with despair and death; here a study from rural life, or a study in character, there a sermon on politics, or a descent into the depths of psychological truth, or a sketch from nature. But nothing could be more concentrated than the power employed to shape each fragment into form. What Pope says of the 'Aeneid' may be applied with very literal truth to these poems:--

Finish'd the whole, and laboured every part
With patient touches of unwearied art.

In the poems of 1842 we have the secret of Tennyson's eminence as a poet as well as the secret of his limitations. He appears to have been constitutionally deficient in what the Greeks called 'architektonikØ', combination and disposition on a large scale. The measure of his power as a constructive artist is given us in the poem in which the English idylls may be said to culminate, namely, 'Enoch Arden'. 'In Memoriam' and the 'Idylls of the King' have a sort of spiritual unity, but they are a series of fragments tacked rather than fused together. It is the same with 'Maud', and it is the same with 'The Princess'. His poems have always a tendency to resolve themselves into a series of cameos: it is only the short poems which have organic unity. A gift of felicitous and musical expression which is absolutely marvellous; an instinctive sympathy with what is best and most elevated in the sphere of ordinary life, of ordinary thought and sentiment, of ordinary activity with consummate representative power; a most rare faculty of seizing and fixing in very perfect form what is commonly so inexpressible because so impalpable and evanescent in emotion and expression; a power of catching and rendering the charm of nature with a fidelity and vividness which resemble magic; and lastly, unrivalled skill in choosing, repolishing and remounting the gems which are our common inheritance from the past: these are the gifts which will secure permanence for his work as long as the English language lasts.

In his power of crystallising commonplaces he stands next to Pope, in subtle felicity of expression beside Virgil. And, when he says of Virgil that we find in his diction "all the grace of all the muses often flowering in one lonely word," he says what is literally true of his own work. As a master of style his place is in the first rank among English classical poets. But his style is the perfection of art. His diction, like the diction of Milton and Gray, resembles mosaic work. With a touch here and a touch there, now from memory, now from unconscious assimilation, inlaying here an epithet and there a phrase, adding, subtracting, heightening, modifying, substituting one metaphor for another, developing what is latent in the suggestive imagery of a predecessor, laying under contribution the most intimate familiarity with what is best in the literature of the ancient and modern world, the

unwearied artist toils patiently on till his precious mosaic work is without a flaw. All the resources of rhetoric are employed to give distinction to his style and every figure in rhetoric finds expression in his diction: Hypallage as in

The pillard dusk Of sounding sycamores.

--_Audley Court_.

Paronomasia as in

The seawind sang _Shrill, chill_ with flakes of foam.

--_Morte d'Arthur_.

Oxymoron as

Behold them _unbeheld, unheard Hear_ all.

--'none'.

Hyperbaton as in

The _dew-impearled_ winds of dawn.

--'Ode to Memory'.

Metonymy as in

The _bright death_ quiver'd at the victim's throat.

--'Dream of Fair Women'.

or in

For some three _careless moans_ The summer pilot of an empty heart.

--'Gardener's Daughter'.

No poet since Milton has employed what is known as Onomatopoeia with so much effect. Not to go farther than the poems of 1842, we have in the 'Morte d'Arthur':--

So all day long the noise of battle _rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea_;

or

Dry clashed 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 bas'd
His feet _on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels_--

or the exquisite

I heard the _water lapping on the crag_,
And the _long ripple washing in the reeds_.

So in 'The Dying Swan',

And _the wavy swell of the sougning reeds_.

See too the whole of 'Oriana' and the description of the dance at
the beginning of 'The Vision of Sin.'

Assonance, alliteration, the revival or adoption of obsolete and provincial words, the transplantation of phrases and idioms from the Greek and Latin languages, the employment of common words in uncommon senses, all are pressed into the service of adding distinction to his diction. His diction blends the two extremes of simplicity and artificiality, but with such fine tact that this strange combination has seldom the effect of incongruity. Longinus has remarked that "as the fainter lustre of the stars is put out of sight by the all-encompassing rays of the sun, so when sublimity sheds its light round the sophistries of rhetoric they become invisible".[1] What Longinus says of "sublimity" is equally true of sincerity and truthfulness in combination with exquisitely harmonious expression. We have an illustration in Gray's 'Elegy'. Nothing could be more artificial than the style, but what poem in the world appeals more directly to the heart and to the eye? It is one thing to call art to the assistance of art, it is quite another thing to call art to the assistance of nature. And this is what both Gray and Tennyson do, and this is why their artificiality, so far from shocking us, "passes in music out of sight". But this cannot be said of Tennyson without reserve. At times his strained endeavours to give distinction to his style by putting common things in an uncommon way led him into intolerable affectation. Thus we have "the knightly growth that fringed his lips" for a moustache, "azure pillars of the hearth" for ascending smoke, "ambrosial orbs" for apples, "frayed magnificence" for a shabby dress, "the secular abyss to come" for future ages, "the sinless years that breathed beneath the Syrian blue" for the life of Christ, "up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye" for a gesture of surprise, and the like. One of the worst instances is in 'In Memoriam', where what is appropriate to the simple sentiment finds, as it should do, corresponding simplicity of expression in the first couplet, to collapse into the falsetto of strained artificiality in the second:--

To rest beneath the clover sod
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
_Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God_.

An illustration of the same thing, almost as offensive, is in 'Enoch Arden', where, in an otherwise studiously simple diction, Enoch's wares as a fisherman become

Enoch's _ocean spoil_
In ocean-smelling osier.

But these peculiarities are less common in the earlier poems than in the later: it was a vicious habit which grew on him.

But, if exception may sometimes be taken to his diction, no exception can be taken to his rhythm. No English poet since Milton, Tennyson's only superior in this respect, had a finer ear or a more consummate mastery over all the resources of rhythmical expression. What colours are to a painter rhythm is, in description, to the poet, and few have rivalled, none have excelled Tennyson in this. Take the following:--

And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street strikes the blank day.

--'In Memoriam'.

See particularly 'In Memoriam', cvii., the lines beginning "Fiercely flies," to "darken on the rolling brine": the description of the island in 'Enoch Arden'; but specification is needless, it applies to all his descriptive poetry. It is marvellous that he can produce such effects by such simple means: a mere enumeration of particulars will often do it, as here:--

No gray old grange or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple style from mead to mead,
Or sheep walk up the windy wold.

--'In Memoriam', c.

Or here:--

The meal sacks on the whitened floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door Made misty with the floating meal.

--'The Miller's Daughter'.

His blank verse is best described by negatives. It has not the endless variety, the elasticity and freedom of Shakespeare's, it has not the massiveness and majesty of Milton's, it has not the austere grandeur of Wordsworth's at its best, it has not the wavy swell, "the linked sweetness long drawn out" of Shelley's, but its distinguishing feature is, if we may use the expression, its importunate beauty. What Coleridge said of Claudian's style may be applied to it: "Every line, nay every word stops, looks full in your face and asks and begs for praise". His earlier blank verse is less elaborate and seemingly more spontaneous and easy than his later. [2] But it is in his lyric verse that his rhythm is seen in its greatest perfection. No English lyrics have more magic or more haunting beauty, more of that which charms at once and charms for ever.

In his description of nature he is incomparable. Take the following from 'The Dying Swan':--

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;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,

or the opening scene in 'none' and in 'The Lotos Eaters', or the meadow scene in 'The Gardener's Daughter', or the conclusion of 'Audley Court', or the forest scene in the 'Dream of Fair Women', or this stanza in 'Mariana in the South':--

There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening through the silent spheres,
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.

A single line, nay, a single word, and a scene is by magic before us, as here where the sea is looked down upon from an immense height:--

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls.

--'The Eagle'.

Or here of a ship at sea, in the distance:--

And on through zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep.

--'To the Rev. F. D. Maurice'.

Or here of waters falling high up on mountains:--

Their thousand _wreaths of dangling water-smoke_.

--'The Princess'.

Or of a water-fall seen at a distance:--

And _like a downward smoke_ the slender stream
Along the cliff _to fall and pause and fall_ did seem.

Or here again:--

We left the dying ebb that _faintly lipp'd
The flat red granite_.

Or here of a wave:--

Like a 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.

--'Elaine'.

That beech will _gather brown_,
This _maple burn itself away_.

--'In Memoriam'.

The _wide-wing'd sunset_ of the misty marsh.

--'Last Tournament'.

But illustrations would be endless. Nothing seems to escape him in
Nature. Take the following:--

Like _a purple beech among the greens
Looks out of place_.

--'Edwin Morris'.

Or

Delays _as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green_.

--'The Princess'.

As _black as ash-buds in the front of March_.

--'The Gardener's Daughter'.

A gusty April morn
That _puff'd_ the swaying _branches into smoke_.

--'Holy Grail'.

So with flowers, trees, birds and insects:--

The fox-glove _clusters dappled bells_.

--'The Two Voices'.

The sunflower:--

Rays round with flame its disk of seed.

--'In Memoriam'.

The dog-rose:--

Tufts of rosy-tinted snow.

--'Two Voices'.

A _million emeralds_ break from the _ruby-budded lime_.

--'Maud'.

In gloss and hue the chestnut, _when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within_.

--'The Brook'.

Or of a chrysalis:--

And flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, _that making slide apart
Their dusk wing cases, all beneath there burns
A Jewell'd harness_, ere they pass and fly.

--'Gareth and Lynette'.

So again:--

Wan-sallow, as _the plant that feeds itself,
Root-bitten by white lichen_.

--'Id'.

And again:--

All the _silvery gossamers_
That _twinkle into green and gold_.

--'In Memoriam'.

His epithets are in themselves a study: "the _dewy-tassell'd_ wood,"
"the _tender-pencill'd_ shadow," "_crimson-circl'd_ star," the "_hoary_
clematis," "_creamy_ spray," "_dry-tongued_ laurels". But whatever he
describes is described with the same felicitous vividness. How magical
is this in the verses to Edward Lear:--

Naiads oar'd
A _glimmering shoulder_ under _gloom_
Of _cavern pillars_.

Or this:--

She lock'd her lips: she left me where I stood:
"Glory to God," she sang, and past afar,

Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

--'A Dream of Fair Women'.

But if in the world of Nature nothing escaped his sensitive and sympathetic observation,--and indeed it might be said of him as truly as of Shelley's 'Alastor'

Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses,

--he had studied the world of books with not less sympathy and attention. In the sense of a profound and extensive acquaintance with all that is best in ancient and modern poetry, and in an extraordinarily wide knowledge of general literature, of philosophy and theology, of geography and travel, and of various branches of natural science, he is one of the most erudite of English poets. With the poetry of the Greek and Latin classics he was, like Milton and Gray, thoroughly saturated. Its influence penetrates his work, now in indirect reminiscence, now in direct imitation, now inspiring, now modifying, now moulding. He tells us in 'The Daisy' how when at Como "the rich Virgilian rustic measure of 'Lari Maxume'" haunted him all day, and in a later fragment how, as he rowed from Desenzano to Sirmio, Catullus was with him. And they and their brethren, from Homer to Theocritus, from Lucretius to Claudian, always were with him. I have illustrated so fully in the notes and elsewhere [1] the influence of the Greek and Roman classics on the poems of 1842 that it is not necessary to go into detail here. But a few examples of the various ways in which they affected Tennyson's work generally may be given. Sometimes he transfers a happy epithet or expression in literal translation, as in:--

On either shining shoulder laid a hand,

which is Homer's epithet for the shoulder--

[Greek: ana phaidimps omps]

--'Od', xi., 128.

It was the red cock shouting to the light,

exactly the

[Greek: heos eboaesen alektor] (Until the cock _shouted_).

--'Batrachomyomachia', 192.

And all in passion utter'd a 'dry' shriek,

which is the 'sicca vox' of the Roman poets. So in 'The Lotos Eaters':--

His voice was _thin_ as voices from the grave,

which is Theocritus' voice of Hylas from his watery grave:--

[Greek: araia d' lketo ph_ona]

(_Thin_ came the voice).

So in 'The Princess', sect. i.:--

And _cook'd his spleen_,

which is a phrase from the Greek, as in Homer, 'Il'., iv., 513:--

[Greek: epi naeusi cholon thumalgea pessei]

(At the ships he cooks his heart-grieving spleen).

Again in 'The Princess', sect. iv.:--

Laugh'd with alien lips,

which is Homer's ('Od'., 69-70)--

[Greek: did' aedae gnathmoisi gelps_on allotrioisi]

So in 'Edwin Morris'--

All perfect, finished _to the finger nail_,

which is a phrase transferred from Latin through the Greek; 'cf.',

Horace, 'Sat.', i., v., 32:--

Ad unguem Factus homo

(A man fashioned to the finger nail).

"The _brute_ earth," 'In Memoriam', cxxvii., which is Horace's

Bruta tellus.

--'Odes', i., xxxiv., 9.

So again:--

A bevy of roses _apple-cheek'd_

in 'The Island', which is Theocritus' [Greek: maloparaeos].

The line in the 'Morte d'Arthur',

This way and that, dividing the swift mind,

is an almost literal translation of Virgil's 'Aen'., iv., 285:--

Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc

(And this way and that he divides his swift mind).

Another way in which they affect him is where, without direct imitation, they colour passages and poems as in 'Oenone', 'The Lotos Eaters', 'Tithonus', 'Tiresias', 'The Death of Oenone', 'Demeter and Persephone', the passage beginning "From the woods" in 'The Gardener's Daughter', which is a parody of Theocritus, 'Id.', vii., 139 'seq.', while the Cyclops' invocation to Galatea in Theocritus, 'Id.', xi., 29-79, was plainly the model for the idyll, "Come down, O Maid," in the seventh section of 'The Princess', just as the tournament in the same poem recalls closely the epic of Homer and Virgil. Tennyson had a wonderful way of transfusing, as it were, the essence of some beautiful passage in a Greek or Roman poet into English. A striking illustration of this would be the influence of reminiscences of Virgil's fourth 'Aeneid' on the idyll of 'Elaine and Guinevere'. Compare, for instance, the following: he is describing the love-wasted Elaine, as she sits brooding in the lonely evening, with the shadow of the wished-for death falling on her:--

But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field,
Approaching through the darkness, call'd; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mix'd

Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

How exactly does this recall, in a manner to be felt rather than exactly defined, a passage equally exquisite and equally pathetic in Virgil's picture of Dido, where, with the shadow of her death also falling upon her, she seems to hear the phantom voice of her dead husband, and "mixes her fancies" with the glooms of night and the owl's funereal wail:--

Hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis
Visa viri, nox quum terras obscura teneret;
Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Sæpe queri, et longas in fletum ducere voces.

--'Aen'., iv., 460.

(From it she thought she clearly heard a voice, even the accents of her husband calling her when night was wrapping the earth with darkness; and on the roof the lonely owl in funereal strains kept oft complaining, drawing out into a wail its protracted notes.)

Similar passages, though not so striking, would be the picture of Pindar's Elysium in 'Tiresias', the sentiment pervading 'The Lotos Eaters' transferred so faithfully from the Greek poets, the scenery in 'none' so crowded with details from Homer, Theocritus and Callimachus. Sometimes we find similes suggested by the classical poets, but enriched by touches from original observation, as here in 'The Princess':--

As one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore.
...
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn Expunge the world,

which was plainly suggested by Homer, iv., 275:--

[Greek: hos d' hot apo skopiaes eide nephos aipolos anaer
erchomenon kata ponton hupo Zephuroio i_oaes tps de t' aneuthen eonti,
melanteron aeute pissa, phainet ion kata ponton, agei de te lailapa
pollaen.]

(As when a goat-herd from some hill-peak sees a cloud coming across the deep with the blast of the west wind behind it; and to him, being as he is afar, it seems blacker, even as pitch, as it goes along the deep, bringing with it a great whirlwind.)

So again the fine simile in 'Elaine', beginning

Bare as a wild wave in the wide North Sea,

is at least modelled on the simile in 'Iliad', xv., 381-4, with reminiscences of the same similes in 'Iliad', xv., 624, and 'Iliad', iv., 42-56. The simile in the first section of the 'Princess',

As when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East,

reminds us of Homer's

[Greek: hos d' ote kinaesae Zephyros Bathulaeion, elthon labros,
epaigixon, epi t' aemuei astachuessin]

(As when the west wind tosses a deep cornfield rushing down with
furious blast, and it bows with all its ears.)

Nothing could be more happy than such an adaptation as the following--

Ever fail'd to draw
The quiet night into her blood,

from Virgil, 'Aen'., iv., 530:--

Neque unquam Solvitur in somnos _oculisve aut pectore noctem
Accipit_.

(And she never relaxes into sleep, or receives the night in eyes or
bosom),

or than the following (in 'Enid') from Theocritus:--

Arms on which the standing muscle sloped,
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it.

[Greek: en de mues stereosisi brachiosin akron hyp' _omon estasan,
aeute petroi oloitrochoi ous te kylind_on cheimarrhous potamos
megalais perixese dinais.]

--'Idyll', xxii., 48 'seq.'

(And the muscles on his brawny arms close under the shoulder stood out
like boulders which the wintry torrent has rolled and worn smooth with
the mighty eddies.)

But there was another use to which Tennyson applied his accurate and intimate acquaintance with the classics. It lay in developing what was suggested by them, in unfolding, so to speak, what was furled in their

imagery. Nothing is more striking in ancient classical poetry than its pregnant condensation. It often expresses in an epithet what might be expanded into a detailed picture, or calls up in a single phrase a whole scene or a whole position. Where in 'Merlin and Vivian' Tennyson described

The _blind wave feeling round his long sea hall
In silence_,

he was merely unfolding to its full Homer's [Greek: kuma k_ophon]--"dumb wave"; just as the best of all comments on Horace's expression, "Vultus nimium lubricus aspici," 'Odes', I., xix., 8, is given us in Tennyson's picture of the Oread in Lucretius:--

How the sun delights
To _glance and shift about her slippery sides_.

Or take again this passage in the 'Agamemnon', 404-5, describing Menelaus pining in his desolate palace for the lost Helen:--

[Greek: pothoi d' uperpontias phasma doxei dom_on anassein.]

(And in his yearning love for her who is over the sea a phantom will seem to reign over his palace.)

What are the lines in 'Guinevere' but an expansion of what is latent but unfolded in the pregnant suggestiveness of the Greek poet:--

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,
And I should evermore be vex'd with thee
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
Or ghostly foot-fall echoing on the stair--

with a reminiscence also perhaps of Constance's speech in 'King John', III., iv.

It need hardly be said that these particular passages, and possibly some of the others, may be mere coincidences, but they illustrate what numberless other passages which could be cited prove that Tennyson's careful and meditative study of the Greek and Roman poets enabled him to enrich his work by these felicitous adaptations.

He used those poets as his master Virgil used his Greek predecessors, and what the elder Seneca said of Ovid, who had appropriated a line from Virgil, might exactly be applied to Tennyson: "Fecisse quod in multis aliis versibus Virgilius fecerat, non surripiendi causâ sed palam imitandi, hoc animo ut vellet agnosci".[4]

He had plainly studied with equal attention the chief Italian poets, especially Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto and Tasso. On a passage in Dante he founded his 'Ulysses', and imitations of that master are frequent throughout his poems. 'In Memoriam', both in its general scheme as well as in numberless particular passages, closely recalls Petrarch; and Ariosto and Tasso have each influenced his work. In the poetry of his own country nothing seems to have escaped him, either in the masters or the minor poets.[5] To apply the term plagiarism to Tennyson's use of his predecessors would be as absurd as to resolve some noble fabric into its stones and bricks, and confounding the one with the other to taunt the architect with appropriating an honour which belongs to the quarry and the potter. Tennyson's method was exactly the method of two of the greatest poets in the world, Virgil and Milton, of the poet who stands second to Virgil in Roman poetry, Horace, of one of the most illustrious of our own minor poets, Gray.

An artist more fastidious than Tennyson never existed. As scrupulous a purist in language as Cicero, Chesterfield and Macaulay in prose, as Virgil, Milton, and Leopardi in verse, his care extended to the nicest minutiae of word-forms. Thus "an^cle" is always spelt with a "c" when it stands alone, with a "k" when used in compounds; thus he spelt "Idylls" with one "l" in the short poems, with two "l's" in the epic poems; thus the employment of "through" or "thro'," of "bad" or "bade," and the retention or suppression of "e" in past participles are always carefully studied. He took immense pains to avoid the clash of "s" with "s," and to secure the predominance of open vowels when rhythm rendered them appropriate. Like the Greek painter with his partridge, he thought nothing of sacrificing good things if, in any way, they interfered with unity and symmetry, and thus, his son tells us, many stanzas, in themselves of exquisite beauty, have been lost to us.

[Footnote 1: 'De Sublimitate,' xvii.]

[Footnote 2: Tennyson's blank verse in the *Idylls of the King* (excepting in the *Morte d'Arthur* and in the grander passages), is obviously modelled in rhythm on that of Shakespeare's earlier style seen to perfection in *King John*. Compare the following lines with the rhythm say of *Elaine* or *Guinevere*;--

But now will canker sorrow eat my bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost;
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit:
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him: therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

--*King John*, III., iv.]

[Footnote 3: 'Illustrations of Tennyson'.]

[Footnote 4: Seneca, third 'Suasoria'.]

[Footnote 5: For fuller illustrations of all this, and for the influence of the ancient classics on Tennyson, I may perhaps venture to refer the reader to my 'Illustrations of Tennyson'. And may I here take the opportunity of pointing out that nothing could have been farther from my intention in that book than what has so often been most unfairly attributed to it, namely, an attempt to show that a charge of plagiarism might be justly urged against Tennyson. No honest critic, who had even cursorily inspected the book, could so utterly misrepresent its purpose.]

IV

Tennyson's place is not among the "lords of the visionary eye," among seers, among prophets, but not the least part of the debt which his countrymen owe to him is his dedication of his art to the noblest purposes. At a time when poetry was beginning to degenerate into what it has now almost universally become--a mere sense-pampering siren, and when critics were telling us, as they are still telling us, that we are to understand by it "all literary production which attains the power of giving pleasure by its form as distinct from its matter," he remained true to the creed of his great predecessors. "L'art pour art," he would say, quoting Georges Sand, "est un vain mot: l'art pour le vrai, l'art pour le beau et le bon, voila la religion que je cherche." When he succeeded to the laureateship he was proud to remember that the wreath which had descended to him was

greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base,

and he was a loyal disciple of that poet whose aim had been, in his own words, "to console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, to feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous". [1] Wordsworth had said that he wished to be regarded as a teacher or as nothing, but unhappily he did not always distinguish between the way in which a poet and a philosopher should teach. He forgot that the didactic element in a poem should be, to employ a homely illustration, what garlic should be in a salad, "scarce suspected, animate the whole," that the poet teaches not as the moralist and the preacher teach, but as nature and life teach us. He taught us when he wrote 'The Fountain' and 'The Highland Reaper, The Leach-gatherer' and 'Michael', he merely wearied us when he sermonised in 'The Excursion' and in 'The Prelude'. Tennyson never makes this mistake. He is seldom directly didactic. Would he inculcate subjugation to the law of duty--he gives us the funeral ode on Wellington, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', and 'Love and Duty'. Would he inculcate

resignation to the will of God, and the moral efficacy of conventional Christianity--he gives us 'Enoch Arden'. Would he picture the endless struggle between the sensual and the spiritual, and the relation of ideals to life--he gives us the 'Idylls of the King'. Would he point to what atheism may lead--he gives us 'Lucretius'. Poems which are masterpieces of sensuous art, such as mere aesthetes, like Rossetti and his school, must contemplate with admiring despair, he makes vehicles of the most serious moral and spiritual teaching. 'The Vision of Sin' is worth a hundred sermons on the disastrous effects of unbridled profligacy. In 'The Palace of Art' we have the quintessence of 'The Book of Ecclesiastes' and much more besides. Even in 'The Lotos Eaters' we have the mirror held up to Hedonism. On the education of the affections and on the purity of domestic life must depend very largely, not merely the happiness of individuals, but the well-being of society, and how wide a space is filled by poems in Tennyson's works bearing influentially on these subjects is obvious. And they admit us into a pleasaunce with which it is good to be familiar, so pure and wholesome is their atmosphere, so tranquilly beautiful the world in which the characters move and the little dramas unfold themselves. They preach nothing, but deep into every heart must sink their silent lessons. "Upon the sacredness of home life," writes his son, "he would maintain that the stability and greatness of a nation largely depend; and one of the secrets of his power over mankind was his true joy in the family duties and affections." What sermons have we in 'The Miller's Daughter', in 'Dora', in 'The Gardener's Daughter' and in 'Love and Duty'. 'The Princess' was a direct contribution to a social question of momentous importance to our time. 'Maud' had an immediate political purpose, while in 'In Memoriam' he became the interpreter and teacher of his generation in a still higher sense.

Since Shakespeare no English poet has been so essentially patriotic, or appealed so directly to the political conscience of the nation. In his noble eulogies of the English constitution and of the virtue and wisdom of its architects, in his spirit-stirring pictures of the heroic actions of our forefathers and contemporaries both by land and sea, in his passionate denunciations of all that he believed would detract from England's greatness and be prejudicial to her real interests, in his hearty sympathy with every movement and with every measure which he believed would contribute to her honour and her power, in all this he stands alone among modern poets. But if he loved England as Shakespeare loved her, he had other lessons than Shakespeare's to teach her. The responsibilities imposed on the England of our time--and no poet knew this better--are very different from those imposed on the England of Elizabeth. An empire vaster and more populous than that of the ~~Cæsars~~ has since then been added to our dominion. Millions, indeed, who are of the same blood as ourselves and who speak our language have, by the folly of common ancestors, become aliens. But how immense are the realms peopled by the colonies which are still loyal to us, and by the three hundred millions who in India own us as their rulers: of this vast empire England is now the capital and centre. That she should fulfil completely and honourably the duties to which destiny has called her will be the prayer of every patriot, that he should by his own efforts contribute all in his power to further such fulfilment must be his

earnest desire. It would be no exaggeration to say that Tennyson contributed more than any man who has ever lived to what may be called the higher political education of the English-speaking races. Of imperial federation he was at once the apostle and the pioneer. In poetry which appealed as probably no other poetry has appealed to every class, wherever our language is spoken, he dwelt fondly on all that constitutes the greatness and glory of England, on her grandeur in the past, on the magnificent promise of the part she will play in the future, if her sons are true to her. There should be no distinction, for she recognises no distinction between her children at home and her children in her colonies. She is the common mother of a common race: one flag, one sceptre, the same proud ancestry, the same splendid inheritance. "How strange England cannot see," he once wrote, "that her true policy lies in a close union with her colonies."

Sharers of our glorious past,
Shall we not thro' good and ill
Cleave to one another still?
Britain's myriad voices call,
Sons be welded all and all
Into one imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul!
One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!

Thus did the poetry of Tennyson draw closer, and thus will it continue to draw closer those sentimental ties--ties, in Burke's phrase, "light as air, but strong as links of iron," which bind the colonies to the mother country; and in so doing, if he did not actually initiate, he furthered, as no other single man has furthered, the most important movement of our time. Nor has any man of genius in the present century--not Dickens, not Ruskin--been moved by a purer spirit of philanthropy, or done more to show how little the qualities and actions which dignify humanity depend, or need depend, on the accidents of fortune. He brought poetry into touch with the discoveries of science, and with the speculations of theology and metaphysics, and though, in treating such subjects, his power is not, perhaps, equal to his charm, the debt which his countrymen owe him, even intellectually, is incalculable.

[Footnote 1: See Wordsworth's letter to Lady Beaumont, 'Prose Works', vol. ii., p. 176.]

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TO THE QUEEN

This dedication was first prefixed to the seventh edition of these poems in 1851, Tennyson having succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate, 19th Nov., 1850.

Revered, beloved [1]--O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria, [2]--since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base;

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then--while [3] a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes--

Take, Madam, this poor book of song;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. [4] May you rule us long.

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
"She wrought her people lasting good; [5]

"Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife and Queen;

"And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons, when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet [6]

"By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will, [7]
And compass'd by the inviolate sea."

MARCH, 1851.

[Footnote 1: 1851. Revered Victoria, you that hold.]

[Footnote 2: 1851. I thank you that your Royal grace.]

[Footnote 3: This stanza added in 1853.]

[Footnote 4: 1851. Your sweetness.]

[Footnote 5: In 1851 the following stanza referring to the first Crystal

Palace, opened 1st May, 1851, was inserted here:--

She brought a vast design to pass,
When Europe and the scatter'd ends
Of our fierce world were mixt as friends
And brethren, in her halls of glass.]

[Footnote 6: 1851. Broader yet.]

[Footnote 7: With this cf. Shelley, 'Ode to Liberty':--

Athens diviner yet
Gleam'd with its crest of columns _on the will_
Of man.]

CLARIBEL

A MELODY

First published in 1830.

In 1830 and in 1842 edd. the poem is in one long stanza, with a full stop in 1830 ed. after line 8; 1842 ed. omits the full stop. The name "Claribel" may have been suggested by Spenser ('F. Q.', ii., iv., or Shakespeare, 'Tempest').

1

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

2

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone:
At noon the wild bee [1] hummeth
About the moss'd headstone:
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,

The callow throstle [2] lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

[Footnote 1: 1830. "Wild" omitted, and "low" inserted with a hyphen before "hummeth".]

[Footnote 2: 1851 and all previous editions, "fledgling" for "callow".]

LILIAN

First printed in 1830.

1

Airy, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

2

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs
She, looking thro' and thro' [1] me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gather'd wimple [2]
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

3

Prythee weep, May Lilian!
Gaiety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian:
Thro' [3] my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded [4] lips

Silver-treble laughter [5] trilleth:
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

4

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

[Footnote 1: 1830. Through and through me.]

[Footnote 2: 1830. Purfled.]

[Footnote 3: 1830. Through.]

[Footnote 4: With "crimson-threaded" 'cf.' Cleveland's 'Sing-song on Clarinda's Wedding', "Her 'lips those threads of scarlet dye"; but the original is 'Solomons Song' iv. 3, "Thy lips are 'like a thread of scarlet'".]

[Footnote 5: 1830. Silver treble-laughter.]

ISABEL

First printed in 1830.

Lord Tennyson tells us ('Life of Tennyson', i., 43) that in this poem his father more or less described his own mother, who was a "remarkable and saintly woman". In this as in the other poems elaborately painting women we may perhaps suspect the influence of Wordsworth's 'Triad', which should be compared with them.

1

Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit [1]; locks not wide-dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,

The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead. [2]

2

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;
The laws of marriage [3] character'd in gold
Upon the blanched [4] tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' [5] all the outworks of suspicious pride.
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' [6] all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

3

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
With swifter movement and in purer light
The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other--
Shadow forth thee:--the world hath not another
(Though all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity,

[Footnote 1: With these lines may be compared Shelley, 'Dedication to the Revolt of Islam':--

And through thine eyes, e'en in thy soul, I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning eternally.]

[Footnote 2: Lowlihead a favourite word with Chaucer and Spenser.]

[Footnote 3: 1830. Wifehood.]

[Footnote 4: 1830. Blenched.]

[Footnote 5: 1830 and all before 1853. Through.]

[Footnote 6: 1830. Through.]

MARIANA

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

First printed in 1830.

This poem as we know from the motto prefixed to it was suggested by Shakespeare ('Measure for Measure', iii., 1, "at the moated grange resides this dejected Mariana,") but the poet may have had in his mind the exquisite fragment of Sappho:--

[Greek: deduke men ha selanna kai Plaeiades, mesai de nuktes, para d' erchet h'ora ego de mona kateud'o.]

"The moon has set and the Pleiades, and it is midnight: the hour too is going by, but I sleep alone."

It was long popularly supposed that the scene of the poem was a farm near Somersby known as Baumber's farm, but Tennyson denied this and said it was a purely "imaginary house in the fen," and that he "never so much as dreamed of Baumbers farm". See 'Life', i., 28.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach [1] to the garden-wall. [2]
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
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;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried; [3]
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
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.
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,
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,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed [4] morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
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.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark [5]
The level waste, the rounding gray.[6]
She only said, "My life is dreary,
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,[7]
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
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!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; [8] the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
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;
She said, "I am weary, weary,
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
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 [9] toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am weary, weary,
O God, that I were dead!"

[Footnote 1: 1863. Pear.]

[Footnote 2: 1872. Gable-wall.]

[Footnote 3: With this beautiful couplet may be compared a couplet of
Helvius Cinna:--

Te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous,
Te flentem paullo vidit post Hesperus idem.
--'Cinnae Reliq'. Ed. Mueller, p. 83.]

[Footnote 4: 1830. Grey-eyed. 'Cf'. 'Romeo and Juliet', ii., 3,
"The grey morn_ smiles on the frowning night".]

[Footnote 5: 1830, 1842, 1843. Dark.]

[Footnote 6: 1830. Grey.]

[Footnote 7: 1830. An' away.]

[Footnote 8: All editions before 1851. I' the pane. With this line
'cf'. 'Maud', I., vi., 8, "and the shrieking rush of the wainscot
mouse".]

[Footnote 9: 1830. Downsloped was westering in his bower.]

TO----

First printed in 1830.

The friend to whom these verses were addressed was Joseph William Blakesley, third Classic and Senior Chancellor's Medallist in 1831, and afterwards Dean of Lincoln. Tennyson said of him: "He ought to be Lord Chancellor, for he is a subtle and powerful reasoner, and an honest man".--'Life', i., 65. He was a contributor to the 'Edinburgh' and 'Quarterly Reviews', and died in April, 1885. See memoir of him in the 'Dictionary of National Biography'.

1

Clear-headed friend, whose joyful scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain
The knots that tangle human creeds, [1]
The wounding cords that [2] bind and strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine:
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

2

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;
Falsehood shall bear her plaited brow:
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords
Can do away that ancient lie;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thro'[3] with cunning words.

3

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed;
Like that strange angel [4] which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

[Footnote 1: 1830. The knotted lies of human creeds.]

[Footnote 2: 1830. "Which" for "that".]

[Footnote 3: 1830. Through and through.]

[Footnote 4: The reference is to Genesis xxxii. 24-32.]

MADELINE

First published in 1830.

1

Thou art not steep'd in golden languors,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thro' [1] light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy [2] forms of flitting change.

2

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles: but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

3

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,

About thee breaks and dances
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden curved frown:
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously, [3]
Again thou blushest angerly;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

[Footnote 1: 1830. Through.]

[Footnote 2: 1830. Aery.]

[Footnote 3: 1830. Three-times-three; though noted as an erratum for amorously.]

SONG.--THE OWL

First printed in 1830.

1

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

2

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch

Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG

TO THE SAME.

First printed in 1830.

1

Thy tuwhits are lull'd I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

2

I would mock thy chaunt anew;
But I cannot mimick it;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

First printed in 1830.

With this poem should be compared the description of Harun al Rashid's Garden of Gladness in the story of Nur-al-din Ali and the damsel Anis al Talis in the Thirty-Sixth Night. The style appears to have been modelled on Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' and 'Lewti', and the influence of Coleridge is very perceptible throughout the poem.

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
A down the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime [1]
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro' [2]
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' [3] lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas [4] on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms [5] unmown, which crept
Adown to where the waters slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

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

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall

Of diamond rillets musical,
Thro' little crystal [6] arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' [7] many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colour'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odour in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul [8] as he sung;
Not he: but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd.
Apart from place, withholding [9] time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the [10] garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:
A sudden splendour from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. [11] A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, [12]
Grew darker from that under-flame:
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,

Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn--[13]
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound, [14]
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries [15] of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

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

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd [16] to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time,
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath [17] her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt [18] a rich
Throne of the [19] massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him--in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID!

[Footnote 1: "Golden prime" from Shakespeare.

"That cropp'd the _golden prime_ of this sweet prince."

--_Rich. III._, i., sc. ii., 248.]

[Footnote 2: 1830. Through.] [Footnote 3: 1830. Through.]

[Footnote 4: 1830 and 1842. Sophas.] [Footnote 5: 1830. Breaded blosms.]

[Footnote 6: 1830. Through crystal.] [Footnote 7: 1830. Through.]

[Footnote 8: "Bulbul" is the Persian for nightingale. _Cf. Princes_,
iv., 104:--

"O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan Shall brush her veil".]

[Footnote 9: 1830. Witholding. So 1842, 1843, 1845.]

[Footnote 10: 1830. Blackgreen.] [Footnote 11: 1830. Of saffron light.]

[Footnote 12: 1830. Unrayed.] [Footnote 13: 1830. Through ... borne.]

[Footnote 14: Shakespeare has the same expression:

"The hum of either army _stilly sounds_".

--_Henry V._, act iv., prol.]

[Footnote 15: 1842. Roseries.] [Footnote 16: 1830. Wreathed.]

[Footnote 17: 1830. Below.]

[Footnote 18: 1830. Underpropped. 1842. Underpropp'd.]

[Footnote 19: 1830. O' the.]

ODE TO MEMORY

First printed in 1830.

After the title in 1830 ed. is "Written very early in life". The influence most perceptible in this poem is plainly Coleridge, on whose 'Songs of the Pixies' it seems to have been modelled. Tennyson considered it, and no wonder, as one of the very best of "his early and peculiarly concentrated Nature-poems". See 'Life', i., 27. It is full of vivid and accurate pictures of his Lincolnshire home and haunts. See 'Life', i., 25-48, 'passim'.

1

Thou who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire!
Strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

2

Come not as thou camest [1] of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day; but robed in soften'd light
Of orient state.
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd, [2]
When she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

3

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist.
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast,
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind
Never grow sere,
When rooted in the garden of the mind,
Because they are the earliest of the year).
Nor was the night thy shroud.

In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.
The eddying of her garments caught from thee
The light of thy great presence; and the cope
Of the half-attain'd futurity,
Though deep not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars which tremble
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
Small thought was there of life's distress;
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful:
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,
Listening the lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years.[3]
O strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

4

Come forth I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes!
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines
Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory!
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:
Come from the woods that belt the grey hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars [4] four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook [5] that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland.
O! hither lead thy feet!
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,
Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath waken'd [6] loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

5

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present

When first she is wed;
And like a bride of old
In triumph led,
With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,
Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
In setting round thy first experiment
With royal frame-work of wrought gold;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
Upon the storied walls;
For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius.
Artist-like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze
On the prime labour of thine early days:
No matter what the sketch might be;
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage [7] whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity, [8]
The trenched waters run from sky to sky;
Or a garden bower'd close
With plaited [9] alleys of the trailing rose,
Long alleys falling down to twilight grotts,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender:
Whither in after life retired
From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy reinspired,
We may hold converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those [10] whom passion hath not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.
My friend, with you [11] to live alone,
Were how much [12] better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!
O strengthen, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

[Footnote 1: 1830. Cam'st.]

[Footnote 2: 1830. Kist.]

[Footnote 3: Transferred from 'Timbuctoo'.

And these with lavish'd sense
Listenist the lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years.]

[Footnote 4: The poplars have now disappeared but the seven elms are still to be seen in the garden behind the house. See Napier, 'The Laureate's County', pp. 22, 40-41.]

[Footnote 5: This is the Somersby brook which so often reappears in Tennyson's poetry, cf. 'Millers Daughter, A Farewell', and 'In Memoriam', 1 xxix. and c.]

[Footnote 6: 1830. Waked. For the epithet "dew-impearled" 'cf'. Drayton, Ideas, sonnet liii., "amongst the dainty 'dew-impearled flowers'," where the epithet is more appropriate and intelligible.]

[Footnote 7: 1830. The few.]

[Footnote 8: 1830 and 1842. Thee.]

[Footnote 9: 1830. Methinks were, so till 1850, when it was altered to the present reading.]

[Footnote 10: The cottage at Maplethorpe where the Tennysons used to spend the summer holidays. (See 'Life', i., 46.)]

[Footnote 11: 1830. Emblems or Glimpses of Eternity.]

[Footnote 12: 1830. Pleached. The whole of this passage is an exact description of the Parsonage garden at Somersby. See 'Life', i., 27.]

SONG

First printed in 1830.

The poem was written in the garden at the Old Rectory, Somersby; an autumn scene there which it faithfully describes. This poem seems to have haunted Poe, a fervent admirer of Tennyson's early poems.

Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
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;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

2

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
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.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

ADELINE

First printed in 1830.

1

Mystery of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

2

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden passed away,
Ere the placid lips be cold?
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

3

What hope or fear or joy is thine?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?
For sure thou art not all alone:
Do beating hearts of salient springs
Keep measure with thine own?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings [1]
To the mosses underneath?
Hast thou look'd upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise?
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

4

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine, [2]
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

5

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies?

Doth the low-tongued Orient [3]
Wander from the side of [4] the morn,
Dripping with Sabsean spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-dropping [5] twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a 'carcanet of rays', [6]
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

[Footnote 1: This conceit seems to have been borrowed from Shelley, 'Sensitive Plant', i.:-

And the hyacinth, purple and white and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music.]

[Footnote 2: 'Cf'. Collins, 'Ode to Pity', "and 'eyes of dewy light'".]

[Footnote 3: What "the low-tongued Orient" may mean I cannot explain.]

[Footnote 4: 1830 and all editions till 1853. O'.]

[Footnote 5: 1863. A-drooping.]

[Footnote 6: A carcanet is a necklace, diminutive from old French "Carcan". Cf. 'Comedy of Errors', in., i, "To see the making of her 'Carcanet'".]

A CHARACTER

First printed in 1830.

The only authoritative light thrown on the person here described is what the present Lord Tennyson gives, who tells us that "the then well-known Cambridge orator S--was partly described". He was "a very plausible, parliament-like, self-satisfied speaker at the Union Debating Society ". The character reminds us of Wordsworth's Moralists. See 'Poet's Epitaph';--

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling,
Nor form nor feeling, great nor small;
A reasoning, self-sufficient thing,
An intellectual all in all.

Shakespeare's fop, too (Hotspur's speech, 'Henry IV.', i., i., 2), seems to have suggested a touch or two.

With a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things".
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by:
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold:
Upon himself himself did feed:
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET

First printed in 1830.

In this poem we have the first grand note struck by Tennyson, the first poem exhibiting the [Greek: spoudaiotates] of the true poet.

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,[1]
The love of love.

He saw thro' [2] life and death, thro' [2] good and ill,
He saw thro' [2] his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,--

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' [3] one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one [4] great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes

Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power--a sacred name. [5]
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.
No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd, [6]
But one poor poet's scroll, and with 'his' word
She shook the world.

[Footnote 1: The expression, as is not uncommon with Tennyson, is extremely ambiguous; it may mean that he hated hatred, scorned scorn, and loved love, or that he had hatred, scorn and love as it were in quintessence, like Dante, and that is no doubt the meaning.]

[Footnotes 2: 1830. Through.]

[Footnote 3: 1830 till 1851. Though.]

[Footnote 4: 2 1830. A.]

[Footnote 5: 1830.]

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

[Footnote 6: 1830. Hurl'd.]

THE POET'S MIND

First published in 1830.

A companion poem to the preceding. After line 7
in 1830 appears this stanza, afterwards omitted:--

Clear as summer mountain streams,
Bright as the inwoven beams,
Which beneath their crissing sapphire

In the midday, floating o'er
The golden sands, make evermore
To a blossom-starr'd shore.
Hence away, unhallowed laughter!

1

Vex not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit:
Vex not thou the poet's mind;
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

2

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;
All the place [1] is holy ground;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.
Holy water will I pour
Into every spicy flower
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.
In your eye there is death,
There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.
Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.
In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants,
It would fall to the ground if you came in.
In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening
With a low melodious thunder;
All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple mountain
Which stands in the distance yonder:
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,
And it sings a song of undying love;
And yet, tho' [2] its voice be so clear and full,
You never would hear it; your ears are so dull;
So keep where you are: you are foul with sin;
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

[Footnote 1: 1830. The poet's mind. With this may be compared the opening stanza of Gray's 'Installation Ode': "Hence! avaunt! 'tis holy ground," and for the sentiments 'cf'. Wordsworth's 'Poet's Epitaph.'

[Footnote 2: 1830 to 1851. Though.]

THE SEA-FAIRIES

First published in 1830 but excluded from all editions till its restoration, when it was greatly altered, in 1853. I here give the text as it appeared in 1830; where the present text is the same as that of 1830 asterisks indicate it.

This poem is a sort of prelude to the Lotus-Eaters, the burthen being the same, a siren song: "Why work, why toil, when all must be over so soon, and when at best there is so little to reward?"

Slow sailed the weary mariners, and saw
Between the green brink and the running foam
White limbs unrobed in a chrystal air,
Sweet faces, etc.

...

middle sea.

SONG.

Whither away, whither away, whither away?
Fly no more!
Whither away wi' the singing sail? whither away wi' the oar?
Whither away from the high green field and the happy blossoming shore?
Weary mariners, hither away,
One and all, one and all,
Weary mariners, come and play;
We will sing to you all the day;
Furl the sail and the foam will fall
From the prow! one and all
Furl the sail! drop the oar!
Leap ashore!
Know danger and trouble and toil no more.
Whither away wi' the sail and the oar?
Drop the oar,
Leap ashore,
Fly no more!
Whither away wi' the sail? whither away wi' the oar?
Day and night to the billow, etc.

...

over the lea;
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the cloverhill swells
High over the full-toned sea.
Merrily carol the revelling gales
Over the islands free:
From the green seabanks the rose downtrails
To the happy brimm'd sea.
Come hither, come hither, and be our lords,
For merry brides are we:
We will kiss sweet kisses, etc.

...

With pleasure and love and revelry;

...

ridg'd sea.
Ye will not find so happy a shore
Weary mariners! all the world o'er;
Oh! fly no more!
Harken ye, harken ye, sorrow shall darken ye,
Danger and trouble and toil no more;
Whither away?
Drop the oar;
Hither away,
Leap ashore;
Oh! fly no more--no more.
Whither away, whither away, whither away with the sail and the oar?

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold; and while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no more.
Whither away from the high green field, and the happy blossoming shore?
Day and night to the billow the fountain calls;
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
From wandering over the lea:
Out of the live-green heart of the dells
They freshen the silvery-crimsoned shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
High over the full-toned sea:
O hither, come hither and furl your sails,
Come hither to me and to me:
Hither, come hither and frolic and play;
Here it is only the mew that wails;
We will sing to you all the day:
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and dales,
And merrily merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight [1] and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land

Over the islands free;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;
Hither, come hither and see;
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,

And sweet shall your welcome be:
O hither, come hither, and be our lords
For merry brides are we:
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words:
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee:
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the golden cords
Runs up the ridged sea.
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?
Whither away? listen and stay: mariner, mariner, fly no more.

[Footnote 1: Bight is properly the coil of a rope; it then came to mean a bend, and so a corner or bay. The same phrase occurs in the 'Voyage of Maledune', v.: "and flung them in bight and bay".]

THE DESERTED HOUSE

First printed in 1830, omitted in all the editions till 1848 when it was restored. The poem is of course allegorical, and is very much in the vein of many poems in Anglo-Saxon poetry.

1

Life and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they!

2

All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

3

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' [1] the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

4

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

5

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious--
A great and distant city--have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

[Footnote 1: 1848 and 1851. Through.]

THE DYING SWAN

First printed in 1830.

The superstition here assumed is so familiar from the Classics as well as from modern tradition that it scarcely needs illustration or commentary. But see Plato, 'Phaedrus', xxxi., and Shakespeare, 'King John', v., 7.

1

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. [1]
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And [2] loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,

And took the reed-tops as it went.

2

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the water [3] wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;
Above in the wind was [4] the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' [5] the marish green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

3

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,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach [6] 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;
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' [7] the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the sougning reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

[Footnote 1: 1830. Grey.]

[Footnote 2: 1830 till 1848. Which.]

[Footnote 3: 1863. River.]

[Footnote 4: 1830. Sung.]

[Footnote 5: 1830. Through.]

[Footnote 6: A coronach is a funeral song or lamentation, from the Gaelic 'Corranach'. 'Cf'. Scott's 'Waverley', ch. xv.,

"Their wives and daughters came clapping their hands and 'crying the coronach' and shrieking".]

[Footnote 7: 1830 till 1851. Through.]

A DIRGE

First printed in 1830.

1

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 [1]
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

2

Thee nor carketh [2] care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

3

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;
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.
Let them rave.

4

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

5

Round thee blow, self-pleached [1] deep,
Bramble-roses, faint and pale,
And long purples [2] of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep.
Thro' [3] the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

6

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,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

7

Wild words wander here and there;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused:
But let them rave.
The balm-cricket [4] carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

[Footnote 1: Still used in the north of England for "birch".]

[Footnote 2: Carketh. Here used transitively, "troubles," though in Old English it is generally intransitive, meaning to be careful or thoughtful; it is from the Anglo-Saxon 'Carian'; it became obsolete in the seventeenth century. The substantive cark, trouble or anxiety, is generally in Old English coupled with "care".]

[Footnote 3: Self-pleached, self-entangled or intertwined. 'Cf' Shakespeare, "pleached bower," 'Much Ado', iii., i., 7.]

[Footnote 4: 1830. "'Long purples'," thus marking that the phrase is borrowed from Shakespeare, 'Hamlet', iv., vii., 169:--

and 'long purples'
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name.
It is the purple-flowered orchis, 'orchis mascula'.]

[Footnote 5: 1830. Through.]

[Footnote 6: Balm cricket, the tree cricket; 'balm' is a corruption of 'baum'.]

LOVE AND DEATH

First printed in 1830.

What time the mighty moon was gathering light [1]
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes;
When, turning round a cassia, full in view
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
And talking to himself, first met his sight:
"You must begone," said Death, "these walks are mine".
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans [2] for flight;
Yet ere he parted said, "This hour is thine;
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death;
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
But I shall reign for ever over all". [3]

[Footnote 1: The expression is Virgil's, 'Georg'., i., 427: "Luna revertentes cum primum 'colligit ignes'".]

[Footnote 2: Vans used also for "wings" by Milton, 'Paradise Lost', ii., 927-8:--

His sail-broad 'vans'
He spreads for flight.

So also Tasso, 'Ger. Lib'., ix., 60:

"Indi spiega al gran volo 'i vanni' aurati".]

[Footnote 3: 'Cf. Lockley Hall Sixty Years After': "Love will conquer at the last".]

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

First published in 1830, not in 1833.

This fine ballad was evidently suggested by the old ballad of Helen of Kirkconnel, both poems being based on a similar incident, and both being the passionate soliloquy of the bereaved lover, though Tennyson's treatment of the subject is his own. Helen of Kirkconnel was one of the poems which he was fond of reciting, and Fitzgerald says that he used also to recite this poem, in a way not to be forgotten, at Cambridge tables. 'Life', i., p. 77.

My heart is wasted with my woe, Oriana.
There is no rest for me below, Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow, Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro, Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing, Oriana,
At midnight the cock was crowing, Oriana:
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going, Oriana;
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing, Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night, Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight, Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight, Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight, Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall, Oriana:
She watch'd my crest among them all, Oriana:
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall, Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall, Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside, Oriana:
The false, false arrow went aside, Oriana:
The damned arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride, Oriana!
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride, Oriana!

Oh! narrow, narrow was the space, Oriana.
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays, Oriana.
Oh! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepen'd in its place, Oriana;
But I was down upon my face, Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay, Oriana!
How could I rise and come away, Oriana?
How could I look upon the day?
They should have stabb'd me where I lay, Oriana
They should have trod me into clay, Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break, Oriana!
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek, Oriana!
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek, Oriana:
What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek, Oriana?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries, Oriana.
Thou comest atween me and the skies, Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes, Oriana.
Within my heart my arrow lies, Oriana.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow! Oriana!
O happy thou that liest low, Oriana!
All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe, Oriana.
A weary, weary way I go, Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea, Oriana,
I walk, I dare not think of thee, Oriana.
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
I dare not die and come to thee, Oriana.
I hear the roaring of the sea, Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE

First published in 1830.

Two children in two neighbour villages
Playing mad pranks along the healthy leas;
Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred;
So runs [1] the round of life from hour to hour.

[Footnote 1: 1830. Fill up.]

THE MERMAN

First printed in 1830.

1

Who would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne?

2

I would be a merman bold;
I would sit and sing the whole of the day;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power;
But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower;
And holding them back by their flowing locks
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly;
And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

3

There would be neither moon nor star;
But the wave would make music above us afar--
Low thunder and light in the magic night--
Neither moon nor star.
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,
All night, merrily, merrily:
But I would throw to them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almondine: [1]

Then leaping out upon them unseen
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly.
Oh! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green!
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;
We would live merrily, merrily.

[Footnote 1: Almondine. This should be "almandine," the word probably being a corruption of alabandina, a gem so called because found at Alabanda in Caria; it is a garnet of a violet or amethystine tint. 'Cf.' Browning, 'Fefine at the Fair', xv., "that string of mock-turquoise, these 'almandines' of glass".]

THE MERMAID

First printed in 1830.

1

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

2

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
"Who is it loves me? who loves not me?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall,
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne

In the midst of the hall;
Till that [1] great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their [2] immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

3

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
With the mermen in and out of the rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds in the [1] crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd [2] by all who would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

[Footnote 1: Till 1857. The.]

[Footnote 2: Till 1857. The.]

[Footnote 3: 1830. 'I the. So till 1853.]

[Footnote 4: 1830 Kist.]

SONNET TO J. M. K.

First printed in 1830, not in 1833.

This sonnet was addressed to John Mitchell Kemble, the well-known Editor of the 'Beowulf' and other Anglo-Saxon poems. He intended to go into the Church, but was never ordained, and devoted his life to early English studies. See memoir of him in 'Dict. of Nat. Biography'.

My hope and heart is with thee--thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:
Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

First published in 1833.

This poem was composed in its first form as early as May, 1832 or 1833, as we learn from Fitzgerald's note--of the exact year he was not certain ('Life of Tennyson', i., 147). The evolution of the poem is an interesting study. How greatly it was altered in the second edition of 1842 will be evident from the collation which follows. The text of 1842 became the permanent text, and in this no subsequent material alterations were made. The poem is more purely fanciful than Tennyson perhaps was willing to own; certainly his explanation of the allegory, as he gave it to Canon Ainger, is not very intelligible: "The new-born love for something, for some one in the wide world from which she has been so long excluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities". Poe's commentary is most to the point: "Why do some persons fatigue themselves in endeavours to unravel such phantasy pieces as the 'Lady of Shallot'? As well unweave the ventum textilem".--'Democratic Review', Dec., 1844, quoted by Mr. Herne Shepherd. Mr. Palgrave says (selection from the 'Lyric Poems of Tennyson', p. 257) the poem was suggested by an Italian romance upon the Donna di Scalotta. On what authority this is said I do not know, nor can I identify the novel. In Novella, lxxxi., a collection of novels printed at Milan in 1804, there is one which tells but very briefly the story of Elaine's love and death, "Qui conta come la Damigella di scalot mori per

amore di Lancealotto di Lac," and as in this novel Camelot is placed near the sea, this may be the novel referred to. In any case the poem is a fanciful and possibly an allegorical variant of the story of Elaine, Shalott being a form, through the French, of Astolat.

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott. [1]

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, [2]
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,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott? [3]

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott". [4]

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 [5]
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the 'curse' may be,
And so [6] she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls, [7]
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot: [8]
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott. [9]

PART III

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

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy. [10]
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to [11] Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot. [12]
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott. [13]

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot. [14]
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river [15]
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom;
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily [16] bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
'The Lady of Shalott.' [17]

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

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right--
The leaves upon her falling light--
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott. [18]

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly, [19]
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale [20] between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
'The Lady of Shalott' [21]

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot [22] mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott". [23]

[Footnote 1: 1833.

To many towered Camelot
The yellow leaved water lily,
The green sheathed daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
Round about Shalott.]

[Footnote 2: 1833.

shiver,
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever
By the island, etc.]

[Footnote 3: 1833.

Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
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
Listening whispers, "'tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott".]

[Footnote 4: 1833.

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

[Footnote 5: 1833.

No time hath she to sport and play:
A charmed web she weaves away.
A curse is on her, if she stay
Her weaving, either night or day]

[Footnote 6: 1833.

Therefore

...

Therefore

...

The Lady of Shalott.]

[Footnote 7: 1833.

She lives with little joy or fear
Over the water running near,
The sheep bell tinkles in her ear,
Before her hangs a mirror clear,
Reflecting towered Camelot.
And, as the mazy web she whirls,
She sees the surly village-churls.]

[Footnote 8: 1833. Came from Camelot.]

[Footnote 9: In these lines are to be found, says the present Lord Tennyson, the key to the mystic symbolism of the poem. But it is not easy to see how death could be an advantageous exchange for fancy-haunted solitude. The allegory is clearer in lines 114-115, for love will so break up mere phantasy.]

[Footnote 10: 1833. Hung in the golden galaxy.]

[Footnote 11: 1833. From.]

[Footnote 12: 1833. From Camelot.]

[Footnote 13: 1833. Green Shalott.]

[Footnote 14: 1833. From Camelot.]

[Footnote 15: 1833. "Tirra lirra, tirra lirra."]

[Footnote 16: 1833. Water flower.]

[Footnote 17: 1833.

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

[Footnote 18: 1833.

A cloud-white crown of pearl she dight,
All raimented in snowy white
That loosely flew (her zone in sight,

Clasped with one blinding diamond bright),
Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,
Though the squally eastwind keenly
Blew, with folded arms serenely
By the water stood the queenly
Lady of Shalott.

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

[Footnote 19: 1833.

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

[Footnote 20: "A corse" (1853) is a variant for the "Dead-pale" of 1857.]

[Footnote 21: 1833.

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

[Footnote 22: 1833. Spells it "Lancelot" all through.]

[Footnote 23: 1833.

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

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

First printed in 1833.

This poem had been written as early as 1831 (see Arthur Hallam's letter, 'Life', i., 284-5, Appendix), and Lord Tennyson tells us that it "came to my father as he was travelling between Narbonne and Perpignan"; how vividly the characteristic features of Southern France are depicted must be obvious to every one who is familiar with them. It is interesting to compare it with the companion poem; the central position is the same in both, desolate loneliness, and the mood is the same, but the setting is far more picturesque and is therefore more dwelt upon. The poem was very greatly altered when re-published in 1842, that text being practically the final one, there being no important variants afterwards.

In the edition of 1833 the poem opened with the following stanza, which was afterwards excised and the stanza of the present text substituted.

Behind the barren hill upsprung
With pointed rocks against the light,
The crag sharpshadowed overhung
Each glaring creek and inlet bright.
Far, far, one light blue ridge was seen,
Looming like baseless fairyland;
Eastward a slip of burning sand,
Dark-rimmed with sea, and bare of green,
Down in the dry salt-marshes stood
That house dark latticed. Not a breath
Swayed the sick vineyard underneath,
Or moved the dusty southernwood.
"Madonna," with melodious moan
Sang Mariana, night and morn,
"Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
Love-forgotten and love-forlorn."

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn".

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down [1]
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, [2] and made appear,
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine, [3]
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan, [4]
"Madonna, sad is night and morn";
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn".

Till all the crimson changed, [5] and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load".
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and morn?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn". [6]

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, "My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn". [7]

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:

She felt he was and was not there, [8]
She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and without the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow [9] sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall. [10]
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten, and die forlorn". [11]

[12] And rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth".
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore".
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn!"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more".
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her moan,
"The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

At eve a dry cicada sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent spheres,
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
"The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn". [13]

[Footnote 1: 1833 From her warm brow and bosom down.]

[Footnote 2: 1833. On either side.]

[Footnote 3: Compare Keats, 'Eve of St. Agnes', "her maiden eyes divine".]

[Footnote 4: 1833. "Madonna," with melodious moan Sang Mariana, etc.]

[Footnote 5: 1833. When the dawncrimson changed.]

[Footnote 6: 1833.

Unto our Lady prayed she.
She moved her lips, she prayed alone,
She praying disarrayed and warm
From slumber, deep her wavy form
In the dark-lustrous mirror shone.
"Madonna," in a low clear tone
Said Mariana, night and morn,
Low she mourned, "I am all alone,
Love-forgotten, and love-forlorn".]

[Footnote 7: 1833.

At noon she slumbered. All along
The silvery field, the large leaves talked
With one another, as among
The spiked maize in dreams she walked.
The lizard leapt: the sunlight played:
She heard the callow nestling lisp,
And brimful meadow-runnels crisp.
In the full-leaved platan-shade.
In sleep she breathed in a lower tone,
Murmuring as at night and morn,
"Madonna! lo! I am all alone.
Love-forgotten and love-forlorn".]

[Footnote 8: 1835. Most false: he was and was not there.]

[Footnote 9: 1833. The sick olive. So the text remained till 1850, when "one" was substituted.]

[Footnote 10: 1833.

From the bald rock the blinding light
Beat ever on the sunwhite wall.]

[Footnote 11: 1833.

"Madonna, leave me not all alone,
To die forgotten and live forlorn."]

[Footnote 12: This stanza and the next not in 1833.]

[Footnote 13: 1833.

One dry cicala's summer song
At night filled all the gallery.
Ever the low wave seemed to roll
Up to the coast: far on, alone
In the East, large Hesper overshadowed
The mourning gulf, and on her soul
Poured divine solace, or the rise
Of moonlight from the margin gleamed,
Volcano-like, afar, and streamed
On her white arm, and heavenward eyes.
Not all alone she made her moan,
Yet ever sang she, night and morn,
"Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
Love-forgotten and love-forlorn".]

ELE~NORE

First printed in 1833. When reprinted in 1842 the alterations noted were then made, and after that the text remained unchanged.

1

Thy dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighbourhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades:
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,

And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore. [1]

2

Or the yellow-banded bees, [2]
Thro' [3] half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd--
A glorious child, dreaming alone,
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

3

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded
With many a deep-hued bell-like flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the Even,
All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland [4] mere,
[5] Eleänore!

4

How may full-sail'd verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
Eleänore?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleänore?
Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
Eleänore,
And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in thee
Is nothing sudden, nothing single;
Like two streams of incense free

From one censer, in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho' [6]
They were modulated so
To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

5

I stand before thee, Eleanore;
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.
I muse, as in a trance, the while
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile. [7]
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. _I_ would _I_ were
So tranced, so rapt in ecstacies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee for evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleanore!

6

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light:
As tho' [8] a star, in inmost heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd--then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was before;
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleanore.

7

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and fear, [9]

Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
Losing his fire and active might
In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation:
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will: [10]
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea:
And the self-same influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.
His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand, [11]
Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleñore.

8

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset and the moon;
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined;
I watch thy grace; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps, [12]
While I muse upon thy face;
And a languid fire creeps
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly: soon
From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon, [13]
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I _would_ [14] be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleñore.

[Footnote 1: With the picture of Eleñore may be compared the description which Ibycus gives of Euryalus. See Bergk's 'Anthologia

Lyrica' (Ibycus), p. 396.]

[Footnote 2: With yellow banded bees 'cf'. Keats's "yellow girted bees," 'Endymion', i. With this may be compared Pindar's beautiful picture of Iamus, who was also fed on honey, 'Olympian', vi., 50-80.]

[Footnote 3: 1833 and 1842. Through.]

[Footnote 4: Till 1857. Island.]

[Footnote 5: 1833. Meer.]

[Footnote 6: 1842 and 1843. Though.]

[Footnote 7: Ambrosial, the Greek sense of [Greek: ambrosios], divine.]

[Footnote 8: 1833 to 1851. Though.]

[Footnote 9: 1833. Did roof noonday with doubt and fear.]

[Footnote 10: 1833.

As waves that from the outer deep
Roll into a quiet cove,
There fall away, and lying still,
Having glorious dreams in sleep,
Shadow forth the banks at will.]

[Footnote 11: 'Cf.' Horace, 'Odes', iii., xxvii., 66-8:

Aderat querenti
Perfidum ridens Venus, et _remisso_
Filius _arcu_.]

[Footnote 12: 1833.

I gaze on thee the cloudless noon
Of mortal beauty.]

[Footnote 13: 1833. Then I faint, I swoon. The latter part of the eighth stanza is little more than an adaptation of Sappho's famous Ode, filtered perhaps through the version of Catullus.]

[Footnote 14: It is curious that a poet so scrupulous as Tennyson should have retained to the last the italics.]

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

First published in 1833. It was greatly altered when republished in 1842, and in some respects, so Fitzgerald thought, not for the better. No alterations of much importance were made in it after 1842. The characters as well as the scenery were, it seems, purely imaginary. Tennyson said that if he thought of any mill it was that of Trumpington, near Cambridge, which bears a general resemblance to the picture here given.

In the first edition the poem opened with the following stanza, which the 'Quarterly' ridiculed, and which was afterwards excised. Its omission is surely not to be regretted, whatever Fitzgerald may have thought.

I met in all the close green ways,
While walking with my line and rod,
The wealthy miller's mealy face,
Like the moon in an ivy-tod.
He looked so jolly and so good--
While fishing in the milldam-water,
I laughed to see him as he stood,
And dreamt not of the miller's daughter.

* * * * *

I see the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup--
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest--gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me [1] sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet [2] Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife, [3]
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine--
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine--[4]

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire: [5]
For even here, [6] where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan; [7]
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream--
Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses [8] in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when [9] they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones. [10]

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
('Twas April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool. [11]

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,

That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck. [12]

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement's edge [13]
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge:
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright--
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light. [14]

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death:
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And filled the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights begin to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope. [15]

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;
And "by that lamp," I thought "she sits!"
The white chalk-quarry [16] from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now!
O will she answer if I call?"

O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?" [17]

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with may,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flush'd like the coming of the day; [18]
And so it was--half-sly, half-shy, [19]
You would, and would not, little one!
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher;
And I was young--too young to wed:
"Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here," she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell. [20]

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart. [21]

Ah, well--but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day [22]
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay,
With bridal flowers--that I may seem,

As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by. [23]

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at [24] her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty, dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight. [25]

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise [26]
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light, [27]
I scarce should be [28] unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells
True love interprets--right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own. [29]
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth
And makes me talk too much in age. [30]

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
Do make a garland for the heart:
So sing [31] that other song I made,
Half anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not. [32]

Love that hath us in the net, [33]
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.
Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.

What is love? for we forget:

Ah, no! no! [34]

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine;
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine!
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss that brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more.

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear--who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind--
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds;
For look, the sunset, south and north, [35]
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below:
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

[Footnote 1: 1833. Scarce makes me.]

[Footnote 2: 1833. Darling.]

[Footnote 3: 1833. Own sweet wife.]

[Footnote 4: This stanza was added in 1842.]

[Footnote 5: 1833.]

My father's mansion, mounted high
Looked down upon the village spire.

I was a long and listless boy,
And son and heir unto the squire.]

[Footnote 6: 1833. In these dear walls.]

[Footnote 7: 1833.

I often heard the cooing dove
In firry woodlands mourn alone.]

[Footnote 8: 1833. The long mosses.]

[Footnote 9: 1842-1851. Where.]

[Footnote 10: This stanza was added in 1842, taking the place of the following which was excised:--

Sometimes I whistled in the wind,
Sometimes I angled, thought and deed
Torpide, as swallows left behind
That winter 'neath the floating weed:
At will to wander every way
From brook to brook my sole delight,
As lithe eels over meadows gray
Oft shift their glimmering pool by night.

In 1833 this stanza ran thus:--

I loved from off the bridge to hear
The rushing sound the water made,
And see the fish that everywhere
In the back-current glanced and played;
Low down the tall flag-flower that sprung
Beside the noisy stepping-stones,
And the massed chestnut boughs that hung
Thick-studded over with white cones,]

[Footnote 11: In 1833 the following took the place of the above stanza which was added in 1842:--

How dear to me in youth, my love,
Was everything about the mill,
The black and silent pool above,
The pool beneath that ne'er stood still,
The meal sacks on the whitened floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door--
Made misty with the floating meal!

Thus in 1833:--

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

[Footnote 12: Thus in 1833:--

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

[Footnote 13: 1872. Casement-edge.]

[Footnote 14: Thus in 1833:--

If you remember, you had set
Upon the narrow casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge.
I raised my eyes at once: above
They met two eyes so blue and bright,
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That they have never lost their light.

After this stanza the following was inserted in 1833 but excised in 1842:--

That slope beneath the chestnut tall
Is wooed with choicest breaths of air:
Methinks that I could tell you all
The cowslips and the kingcups there.
Each coltsfoot down the grassy bent,
Whose round leaves hold the gathered shower,
Each quaintly-folded cuckoo pint,
And silver-paly cuckoo flower.]

[Footnote 15: Thus in 1833:--

In rambling on the eastern wold,
When thro’ the showery April nights

Their hueless crescent glimmered cold,
From all the other village lights
I knew your taper far away.
My heart was full of trembling hope,
Down from the wold I came and lay
Upon the dewy-swarded slope.]

[Footnote 16; Mr. Cuming Walters in his interesting volume 'In Tennyson Land', p. 75, notices that the white chalk quarry at Thetford can be seen from Stockworth Mill, which seems to show that if Tennyson did take the mill from Trumpington he must also have had his mind on Thetford Mill. Tennyson seems to have taken delight in baffling those who wished to localise his scenes. He went out of his way to say that the topographical studies of Messrs. Church and Napier were the only ones which could he relied upon. But Mr. Cuming Walters' book is far more satisfactory than their thin studies.]

[Footnote 17: Thus in 1833:--

The white chalk quarry from the hill
Upon the broken ripple gleamed,
I murmured lowly, sitting still,
While round my feet the eddy streamed:
"Oh! that I were the wreath she wreathes,
The mirror where her sight she feeds,
The song she sings, the air she breathes,
The letters of the books she reads".]

[Footnote 18: 1833.

I loved, but when I dared to speak
My love, the lanes were white with May
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flushed like the coming of the day.]

[Footnote 19: 1833. Rosecheekt, roselipt, half-sly, half-shy.]

[Footnote 20: Cf. Milton, 'Paradise Lost';--

Two other precious drops that ready stood
He, ere they fell, kiss'd.]

[Footnote 21: These three stanzas were added in 1842, the following being excised:--

Remember you the clear moonlight,
That whitened all the eastern ridge,
When o'er the water, dancing white,
I stepped upon the old mill-bridge.

I heard you whisper from above
A lute-toned whisper, "I am here";
I murmured, "Speak again, my love,
The stream is loud: I cannot hear".

I heard, as I have seemed to hear,
When all the under-air was still,
The low voice of the glad new year
Call to the freshly-flowered hill.
I heard, as I have often heard
The nightingale in leavy woods
Call to its mate, when nothing stirred
To left or right but falling floods.]

[Footnote 22: 1842. I gave you on the joyful day.]

[Footnote 23: In 1833 the following stanza took the place of the one here substituted in 1842:--

Come, Alice, sing to me the song
I made you on our marriage day,
When, arm in arm, we went along
Half-tearfully, and you were gay
With brooch and ring: for I shall seem,
The while you sing that song, to hear
The mill-wheel turning in the stream,
And the green chestnut whisper near.

In 1833 the song began thus, the present stanza taking its place in 1842:--

I wish I were her earring,
Ambushed in auburn ringlets sleek,
(So might my shadow tremble
Over her downy cheek),
Hid in her hair, all day and night,
Touching her neck so warm and white.]

[Footnote 24: 1872. In.]

[Footnote 25: 1833.

I wish I were the girdle
Buckled about her dainty waist,
That her heart might beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest.
I should know well if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

This stanza bears so close a resemblance to a stanza in Joshua Sylvester's 'Woodman's Bear' (see Sylvester's 'Works', ed. 1641, p. 616)

that a correspondent asked Tennyson whether Sylvester had suggested it. Tennyson replied that he had never seen Sylvester's lines ('Life of Tennyson', iii., 51). The lines are:--

But her slender virgin waste
Made mee beare her girdle spight
Which the same by day imbrac't
Though it were cast off by night
That I wisht, I dare not say,
To be girdle night and day.

For other parallels see the present Editor's 'Illustrations of Tennyson', p. 39.]

[Footnote 26: 1833.

I wish I were her necklace,
So might I ever fall and rise.]

[Footnote 27: 1833. So warm and light.]

[Footnote 28: 1833. I would not be.]

[Footnote 29: 1833.

For o'er each letter broods and dwells,
(Like light from running waters thrown
On flowery swaths) the blissful flame
Of his sweet eyes, that, day and night,
With pulses thrilling thro' his frame
Do inly tremble, starry bright.]

[Footnote 30: Thus in 1833:--

How I waste language--yet in truth
You must blame love, whose early rage
Made me a rhymster in my youth,
And over-garrulous in age.]

[Footnote 31: 1833. Sing me.]

[Footnote 32: 1833.

When in the breezy limewood-shade.
I found the blue forget-me-not.]

[Footnote 33: In 1833 the following song took the place of the song in the text:--

All yesternight you met me not,
My ladylove, forget me not.
When I am gone, regret me not.
But, here or there, forget me not.
With your arched eyebrow threat me not,
And tremulous eyes, like April skies,
That seem to say, "forget me not,"
I pray you, love, forget me not.

In idle sorrow set me not;
Regret me not; forget me not;
Oh! leave me not: oh, let me not
Wear quite away;--forget me not.
With roguish laughter fret me not.
From dewy eyes, like April skies,
That ever _look_, "forget me not".
Blue as the blue forget-me-not.]

[Footnote 34: These two stanzas were added in 1842.]

[Footnote 35: 1833.

I've half a mind to walk, my love,
To the old mill across the wolds
For look! the sunset from above,]

FATIMA

First printed in 1833.

The 1833 edition has no title but this quotation from Sappho prefixed:--

'Phainetai moi kaenos isos theoisin Emmen anaer'--SAPPHO.

The title was prefixed in 1842; it is a name taken from 'The Arabian Nights' or from the Moallakat. The poem was evidently inspired by Sappho's great ode. 'Cf.' also Fragment I. of Ibycus. In the intensity of the passion it stands alone among Tennyson's poems.

O Love, Love, Love! O withering might!
O sun, that from [1] thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers:
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:
I roll'd among the tender flowers:
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth:
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south. [2]

Last night, when some one spoke his name, [3]
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame.
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame
O Love, O fire! once he drew
With one long kiss, my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew. [4]

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly: from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye:
I 'will' possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

[Footnote 1: 1833. At.]

[Footnote 2: This stanza was added in 1842.]

[Footnote 3: 'Cf.' Byron, 'Occasional Pieces':--

They name thee before me A knell to mine ear, A shudder comes o'er me,
Why wert thou so dear?]

[Footnote 4: 'Cf.' Achilles Tatius, 'Clitophon and Leucippe', bk. i., l:

[Greek: ἡδὲ (psyche) tarachtheisa tps philaemati palletai, ei de mae tois splagchnois in dedemenae aekolouthaesēn an elkaetheisa ano tois philaemasin.]

(Her soul, distracted by the kiss, throbs, and had it not been close bound by the flesh would have followed, drawn upward by the kisses.)]

NONE

First published in 1833, On being republished in 1842 this poem was practically rewritten, the alterations and additions so transforming the poem as to make it almost a new work. I have therefore printed a complete transcript of the edition of 1833, which the reader can compare. The final text is, with the exception of one alteration which will be noticed, precisely that of 1842, so there is no trouble with variants. 'none' is the first of Tennyson's fine classical studies. The poem is modelled partly on the Alexandrian Idyll, such an Idyll for instance as the second Idyll of Theocritus or the 'Megara' or 'Europa' of Moschus, and partly perhaps on the narratives in the 'Metamorphoses' of Ovid, to which the opening bears a typical resemblance. It is possible that the poem may have been suggested by Beattie's 'Judgment of Paris' which tells the same story, and tells it on the same lines on which it is told here, though it is not placed in the mouth of none. Beattie's poem opens with an elaborate description of Ida and of Troy in the distance. Paris, the husband of none, is one afternoon confronted with the three goddesses who are, as in Tennyson's Idyll, elaborately delineated as symbolising what they here symbolise. Each makes her speech and each offers what she has to offer, worldly dominion, wisdom, sensual pleasure. There is, of course, no comparison in point of merit between the two poems, Beattie's being in truth perfectly commonplace. In its symbolic aspect the poem may be compared with the temptations to which Christ is submitted in 'Paradise Regained'. See books iii. and iv.

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier [1]
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus [2]
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 none, wandering forlorn
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
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd [3] Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill: [4]
The grasshopper is silent in the grass;
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone, [5]
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps. [6]
The purple flowers droop: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim, [7]
And I am all awearied of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God, [8]
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, [9]
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.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois [10] all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

"My own none,
Beautiful-brow'd none, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
"For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.' [11]

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

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnight: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire, [12]
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
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'.

"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, slowing dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule

Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore.
Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

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

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek [13]
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power, (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right [14]
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest. Yet indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiass'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, [15]
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will.
Circl'd thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.' "Here she ceased,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida.
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite, beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian [16] wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom [17] her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece'.
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herk's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest--why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet--from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone none 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.

"O mother, here 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, [18] that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

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

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

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me

Walking the cold and starless road of
Death Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. [19] I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, [20] for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

[1833.]

There is a dale in Ida, lovelier
Than any in old Ionia, beautiful
With emerald slopes of sunny sward, that lean
Above the loud glenriver, which hath worn
A path thro' steepdown granite walls below
Mantled with flowering tendriltwine. In front
The cedarshadowy valleys open wide.
Far-seen, high over all the God-built wall
And many a snowycolumned range divine,
Mounted with awful sculptures--men and Gods,
The work of Gods--bright on the dark-blue sky
The windy citadel of Ilion
Shone, like the crown of Troas. Hither came
Mournful none wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate. Round her neck,
Her neck all marblewhite and marblecold,
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a vine-entwined stone,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shadow
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, manyfountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
The grasshopper is silent in the grass,
The lizard with his shadow on the stone
Sleeps like a shadow, and the scarletwinged [21]
Cicala in the noonday leapeth not
Along the water-rounded granite-rock.
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lilycradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, manyfountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crowned snake! O mountain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gathered 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, manyfountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewydark,
And dewydark aloft the mountain pine;
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jetblack goat whitehorned, whitehooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

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

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

" My own none,
Beautifulbrowed none, mine own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
"For the most fair," in aftertime may breed
Deep evilwilledness of heaven and sore
Heartburning toward hallowed Ilion;
And all the colour of my afterlife
Will be the shadow of to-day. To-day
Hera and Pallas and the floating grace
Of laughter-loving Aphrodite meet
In manyfolded Ida to receive
This meed of beauty, she to whom my hand
Award the palm. Within the green hillside,
Under yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Is an ingoing grotto, strown with spar
And ivymatted at the mouth, wherein
Thou un beholden may'st behold, unheard

Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

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

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

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power
'Which in all action is the end of all.
Power fitted to the season, measured by
The height of the general feeling, wisdomborn
And throned of wisdom--from all neighbour crowns
Alliance and allegiance evermore. Such boon from me
Heaven's Queen to thee kingborn,
A shepherd all thy life and yet kingborn,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in this
Only are likest gods, who have attained
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy;
The changeless calm of undisputed right,
The highest height and topmost strength of power.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit

Out at arm's length, so much the thought of power
Flattered his heart: but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and barbed limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold;
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snowcold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Selfreverence, selfknowledge, selfcontrol
Are the three hinges of the gates of Life,
That open into power, everyway
Without horizon, bound or shadow or cloud.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Will come uncalled-for) but to live by law
Acting the law we live by without fear,
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom, in the scorn of consequence.

(Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.)
Not as men value gold because it tricks
And blazons outward Life with ornament,
But rather as the miser, for itself.
Good for selfgood doth half destroy selfgood.
The means and end, like two coiled snakes, infect
Each other, bound in one with hateful love.
So both into the fountain and the stream
A drop of poison falls. Come hearken to me,
And look upon me and consider me,
So shall thou find me fairest, so endurance,
Like to an athlete's arm, shall still become
Sinewed with motion, till thine active will
(As the dark body of the Sun robed round
With his own ever-emanating lights)
Be flooded o'er with her own effluences,
And thereby grow to freedom.' "Here she ceased
And Paris pondered. I cried out, 'Oh, Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

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

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece'.
I only saw my Paris raise his arm:
I only saw great Herk's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone.
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, hearken 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 passed by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouched 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 quickfalling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines--
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, or lower down
Filling greengulph'd Ida, all between
The snowy peak and snowwhite cataract
Fostered the callow eaglet--from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, nevermore
Shall lone none 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.

"Oh! mother Ida, hearken ere 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?
Sealed it with kisses? watered it with tears?
Oh happy tears, and how unlike to these!
Oh happy Heaven, how can'st thou see my face?
Oh happy earth, how can'st thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life.
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.

Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids--let me die.

"Yet, mother Ida, hear me ere I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born. I will not die alone.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill, happy laughter, etc.

(Same as last stanza of subsequent editions.)

[Footnote 1: Tennyson, as we learn from his 'Life' (vol. i., p. 83), began 'none' while he and Arthur Hallam were in Spain, whither they went with money for the insurgent allies of Torrigo in the summer of 1830. He wrote part of it in the valley of Caunteret in the Pyrenees, the picturesque beauty of which fascinated him and not only suggested the scenery of this Idyll, but inspired many years afterwards the poem 'All along the valley'. The exquisite scene with which the Idyll opens bears no resemblance at all to Mount Ida and the Troad.]

[Footnote 2: Gargarus or Gargaron is the highest peak of the Ida range, rising about 4650 feet above the level of the sea.]

[Footnote 3: The epithet many-fountain'd [Greek: 'polpidax'] is Homer's stock epithet for Ida. 'Cf. Iliad', viii., 47; xiv., 283, etc., etc.]

[Footnote 4: A literal translation from a line in Callimachus, 'Lavacrum Palladis', 72:

[Greek: 'mesambrinae d'eich horos haesuchia']
(noonday quiet held the hill).]

[Footnote 5: So Theocritus, 'Idyll', vii., 22:--

[Greek: 'Anika dae kai sauros eph aimasiysi katheudei.']
(When indeed the very lizard is sleeping on the loose stones of the wall.)]

[Footnote 6: This extraordinary mistake in natural history (the cicada being of course loudest in mid noonday when the heat is greatest) Tennyson allowed to stand, till securing accuracy at the heavy price of a pointless pleonasm, he substituted in 1884 "and the winds are dead".]

[Footnote 7: An echo from 'Henry VI.', part ii., act ii., se. iii.:--

Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief.]

[Footnote 8: none was the daughter of the River-God Kebren.]

[Footnote 9: For the myth here referred to see Ovid, 'Heroides', xvi., 179-80:--

Ilion aspicias, firmataque turribus altis Moenia,
Phoeboeae; structa canore lyrae.

It was probably an application of the Theban legend of Amphion, and arose from the association of Apollo with Poseidon in founding Troy.

A fabric huge 'Rose like an exhalation,'

--Milton's 'Paradise Lost', i., 710-11.

'Cf. Gareth and Lynette', 254-7.]

[Footnote 10: The river Simois, so often referred to in the 'Iliad', had its origin in Mount Cotylus, and passing by Ilion joined the Scamander below the city.]

[Footnote 11: 'Cf'. the [Greek: synophrys kora](the maid of the meeting brows) of Theocritus, 'Id'., viii., 72. This was considered a great beauty among the Greeks, Romans and Orientals. Ovid, 'Ars. Amat'., iii., 201, speaks of women effecting this by art: "Arte, supercilii confinia nuda repletis".]

[Footnote 12: The whole of this gorgeous passage is taken, with one or two additions and alterations in the names of the flowers, from 'Iliad', xiv., 347-52, with a reminiscence no doubt of Milton, 'Paradise Lost', iv., 695-702.]

[Footnote 13: The "'angry' cheek" is a fine touch.]

[Footnote 14: This fine sentiment is, of course, a commonplace among ancient philosophers, but it may be interesting to put beside it a passage from Cicero, 'De Finibus', ii., 14, 45:

"Honestum id intelligimus quod tale est ut, detractâomni utilitate, sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit jure laudari".

We are to understand by the truly honourable that which, setting aside all consideration of utility, may be rightly praised in itself, exclusive of any prospect of reward or compensation.]

[Footnote 15: This passage is very obscurely expressed, but the general meaning is clear: "Until endurance grow sinewed with action, and the full-grown will, circled through all experiences grow or become law, be identified with law, and commensure perfect freedom". The true moral ideal is to bring the will into absolute harmony with law, so that virtuous action becomes an instinct, the will no longer rebelling against the law, "service" being in very truth "perfect freedom".]

[Footnote 16: The Paphos referred to is the old Paphos which was sacred to Aphrodite; it was on the south-west extremity of Cyprus.]

[Footnote 17: Adopted from a line excised in 'Mariana in the South'. See 'supra'.]

[Footnote 18: This was Eris.]

[Footnote 19: Helen.]

[Footnote 20: With these verses should be compared Schiller's fine lyric 'Kassandra', and with the line, "All earth and air seem only burning fire," from Webster's 'Duchess of Malfi':--

The heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass,
The earth of flaming sulphur.]

[Footnote 21: In the Pyrenees, where part of this poem was written, I saw a very beautiful species of Cicala, which had scarlet wings spotted with black. Probably nothing of the kind exists in Mount Ida.]

THE SISTERS

First published in 1833.

The only alterations which have been made in it since have simply consisted in the alteration of "'an'" for "and" in the third line of each stanza, and "through and through" for "thro' and thro'" in line 29, and "wrapt" for "wrapped" in line 34. It is curious that in 1842 the original "bad" was altered to "bade," but all subsequent editions keep to the original. It has been said that this poem was founded on the old Scotch ballad "The Twa Sisters" (see for that ballad Sharpe's 'Ballad Book', No. x., p. 30), but there is no resemblance at all between the ballad and this poem beyond the fact that in each there are two sisters who are both loved by a certain squire, the elder in jealousy pushing

the younger into a river and drowning her.

We were two daughters of one race:
She was the fairest in the face:
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
They were together and she fell;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.
The wind is howling in turret and tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,
To win his love I lay in wait:
O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bad him come;
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head:
O the Earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest:
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night:
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.
O the Earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was dead.
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O the Earl was fair to see!

TO-----

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I have not been able to ascertain to whom this dedication was addressed. Sir Franklin Lushington tells me that he thinks it was an imaginary person. The dedication explains the allegory intended. The poem appears to have been suggested, as we learn from 'Tennyson's Life' (vol. i., p. 150), by a remark of Trench to Tennyson when they were undergraduates at Trinity: "We cannot live in art". It was the embodiment Tennyson added of his belief "that the God-like life is with man and for man". 'Cf.' his own lines in 'Love and Duty':--\$

For a man is not as God,
But then most God-like being most a man.

It is a companion poem to the 'Vision of Sin'; in that poem is traced the effect of indulgence in the grosser pleasures of sense, in this the effect of the indulgence in the more refined pleasures of sense.

I send you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul, [1]
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

[Footnote 1: 1833.

I send you, Friend, a sort of allegory,
(You are an artist and will understand
Its many lesser meanings) of a soul.]

THE PALACE OF ART

First published in 1833, but altered so extensively on its republication in 1842 as to be practically rewritten. The alterations in it after 1842

were not numerous, consisting chiefly in the deletion of two stanzas after line 192 and the insertion of the three stanzas which follow in the present text, together with other minor verbal corrections, all of which have been noted. No alterations were made in the text after 1853. The allegory Tennyson explains in the dedicatory verses, but the framework of the poem was evidently suggested by 'Ecclesiastes' ii. 1-17. The position of the hero is precisely that of Solomon. Both began by assuming that man is self-sufficing and the world sufficient; the verdict of the one in consequence being "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," of the other what the poet here records. An admirable commentary on the poem is afforded by Matthew Arnold's picture of the Romans before Christ taught the secret of the only real happiness possible to man. See 'Obermann Once More'. The teaching of the poem has been admirably explained by Spedding. It "represents allegorically the condition of a mind which, in the love of beauty and the triumphant consciousness of knowledge and intellectual supremacy, in the intense enjoyment of its own power and glory, has lost sight of its relation to man and God". See 'Tennyson's Life', vol. i., p. 226.

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,
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass [1]
Suddenly scaled the light.

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

And "while the world [2] runs round and round,"
I said, "Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn [3] whirls, his stedfast [4] shade
Sleeps on his luminous [5] 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"

* * * * *

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. [6]

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods. [6]

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands. [6]

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow. [6]

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. [6]

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?" [6]

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire. [6]

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires. [6]

* * * * *

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom, [7]
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,
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 [8]
And change of my still soul.

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. [9]

One seem'd all dark and red--a tract of sand,

And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon. [10]

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. [11]

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain. [11]

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. [11]

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. [12]

And one, an English home--gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep--all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace. [13]

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,
Not less than truth design'd. [14]

* * * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm. [15]

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.

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. [16]

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens

Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens. [17]

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law. [18]

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama [19] slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's [20] 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. [21]

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 [22] the pillar'd town.

Nor [23] these alone: but every [24] legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind [25]
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, design'd. [26]

* * * *

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
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,
And somewhat grimly smiled. [27]

And there the Ionian father of the rest; [28]
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin. [29]

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift. [29]

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land

So wrought, they will not fail. [29]

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings;
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings; [29]

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,
And trusted any cure. [29]

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. [29]

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colour'd flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know. [29]

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange: [30]

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, [31] drew
Rivers of melodies.

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

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of [32] the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

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--
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
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flatter'd to the height. [33]

"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,
My Gods, with whom I dwell! [34]

"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. [34]

"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." [34]

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,
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,
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all." [35]

* * *

Full oft [36] the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so three years
She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell, [37]
Like Herod, [38] when the shout was in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality, [39]
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight,
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought. [40]

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born

Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn. [41]

"What! is not this my place of strength," she said,
"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
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,

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
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping [42] 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
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
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!"

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

And death and life she hated equally,
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,
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
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;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound
Of rocks [43] 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.
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.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray. [44]

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt." [45]

[Footnote 1: 1833.

I chose, whose ranged ramparts bright
From great broad meadow bases of deep grass.]

[Footnote 2: 1833. "While the great world."]

[Footnote 3: "The shadow of Saturn thrown upon the bright ring that surrounds the planet appears motionless, though the body of the planet revolves. Saturn rotates on its axis in the short period of ten and a half hours, but the shadow of this swiftly whirling mass shows no more motion than is seen in the shadow of a top spinning so rapidly that it seems to be standing still." Rowe and Webb's note, which I gladly borrow.]

[Footnote 4: 1833 and 1842. Steadfast.]

[Footnote 5: After this stanza in 1833 this, deleted in 1842:--

"And richly feast within thy palace hall,

Like to the dainty bird that sups,
Lodged in the lustrous crown-imperial,
Draining the honey cups."]

[Footnote 6: In 1833 these eight stanzas were inserted after the stanza beginning, "I take possession of men's minds and deeds"; in 1842 they were transferred, greatly altered, to their present position. For the alterations on them see 'infra.']

[Footnote 7: 1833.

Gloom,
Roofed with thick plates of green and orange glass
Ending in stately rooms.]

[Footnote 8: 1833.

All various, all beautiful,
Looking all ways, fitted to every mood.]

[Footnote 9: Here in 1833 was inserted the stanza, "One showed an English home," afterwards transferred to its present position 85-88.]

[Footnote 10: 1833.

Some were all dark and red, a glimmering land
Lit with a low round moon,
Among brown rocks a man upon the sand
Went weeping all alone.]

[Footnote 11: These three stanzas were added in 1842.]

[Footnote 12: Thus in 1833:--

One seemed a foreground black with stones and slags,
Below sun-smitten icy spires
Rose striped with long white cloud the scornful crags,
Deep trenched with thunder fires.]

[Footnote 13: Not inserted here in 1833, but the following in its place:--

Some showed far-off thick woods mounted with towers,
Nearer, a flood of mild sunshine
Poured on long walks and lawns and beds and bowers
Trellised with bunchy vine.]

[Footnote 14: Inserted in 1842.]

[Footnote 15: Thus in 1833, followed by the note:--

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

When I first conceived the plan of the Palace of Art, I intended to have introduced both sculptures and paintings into it; but it is the most difficult of all things to 'devise' a statue in verse. Judge whether I have succeeded in the statues of Elijah and Olympias.

One was the Tishbite whom the raven fed,
As when he stood on Carmel steeps,
With one arm stretched out bare, and mocked and said,
"Come cry aloud-he sleeps".

Tall, eager, lean and strong, his cloak wind-borne
Behind, his forehead heavenly bright
From the clear marble pouring glorious scorn,
Lit as with inner light.

One, was Olympias: the floating snake
Rolled round her ancles, round her waist
Knotted, and folded once about her neck,
Her perfect lips to taste.

Round by the shoulder moved: she seeming blythe
Declined her head: on every side
The dragon's curves melted and mingled with
The woman's youthful pride
Of rounded limbs.

Or Venus in a snowy shell alone,
Deep-shadowed in the glassy brine,
Moonlike glowed double on the blue, and shone
A naked shape divine.]

[Footnote 16: Inserted in 1842.]

[Footnote 17: Thus in 1833:--

Or that deep-wounded child of Pendragon
Mid misty woods on sloping greens
Dozed in the valley of Avilion,
Tended by crowned queens.

The present reading is that of 1842. The reference is, of course, to

King Arthur, the supposed son of Uther Pendragon.

In 1833 the following stanza, excised in 1842, followed:--

Or blue-eyed Kriemhilt from a craggy hold,
Athwart the light-green rows of vine,
Poured blazing hoards of Nibelungen gold,
Down to the gulfy Rhine.]

[Footnote 18: Inserted in 1842 thus:--

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To listen for a footfall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Tuscan king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

List a footfall, 1843. Ausonian for Tuscan, 1850. The reference is to
Egeria and Numa Pompilius. 'Cf.' Juvenal, iii., 11-18:--

Hic ubi nocturnæ
Numa constituebat amicæ
...
In vallem ~geriae descendimus et speluneas
Dissimiles veris.

and the beautiful passage in Byron's 'Childe Harold', iv., st.
cxv.-cxix.]

[Footnote 19: This is Camadev or Camadeo, the Cupid or God of Love of the
Hindu mythology.]

[Footnote 20: This picture of Europa seems to have been suggested by
Moschus, 'Idyll', ii., 121-5:--

[Greek: Hae d' ar ephezomenae Zaenos Boeois epi n_otois tae men echen
taurou dolichon keras, en cheri d' allae eirue porphyreas kolpou
ptuchas.]

"Then, seated on the back of the divine bull, with one hand did she
grasp the bull's long horn and with the other she was catching up the
purple folds of her garment, and the robe on her shoulders was swelled
out."

See, too, the beautiful picture of the same scene in Achilles
Tatius, 'Clitophon and Leucippe', lib. i., 'ad init.:' and in Politian's
finely picturesque poem.]

[Footnote 21: In 1833 thus:--

Europa's scarf blew in an arch, unclasped,

From her bare shoulder backward borne.

Off inserted in 1842. Here in 1833 follows a stanza, excised in 1842:--

He thro' the streaming crystal swam, and rolled
Ambrosial breaths that seemed to float
In light-wreathed curls. She from the ripple cold
Updrew her sandalled foot.]

[Footnote 22: 1833. Over.]

[Footnote 23: 1833. Not.]

[Footnote 24: 1833. Many a.]

[Footnote 25: The Caucasian range forms the north-west margin of the great tableland of Western Asia, and as it was the home of those races who afterwards peopled Europe and Western Asia and so became the fathers of civilisation and culture, the "Supreme Caucasian mind" is a historically correct but certainly recondite expression for the intellectual flower of the human race, for the perfection of human ability.]

[Footnote 26: 1833. Broidered in screen and blind.

In the edition of 1833 appear the following stanzas, excised in 1842:--

So that my soul beholding in her pride
All these, from room to room did pass;
And all things that she saw, she multiplied,
A many-faced glass.

And, being both the sower and the seed,
Remaining in herself became
All that she saw, Madonna, Ganymede,
Or the Asiatic dame--

Still changing, as a lighthouse in the night
Changeth athwart the gleaming main,
From red to yellow, yellow to pale white,
Then back to red again.

"From change to change four times within the womb
The brain is moulded," she began,
"So thro' all phases of all thought I come
Into the perfect man.

"All nature widens upward: evermore
The simpler essence lower lies,
More complex is more perfect, owning more
Discourse, more widely wise.

"I take possession of men's minds and deeds.
I live in all things great and small.
I dwell apart, holding no forms of creeds,
But contemplating all."

Four ample courts there were, East, West, South, North,
In each a square lawn where from
A golden-gorged dragon spouted forth
The fountain's diamond foam.

All round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain floods.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Over the black rock streamed below
In steamy folds, that, floating as they fell,
Lit up a torrent bow.

And round the roofs ran gilded galleries
That gave large view to distant lands,
Tall towns and mounds, and close beneath the skies
Long lines of amber sands.

Huge incense-urns along the balustrade,
Hollowed of solid amethyst,
Each with a different odour fuming, made
The air a silver mist.

Far-off 'twas wonderful to look upon
Those sumptuous towers between the gleam
Of that great foam-bow trembling in the sun,
And the argent incense-steam;

And round the terraces and round the walls,
While day sank lower or rose higher,
To see those rails with all their knobs and balls,
Burn like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deepset windows, stained and traced.
Burned, like slow-flaming crimson fires,
From shadowed grotts of arches interlaced,
And topped with frostlike spires.]

[Footnote 27: 1833.

There deep-haired Milton like an angel tall
Stood limned, Shakspeare bland and mild,
Grim Dante pressed his lips, and from the wall
The bald blind Homer smiled.

Recast in its present form in
1842. After this stanza in 1833 appear the following stanzas, excised in
1842:--

And underneath fresh carved in cedar wood,
Somewhat alike in form and face,
The Genii of every climate stood,
All brothers of one race:

Angels who sway the seasons by their art,
And mould all shapes in earth and sea;
And with great effort build the human heart
From earliest infancy.

And in the sun-pierced Oriels' coloured flame
Immortal Michael Angelo
Looked down, bold Luther, large-browed Verulam,
The King of those who know. [A]

Cervantes, the bright face of Calderon,
Robed David touching holy strings,
The Halicarnassean, and alone,
Alfred the flower of kings.

Isaiah with fierce Ezekiel,
Swarth Moses by the Coptic sea,
Plato, Petrarca, Livy, and Raphael,
And eastern Confutzer.

[Sub-Footer A: Il ma^ostro di color chi sanno.--Dante, 'Inf.',
iii.]]

[Footnote 28: Homer. 'Cf.' Pope's 'Temple of Fame', 183-7:--

Father of verse in holy fillets dress'd,
His silver beard wav'd gently o'er his breast,
Though blind a boldness in his looks appears,
In years he seem'd but not impaired by years.]

[Footnote 29: All these stanzas were added in 1842. In 1833 appear the
following stanzas, excised in 1842:--

As some rich tropic mountain, that infolds
All change, from flats of scattered palms
Sloping thro' five great zones of climate, holds
His head in snows and calms--

Full of her own delight and nothing else,
My vain-glorious, gorgeous soul
Sat throned between the shining oriels,

In pomp beyond control;

With piles of flavorful fruits in basket-twine
Of gold, upheaped, crushing down
Musk-scented blooms--all taste--grape, gourd or pine--
In bunch, or single grown--

Our growths, and such as brooding Indian heats
Make out of crimson blossoms deep,
Ambrosial pulps and juices, sweets from sweets
Sun-changed, when sea-winds sleep.

With graceful chalices of curious wine,
Wonders of art--and costly jars,
And bossed salvers. Ere young night divine
Crowned dying day with stars,

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

Ranged on the fretted woodwork to the ground.
Thus her intense untold delight,
In deep or vivid colour, smell and sound,
Was nattered day and night. [A]

[Sub-Footer A: If the poem were not already too long, I should have inserted in the text the following stanzas, expressive of the joy wherewith the soul contemplated the results of astronomical experiment. In the centre of the four quadrangles rose an immense tower.

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

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

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

Is circled by the other, etc.]

And many more, that in their lifetime were
Full-welling fountain heads of change,
Between the stone shafts glimmered, blazoned fair
In divers raiment strange.]

[Footnote 31: The statue of Memnon near Thebes in Egypt when first struck by the rays of the rising sun is said to have become vocal, to have emitted responsive sounds. See for an account of this 'Pausanias', i., 42; Tacitus, 'Annals', ii., 61; and Juvenal, 'Sat.', xv., 5:

"Dimidio magicae resonant ubi Memnone Chordae,"

and compare Akenside's verses,
'Plea. of Imag.', i., 109-113:--

Old Memnon's image, long renown'd
By fabling Nilus: to the quivering touch
Of Titan's ray, with each repulsive string
Consenting, sounded thro' the warbling air
Unbidden strains.]

[Footnote 32: 1833. O'.]

[Footnote 33: Here added in 1842 and remaining till 1851 when they were excised are two stanzas:--

"From shape to shape at first within the womb
The brain is modell'd," she began,
"And thro' all phases of all thought I come
Into the perfect man.

"All nature widens upward. Evermore
The simpler essence lower lies:
More complex is more perfect, owning more
Discourse, more widely wise."]

[Footnote 34: These stanzas were added in 1851.]

[Footnote 35: Added in 1842, with the following variants which remained till 1851, when the present text was substituted:--

"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."]

[Footnote 36: 1833. Sometimes.]

[Footnote 37:

And intellectual throne
Of full-sphered contemplation. So three years
She throve, but on the fourth she fell.

And so the text remained till 1850, when the present
reading was substituted.]

[Footnote 38: For the reference to Herod see
'Acts' xii. 21-23.]

[Footnote 39: Cf. Hallam's 'Remains', p.
132: "That, i.e. Redemption," is in the power of God's election with
whom alone rest 'the abysmal secrets of personality'.]

[Footnote 40:
See 'Daniel' v. 24-27.]

[Footnote 41: In 1833 the following stanza,
excised in 1842:--

"Who hath drawn dry the fountains of delight,
That from my deep heart everywhere
Moved in my blood and dwelt, as power and might
Abode in Sampson's hair?"]

[Footnote 42: 1833. Downward-sloping.]

[Footnote 43: 1833.

Or the sound
Of stones.

So till 1851, when "a sound of rocks" was substituted.]

[Footnote 44: 1833. "Dying the death I die?" Present reading substituted
in 1842.]

[Footnote 45: Because intellectual and aesthetic pleasures are
'abused' and their purpose and scope mistaken, there is no reason
why they should not be enjoyed. See the allegory in 'In Memoriam',
ciii., stanzas 12-13.]

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

Though this is placed among the poems published in 1833 it first appeared in print in 1842. The subsequent alterations were very slight, and after 1848 none at all were made.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown:
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired:
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head.
Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies:
A great enchantress you may be;
But there was that across his throat
Which you hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.

Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall:
The guilt of blood is at your door:
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife [1]
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere:
You pine among your halls and towers:
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If Time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yoeman go.

[Footnote 1: 1842 and 1843. "The gardener Adam and his wife." In 1845 it was altered to the present text.]

THE MAY QUEEN

The first two parts were first published in 1833.

The scenery is typical of Lincolnshire; in Fitzgerald's phrase, it is all Lincolnshire inland, as 'Locksley Hall' is seaboard.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad [1] New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black, black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you [2] do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin [3] leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,--
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother--what is that to me?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the live-long day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

[Footnote 1: 1833. "Blythe" for "glad".]

[Footnote 2: 1883. Ye.]

[Footnote 3: 1842. Robert. This is a curious illustration of Tennyson's scrupulousness about trifles: in 1833 it was "Robin," in 1842 "Robert," then in 1843 and afterwards he returned to "Robin".]

NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on [1] the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow'll come back again with summer o'er the wave.
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early, early morning the summer sun'll shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, [2] my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,

And you'll come [3] sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,[4]
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive [5] me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go; [6]
Nay, nay, you must not weep, [7] nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you [8] have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;
Tho' you'll [9] not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you [10] say,
And be often, often with you when you think [11] I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night for evermore,
And you [12] see me carried out from the threshold of the door;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush that I set
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother: call me before the day is born. [13]
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if your waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

[Footnote 1: 1833. The may upon.]

[Footnote 2: 1833. Ye'll bury me.]

[Footnote 3: 1833. And ye'll come.]

[Footnote 4: 1833. I shall not forget ye, mother, I shall hear ye when
ye pass.]

[Footnote 5: 1833. But ye'll forgive.]

[Footnote 6: 1833. Ye'll kiss me, my own mother, upon my cheek and brow.
1850. And forgive me ere I go.]

[Footnote 7: 1833. Ye must not weep.]

[Footnote 8: 1833. Ye ... ye.]

[Footnote 9: 1833. Ye'll.]

[Footnote 10: 1833. Ye.]

[Footnote 11: 1833. Ye when ye think.]

[Footnote 12: 1833. Ye.]

[Footnote 13: 1833. Call me when it begins to dawn. 1842. Before the day is born.]

CONCLUSION

Added in 1842.

I thought to pass away before, and yet alive I am;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace. [1]

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd [2] me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me--I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, "It's not for them: it's mine".
And if it comes [3] three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort _her_ when I am past away.

And say to Robin [4] a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived--I cannot tell--I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine--
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun--
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true--
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home--
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come--
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast--
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

[Footnote 1: 1842.

But still it can't be long, mother, before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, he preaches words of peace.

Present reading 1843.]

[Footnote 2: 1842-1848.

He show'd me all the mercy, for he taught me all the sin.
Now, though, etc.

1850. For show'd he me all the sin.]

[Footnote 3: 1889. Come.]

[Footnote 4: 1842. Robert. 1843. Robin restored.]

THE LOTOS-EATERS

First published in 1833, but when republished in 1842 the alterations in the way of excision, alteration, and addition were very extensive. The text of 1842 is practically the final text. This charming poem is founded on 'Odyssey', ix., 82 'seq.'

"On the tenth day we set foot on the land of the lotos-eaters who eat a flowery food. So we stepped ashore and drew water... When we had tasted meat and drink I sent forth certain of my company to go and make search what manner of men they were who here live upon the earth by bread... Then straightway they went and mixed with the men of the lotos-eaters, and so it was that the lotos-eaters devised not death for our fellows but gave them of the lotos to taste. Now whosoever of them did eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotos had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotos-eating men ever feeding on the lotos and forgetful of his homeward way. Therefore I led them back to the ships weeping and sore against their will ... lest haply any should eat of the lotos and be forgetful of returning."

(Lang and Butcher's translation.)

But in the details of his poem Tennyson has laid many other poets under contribution, notably Moschus, 'Idyll', v.; Bion, 'Idyll', v.; Spenser, 'Faerie Queen', II. vi. (description of the 'Idle Lake'), and Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence'.

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land,
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon; [1]
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow [2]

From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow, [3]
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
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,
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,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
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".

[Footnote 1: 1883. Above the valley burned the golden moon.]

[Footnote 2: 1883. River's seaward flow.]

[Footnote 3: 1833. Three thunder-cloven thrones of oldest snow.]

CHORIC SONG

1

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 gentler on the spirit lies,

Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

2

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

3

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

4

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. [1]
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone.
Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone.

What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone.
What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave? [2]
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave [3]
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech:
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those [4] old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

6

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle? [5]
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There 'is' confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with [6] many wars
And eyes grow dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.[7]

7

But, propt on beds [8] of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill--
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine--
To watch [9] 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.

8

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak: [9]
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,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething
free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery
sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships and praying
hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer--some, 'tis whisper'd--down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more. [10]

[Footnote 1: 'Cf.' Virgil, AEn., iv., 451:--

~~Tædet cæ~~ convexa tueri.

Paraphrased from Moschus, 'Idyll', v., 11-15.]

[Footnote 2: For climbing up the wave 'cf.' Virgil, 'AEn.', i., 381: "Conscendi navilus æquor," and 'cf.' generally Bion, 'Idyll', v., 11-15.]

[Footnote 3: From Moschus, 'Idyll', v., 'passim'.

[Footnote 4: 1833. The.]

[Footnote 5: The little isle, 'i. e.', Ithaca.]

[Footnote 6: 1863 By.]

[Footnote 7: Added in 1842.]

[Footnote 8: 1833. Or, propt on lavish beds.]

[Footnote 9: 1833 to 1850 inclusive. Hear.]

[Footnote 10: 1833 to 1850 inclusive. Flowery peak.]

[Footnote 11: In 1833 we have the following, which in 1842 was excised and the present text substituted:--

We have had enough of motion,
Weariness and wild alarm,
Tossing on the tossing ocean,
Where the tusked sea-horse walloweth
In a stripe of grass-green calm,
At noontide beneath the lee;
And the monstrous narwhale swalloweth
His foam-fountains in the sea.
Long enough the wine-dark wave our weary bark did carry.
This is lovelier and sweeter,
Men of Ithaca, this is meeter,
In the hollow rosy vale to tarry,
Like a dreamy Lotos-eater, a delirious Lotos-eater!
We will eat the Lotos, sweet
As the yellow honeycomb,
In the valley some, and some
On the ancient heights divine;
And no more roam,
On the loud hoar foam,
To the melancholy home
At the limit of the brine,
The little isle of Ithaca, beneath the day's decline.

We'll lift no more the shattered oar,
 No more unfurl the straining sail;
 With the blissful Lotos-eaters pale
 We will abide in the golden vale
 Of the Lotos-land till the Lotos fail;
 We will not wander more.
 Hark! how sweet the horned ewes bleat
 On the solitary steeps,
 And the merry lizard leaps,
 And the foam-white waters pour;
 And the dark pine weeps,
 And the lithe vine creeps,
 And the heavy melon sleeps
 On the level of the shore:
 Oh! islanders of Ithaca, we will not wander more,
 Surely, surely slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
 Than labour in the ocean, and rowing with the oar,
 Oh! islanders of Ithaca, we will return no more.

The fine picture in the text of the gods of Epicurus was no doubt immediately suggested by 'Lucretius', iii., 15 'seq.', while the 'Icaromenippus' of Lucian furnishes an excellent commentary on Tennyson's picture of those gods and what they see. 'Cf.' too the Song of the Parcae in Goethe's 'Iphigenie auf Tauris', iv., 5.]

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

First published in 1833 but very extensively altered on its republication in 1842. It had been written by June, 1832, and appears to have been originally entitled 'Legend of Fair Women' (see Spedding's letter dated 21st June, 1832, 'Life', i., 116). In nearly every edition between 1833 and 1853 it was revised, and perhaps no poem proves more strikingly the scrupulous care which Tennyson took to improve what he thought susceptible of improvement. The work which inspired it, Chaucer's 'Legend of Good Women', was written about 1384, thus "preluding" by nearly two hundred years the "spacious times of great Elizabeth". There is no resemblance between the poems beyond the fact that both are visions and both have as their heroines illustrious women who have been unfortunate. Cleopatra is the only one common to the two poems. Tennyson's is an exquisite work of art--the transition from the anarchy of dreams to the dreamland landscape and to the sharply denned figures--the skill with which the heroines (what could be more perfect than Cleopatra and Jephtha's daughter?) are chosen and contrasted--the wonderful way in which the Iphigenia of Euripides and Lucretius and the Cleopatra of Shakespeare are realised are alike admirable. The poem opened in 1833 with the following strangely irrelevant verses, excised in 1842, which as Fitzgerald observed "make a perfect poem by themselves without affecting the 'dream'":-

As when a man, that sails in a balloon,
Downlooking sees the solid shining ground
Stream from beneath him in the broad blue noon,
Tilth, hamlet, mead and mound:

And takes his flags and waves them to the mob,
That shout below, all faces turned to where
Glow ruby-like the far up crimson globe,
Filled with a finer air:

So lifted high, the Poet at his will
Lets the great world flit from him, seeing all,
Higher thro' secret splendours mounting still,
Self-poised, nor fears to fall.

Hearing apart the echoes of his fame.
While I spoke thus, the seedsman, memory,
Sowed my deepfurrowed thought with many a name,
Whose glory will not die.

I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
"The Legend of Good Women," long ago
Sung by the morning star [1] of song, who made
His music heard below;

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

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears.
In every land I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death. [2]

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

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs:
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries;
And forms that pass'd [3] at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall; [4]
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down,
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in coolest dew,
The maiden splendours of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast [5] blue.

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

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre

Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest.
Growths of jasmine turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree, [6]
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
The red anemone.

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

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

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime
"Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time".

At length I saw a lady [7] within call,
Stillier than chisell'd marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall, [8]
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech: she turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty: ask thou not my name:
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died.
Where'er I came I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady [9]: in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died," [10]
I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd
To one [11] that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws;
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse:
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place, [12]
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears: [13]
My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore;
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat;
Touch'd; and I knew no more." [14]

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam, [15]
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,
That I may look on thee".

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks [16] and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
"I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd
All moods. Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humour ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

"Nay--yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Caesar. Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony? [17]

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck: we sat as God by God:
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod. [18]

"We drank the Libyan [19] Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which outburn'd Canopus. O my life In Egypt!
O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife, [20]

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms, [21]
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mail'd Bacchus leapt into my arms,

Contented there to die!

"And there he died: and when I heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life, I would not brook my fear [22]
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd his fame.
What else was left? look here!"

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found [23]
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever!--lying robed and crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck [24] by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird,
That claps his wings at dawn.

"The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine:
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor,

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied

To where he stands,--so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite, [25]
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: "Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath". She render'd answer high:
"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

"My God, my land, my father--these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

"And I went mourning, 'No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers'--emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

"Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower

"The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den; [26]
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

"Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

"When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

"It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

"Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer [27]
On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me where I stood:
"Glory to God," she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me: "Turn and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do haunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: "O, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
The dagger thro' her side".

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc, [28]
A light of ancient France;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath, [29]
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike

Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be express
By sighs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd [30] with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

[Footnote 1: Suggested apparently by Denham, 'Verses on Cowley's
Death':--

Old Chaucer, like the morning star
To us discovers
Day from far.]

[Footnote 2: Here follow in 1833 two stanzas excised in 1842:--

In every land I thought that, more or less,
The stronger sterner nature overbore
The softer, uncontrolled by gentleness
And selfish evermore:

And whether there were any means whereby,
In some far aftertime, the gentler mind
Might reassume its just and full degree
Of rule among mankind.]

[Footnote 3: 1833. Screamed.]

[Footnote 4: The Latin 'testudo' formed of the shields of soldiers
held over their heads.]

[Footnote 5: 1883 to 1848 inclusive. Stedfast.]

[Footnote 6: 1833.

Clasping jasmine turned
Its twined arms festooning tree to tree.

Altered to present reading, 1842.]

[Footnote 7: A lady, i.e., Helen.]

[Footnote 8: Tennyson has here noticed what is so often emphasised by Greek writers, that tallness was a great beauty in women. See Aristotle, 'Ethics', iv., 3, and Homer, 'passim, Odyssey', viii., 416; xviii., 190 and 248; xxi., 6. So Xenophon in describing Panthea emphasises her tallness, 'Cyroped.', v.]

[Footnote 9: 1883. Sovran lady.]

[Footnote 10: As the old men say, 'Iliad', iii., 156-8.]

[Footnote 11: The one is Iphigenia.]

[Footnote 12: Aulis.]

[Footnote 13: It was not till 1884 that this line was altered to the reading of the final edition, 'i.e.', "Which men called Aulis in those iron years". For the "iron years" of that reading 'cf.' Thomson, 'Spring', 384, "'iron' times".]

[Footnote 14: From 1833 till 1853 this stanza ran:--

"The tall masts quivered as they lay afloat,
The temples and the people and the shore,
One drew a sharp knife thro' my tender throat
Slowly,--and nothing more".

It is curious that Tennyson should have allowed the last line to stand so long; possibly it may have been to defy Lockhart's sarcastic commentary: "What touching simplicity, what pathetic resignation--he cut my throat, nothing more!" With Tennyson's picture should be compared Æschylus, 'Agamem.', 225-49, and Lucretius, i., 85-100. For the bold and picturesque substitution of the effect for the cause in the "bright death quiver'd" 'cf.' Sophocles, 'Electra', 1395,

[Greek: 'neakonaeton aima cheiroin ech_on,']

"with the newly-whetted blood on his hands". So "vulnus" is frequently used by Virgil, and 'cf.' Silius Italicus, 'Punica', ix., 368-9:--

Per pectora 'saxas'
Exceptat 'mortes'.]

[Footnote 15: She expresses the same wish in 'Iliad', iii., 73-4.]

[Footnote 16: Cleopatra. The skill with which Tennyson has here given us, in quintessence as it were, Shakespeare's superb creation needs no commentary, but it is somewhat surprising to find an accurate scholar like Tennyson guilty of the absurdity of representing Cleopatra as of gipsy complexion. The daughter of Ptolemy Aulates and a lady of Pontus,

she was of Greek descent, and had no taint at all of African intermixtures. See Peacock's remarks in 'Gryll Grange', p. 206, 7th edit., 1861.]

[Footnote 17: After this in 1833 and in 1842 are the following stanzas, afterwards excised:--

"By him great Pompey dwarfs and suffers pain,
A mortal man before immortal Mars;
The glories of great Julius lapse and wane,
And shrink from suns to stars.

"That man of all the men I ever knew
Most touched my fancy.
O! what days and nights
We had in Egypt, ever reaping new
Harvest of ripe delights.

"Realm-draining revels! Life was one long feast,
What wit! what words! what sweet words, only made
Less sweet by the kiss that broke 'em, liking best
To be so richly stayed!

"What dainty strifes, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my gallant Antony,
My mailed captain leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die!

"And in those arms he died: I heard my name
Sighed forth with life: then I shook off all fear:
Oh, what a little snake stole Caesar's fame!
What else was left? look here!"

"With that she tore her robe apart," etc.]

[Footnote 18: This stanza was added in 1843.]

[Footnote 19: 1845-1848. Lybian.]

[Footnote 20: Added in 1845 as a substitute for

"What nights we had in Egypt! I could hit
His humours while I crossed them:
O the life I led him, and the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

which is the reading of 1843. Canopus is a star in Argo, not visible in the West, but a conspicuous feature in the sky when seen from Egypt, as Pliny notices, 'Hist. Nat.', vi., xxiv. "Fatentes Canopum noctibus sidus ingens et clarum". 'Cf.' Manilius, 'Astron.', i., 216-17, "Nusquam invenies fulgere Canopum donec Niliacas per pontum veneris oras," and Lucan, 'Pharsal.', viii., 181-3.]

[Footnote 21: Substituted in 1843 for the reading of 1833 and 1842.]

[Footnote 22: Substituted in 1845 for the reading of 1833, 1842, 1843, which ran as recorded 'supra'. 1845 to 1848. Lybian. And for the reading of 1843

Sigh'd forth with life I had no further fear,
O what a little worm stole Caesar's fame!]

[Footnote 23: A splendid transfusion of Horace's lines about her, Ode I., xxxvii.

Invidens Privata deduci superto
Non humilis mulier triumpho.]

[Footnote 24: 1833 and 1842. Touched.]

[Footnote 25: For the story of Jephtha's daughter see Judges, chap. xi.]

[Footnote 26: All editions up to and including 1851. In his den.]

[Footnote 27: For reference see Judges xi, 33.]

[Footnote 28: 1833.

Ere I saw her, that in her latest trance
Clasped her dead father's heart, or Joan of Arc.

The reference is, of course, to the well-known story of Margaret Roper, the daughter of Sir Thomas More, who is said to have taken his head when he was executed and preserved it till her death.]

[Footnote 29: Eleanor, the wife of Edward I., is said to have thus saved his life when he was stabbed at Acre with a poisoned dagger.]

[Footnote 30: The earliest and latest editions, 'i.e.', 1833 and 1853, have "tho'," and all the editions between "though". "Though culled," etc.]

MARGARET

First printed in 1833.

Another of Tennyson's delicious fancy portraits, the twin sister to Adeline.

1

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you have won
A tearful grace, as tho' [1] you stood
Between the rainbow and the sun.
The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent cheek,
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight
Of dainty sorrow without sound,
Like the tender amber round,
Which the moon about her spreadeth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

2

You love, remaining peacefully,
To hear the murmur of the strife,
But enter not the toil of life.
Your spirit is the calmed sea,
Laid by the tumult of the fight.
You are the evening star, alway
Remaining betwixt dark and bright:
Lull'd echoes of laborious day
Come to you, gleams of mellow light
Float by you on the verge of night.

3

What can it matter, Margaret,
What songs below the waning stars
The lion-heart, Plantagenet, [2]
Sang looking thro' his prison bars?
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet, [3]
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true heart,
Even in her sight he loved so well?

4

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,
And less aerially blue,
But ever trembling thro' the dew [4]
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

5

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me speak:
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek:
The sun is just about to set.
The arching lines are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,
Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit between
Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn
Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves. [5]

[Footnote 1: All editions except 1833 and 1853. Though.]

[Footnote 2: 1833. Lion-souled Plantagenet. For songs supposed to have been composed by Richard I. during the time of his captivity see Sismondi, 'Littérature du Midi de l'Europe', vol. i., p. 149, and 'La Tour Tønðbreuse' (1705), which contains a poem said to have been written by Richard and Blondel in mixed Romance and Provençal, and a love-song in Norman French, which have frequently been reprinted. See, too, Barney's 'Hist. of Music', vol. ii., p. 238, and Walpole's 'Royal and Noble Authors', sub.-tit. "Richard I.," and the fourth volume of Reynouard's 'Choix des Poésies des Troubadours'. All these poems are probably spurious.]

[Footnote 3: Chatelet was a poet-squire in the suite of the Marshal Damville, who was executed for a supposed intrigue with Mary Queen of Scots. See Tytler, 'History of Scotland', vi., p. 319, and Mr. Swinburne's tragedy.]

[Footnote 4: 1833.

And more aerially blue,
And ever trembling thro' the dew.]

[Footnote 5: 1833. Jasmin-leaves.]

THE BLACKBIRD.

Not in 1833.

This is another poem placed among the poems of 1833, but not printed till 1842.

O blackbird! sing me something well:
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring, [1]
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting. [2]

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry:
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares, [3]
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, [4] or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

[Footnote 1: 1842. Yet, though I spared thee kith and kin. And so till 1853, when it was altered to the present reading.]

[Footnote 2: 1842 to 1851. Jennetin, altered in 1853 to present reading.]

[Footnote 3: 1842. I better brook the drawling stares. Altered, 1843.]

[Footnote 4: 1842. Not hearing thee at all. Altered, 1843.]

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

First printed in 1833.

Only one alteration has been made in this poem, in line 41, where in 1842 "one' was altered to" twelve ".

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing:
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he doth not move:
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true, true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste

His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps: the light burns low:
'Tis nearly twelve [1] o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

[Footnote 1: 1833. One.]

TO J. S.

First published in 1833.

This beautiful poem was addressed to James Spedding on the death of his brother Edward.

The wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold, [1]
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow [2]
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost:
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass; [3]
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile--nor speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother: his mute dust
I honour and his living worth:
A man more pure and bold [4] and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I:
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain, [5]
I will not even preach to you,
"Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain".

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done--to weep or not to weep.

I will not say "God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind";
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun, [6]
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters [7] as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How _should_ I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be
That only [8] silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease;
Although myself could almost take [9]
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

[Footnote 1: Possibly suggested by Tasso, 'Gerus.', lib. xx., st.
lviii.--

Qual vento a cui s'oppono o selva o colle
Doppia nella contesa i soffi e l' ira;
Ma con fiato piu placido e piu molle
Per le compagne libere poi spira.]

[Footnote 2: 1833.

My heart this knowledge bolder made,
Or else it had not dared to flow.

Altered in 1842.]

[Footnote 3: Tennyson's father died in March, 1831.]

[Footnote 4: 1833. Mild.]

[Footnote 5: 'Cf.' Gray's Alcaic stanza on West's death:--

O lacrymarum fons tenero sacros
'Ducentium ortus ex animo'.]

[Footnote 6: 1833. Sunken sun. Altered to present reading, 1842. The image may have been suggested by Henry Vaughan, 'Beyond the Veil':--

Their very memory is fair and bright,
...
It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast Like stars
...
Or those faint beams in which the hill is drest
After the sun's remove.]

[Footnote 7: 1833, 1842, 1843. My tablets. This affected phrase was altered to the present reading in 1845.]

[Footnote 8: 1833. Holy. Altered to "only," 1842.]

[Footnote 9: 1833. Altho' to calm you I would take. Altered to present reading, 1842.]

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

This is another poem which, though included among those belonging to 1833, was not published till 1842. It is an interesting illustration, like the next poem but one, of Tennyson's political opinions; he was, he said, "of the same politics as Shakespeare, Bacon and every sane man". He was either ignorant of the politics of Shakespeare and Bacon or did himself great injustice by the remark. It would have been more true to say--for all his works illustrate it--that he was of the same politics as Burke. He is here, and in all his poems, a Liberal-Conservative in the proper sense of the term. At the time this trio of poems was written England was passing through the throes which preceded, accompanied and followed the Reform Bill, and the lessons which Tennyson preaches in them were particularly appropriate. He belonged to the Liberal Party rather in relation to social and religious than to political questions. Thus he ardently supported the Anti-slavery Convention and advocated the measure for abolishing subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, but he was, as a politician, on the side of Canning, Peel and the Duke of Wellington, regarding as they did the new-born democracy with mingled feelings of apprehension and perplexity. His exact attitude is indicated by some verses written about this time published by his son ('Life', i., 69-70). If Mr. Aubrey de Vere is correct this and the following poem were occasioned by some popular demonstrations connected with the Reform Bill and its rejection by the House of Lords. See 'Life of Tennyson', vol. i., appendix.

You ask me, why, tho' [1] ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist, [2]
And languish for the purple seas?

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

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent:

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

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

Tho' Power should make from land to land [3]
The name of Britain trebly great--
Tho' every channel [4] of the State
Should almost choke with golden sand--

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

[Footnote 1: 1842 and 1851. Though.]

[Footnote 2: 1842 to 1843. Whose spirits fail within the mist. Altered to present reading in 1845.]

[Footnote 3: All editions up to and including 1851. Though Power, etc.]

[Footnote 4: 1842-1850. Though every channel.]

"OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS..."

First published in 1842, but it seems to have been written in 1834. The fourth and fifth stanzas are given in a postscript of a letter from Tennyson to James Spedding, dated 1834.

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

There in her place [1] she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face--

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks, [2]
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

[Footnote 1: 1842 to 1850 inclusive. Within her place. Altered to present reading, 1850.]

[Footnote 2: The "trifulci ignes" or "trifulca tela" of the Roman poets.]

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

First published in 1842.

This poem had been written by 1834, for Tennyson sends it in a letter dated that year to James Spedding (see 'Life', i., 173).

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' [1] sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge [2] circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth [3] of minds.

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

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

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

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

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.

We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

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

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

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

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

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

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole,
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head;
To shame the boast so often made, [4]
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh, yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war--[5]

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

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

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay, [6]
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away--

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

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

[Footnote 1: 1842 and so till 1851. Though.]

[Footnote 2: 1842. Knowledge is spelt with a capital K.]

[Footnote 3: 1842. Or growth.]

[Footnote 4: 1842. The boasting words we said.]

[Footnote 5: Possibly suggested by Homer's expression, [Greek: ana ptolemaio gepuras], 'Il'., viii., 549, and elsewhere; but Homer's and Tennyson's meaning can hardly be the same. In Homer the "bridges of war" seem to mean the spaces between the lines of tents in a bivouac: in Tennyson the meaning is probably the obvious one.]

[Footnote 6: All up to and including 1851. Not less, though dogs of Faction bay.]

THE GOOSE

This was first published in 1842. No alteration has since been made in it.

This poem, which was written at the time of the Reform Bill agitation, is a political allegory showing how illusory were the supposed advantages held out by the Radicals to the poor and labouring classes. The old woman typifies these classes, the stranger the Radicals, the goose the Radical programme, Free Trade and the like, the eggs such advantages as the proposed Radical measures might for a time seem to confer, the clattering goose, the storm and whirlwind the heavy price which would have to be paid for them in the social anarchy resulting from triumphant Radicalism. The allegory may be narrowed to the Free Trade question.

I knew an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason,
"Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,
It is a stormy season".

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose--'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbours;
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder:
But, ah! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"
Then wax'd her anger stronger:
"Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer".

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning;

"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning".

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder;

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!"

THE EPIC

First published in 1842; "tho" for "though" in line 44 has been the only alteration made since 1850.

This Prologue was written, like the Epilogue, after "The Epic" had been composed, being added, Fitzgerald says, to anticipate or excuse "the faint Homeric echoes," to give a reason for telling an old-world tale. The poet "mouthing out his hollow oes and aes" is, we are told, a good description of Tennyson's tone and manner of reading.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,--
The game of forfeits done--the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away--
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners, [1]
Now hawking at Geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, "at home was little left,

And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
 To hold by". Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
 On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him".
 "And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."
 "Why, yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way
 At college: but another which you had,
 I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
 What came of that?" "You know," said Frank, "he burnt
 His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books "--[2]
 And then to me demanding why? "Oh, sir,
 He thought that nothing new was said, or else
 Something so said 'twas nothing--that a truth
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
 God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
 It pleased _me_ well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,
 "Why take the style of those heroic times?
 For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
 Nor we those times; and why should any man
 Remodel models? these twelve books of mine [3]
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt."
 "But I," Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this hearth,
 And have it: keep a thing its use will come.
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."
 He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy, like a horse
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame
 When we were Freshmen: then at my request
 He brought it; and the poet little urged,
 But with some prelude of disparagement,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

[Footnote 1: A burning topic with the clergy in and about 1833.]

[Footnote 2: 1842 to 1844. "You know," said Frank, "he flung His epic
 of King Arthur in the fire!" The present reading, 1850.]

[Footnote 3: 1842, 1843.

Remodel models rather than the life?
 And these twelve books of mine (to speak the truth).

Present reading, 1845.]

MORTE D'ARTHUR

This is Tennyson's first study from Malory's 'Morte d'Arthur'. We learn
 from Fitzgerald that it was written as early as the spring of 1835, for

in that year Tennyson read it to Fitzgerald and Spedding, "out of a MS. in a little red book," and again we learn that he repeated some lines of it at the end of May, 1835, one calm day on Windermere, adding "Not bad that, Fitz., is it?" ('Life', i., 184). It is here represented as the eleventh book of an Epic, the rest of which had been destroyed, though Tennyson afterwards incorporated it, adding introductory lines, with what was virtually to prove an Epic in twelve books, 'The Idylls of the King'. The substance of the poem is drawn from the third, fourth and fifth chapters of the twenty-first book of Malory's 'Romance', which is followed very closely. It is called "an Homeric echo," but the diction bears a much closer resemblance to that of Virgil than to that of Homer, though the rhythm is perhaps more Homeric than Virgilian. It is Tennyson's masterpiece in "the grand style," and is indeed as near perfection as any work of this kind could be. In spite of its singular mixture of simplicity, purely Homeric, and artificiality, at times ultra-Virgilian, the incongruity never shocks, so noble and impressive is the general effect. The text of 1842 was never subsequently altered except in the spelling of "mere" and "though" in lines 37, 77, 147, 155, 162, 272, and in the insertion in 1853 of the line:--

"Across the ridge and pac'd beside the mere."

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 fall'n in Lyonness about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field, [1]
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep--the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,--
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more--but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand [2] Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword--and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou se^ost, and lightly bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks, [3]
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, [4]
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, [5]
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 f^oalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again [6]
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere, [7]
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule,
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, [8]
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king, [9]
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran, [10]
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh;'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear [11]
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he hath rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.
But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear"
Quick, quick! I fear it is too late, and I shall die ".
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels--
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge, [12]
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream--by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold--and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls--
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the däs-throne--were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere, [13]
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless.
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways, [14]

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains [15] about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou se^ost--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, [16] or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea, [17]
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn.
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we
Sat rapt: It was the tone with which he read--
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness--
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
"There now--that's nothing!" drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue;
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores.
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore,

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
"Arthur is come again: he cannot die".
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated--"Come again, and thrice as fair";
And, further inland, voices echoed--
"Come With all good things, and war shall be no more".
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

[Footnote 1: 'Cf. Morte d'Arthur', xxxi., iv.: "They led him betwixt them to a little chapel from the not far seaside".]

[Footnote 2: 'Cf. Id.', v.:

"'Therefore,' said Arthur, 'take thou my good sword Excalibur and go with it to yonder waterside. And when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword on that water and come again and tell me what thou there seest.'

'My lord,' said Bedivere, 'your commandment shall be done and lightly will I bring thee word again.'

So Sir Bedivere departed and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, 'If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come to good but harm and loss'. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree."]

[Footnote 3: 1842-1853. Studs.]

[Footnote 4: Literally from Virgil ('n.', iv., 285).

"Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc."]

[Footnote 5: 'Cf. Romance, Id.', v.:

"'I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan.'"]

[Footnote 6: 'Romance, Id.', v.:

"'That is untruly said of thee,' said the king, 'therefore go thou lightly again and do my command as thou to me art lief and dear; spare not, but throw in.'

Then Sir Bedivere returned again and took the sword in his hand, and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft he hid the sword and returned again, and told the king that he had

been to the water and done his commandment."]

[Footnote 7: This line was not inserted till 1853.]

[Footnote 8: 'Romance, Id.', v.:

"'Ah, traitor untrue!' said King Arthur, 'now thou hast betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that thou that hast been so lief and dear, and thou that art named a noble knight, would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly.... And but if thou do not now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee I shall slay thee with mine own hands.'"]

[Footnote 9: There is a curious illustration of this in an anecdote told of Queen Elizabeth. "Cecil intimated that she must go to bed, if it were only to satisfy her people.

'Must!' she exclaimed; 'is must a word to be addressed to princes? Little man, little man, thy father if he had been alive durst not have used that word, but thou hast grown presumptuous because thou knowest that I shall die.'"]

Lingard, 'Hist'., vol. vi., p. 316.]

[Footnote 10: 'Romance, Id.', v.:

"Then Sir Bedivere departed and went to the sword and lightly took it up and went to the waterside, and then he bound the girdle about the hilt and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and then came an arm and a hand above the water, and met it and caught it and so shook it thrice and brandished it, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water."]

[Footnote 11: 'Romance, Id.', v.:

"'Alas,' said the king, 'help me hence for I dread me I have tarried over long'.

Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back and so went with him to that water."]

[Footnote 12: 'Romance, Id.', v.:

"And when they were at the waterside even fast by the bank hove a little barge and many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen and all they had black hoods and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. 'Now put me into the barge,' said the king, and so they did softly. And there received him three queens with great

mourning, and so they set him down and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head; and then that queen said: 'Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me?'"

[Footnote 13: 'Romance, Id'., v.:

"Then Sir Bedivere cried: 'Ah, my Lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies?'

'Comfort thyself,' said the king, 'and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust to trust in. For I will unto the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou never hear more of me, pray for my soul.'"]

[Footnote 14: With this 'cf>/i>. Greene, 'James IV'., v., 4:--

"Should all things still remain in one estate
Should not in greatest arts some scars be found
Were all upright nor chang'd what world were this?
A chaos made of quiet, yet no world."

And 'cf'. Shakespeare, 'Coriolanus', ii., iii.:--

What custom wills in all things should we do it,
The dust on antique Time would be unswept,
And mountainous error too highly heaped
For Truth to overpeer.]

[Footnote 15: 'Cf.' Archdeacon Hare's "Sermon on the Law of Self-Sacrifice".

"This is the golden chain of love whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator."

For further illustrations see 'Illust. of Tennyson', p. 158.]

[Footnote 16: Paraphrased from 'Odyssey', vi., 42-5, or 'Lucretius', iii., 18-22.]

[Footnote 17: The expression "'crowned' with summer 'sea'" from 'Odyssey', x., 195: [Greek: naeson taen peri pontos apeiritos estaphan_otai.]]

First published in 1842.

In the 'Gardener's Daughter' we have the first of that delightful series of poems dealing with scenes and characters from ordinary English life, and named appropriately 'English Idylls'. The originator of this species of poetry in England was Southey, in his 'English Eclogues', written before 1799. In the preface to these eclogues, which are in blank verse, Southey says: "The following eclogues, I believe, bear no resemblance to any poems in our language. This species of composition has become popular in Germany, and I was induced to attempt it by an account of the German idylls given me in conversation." Southey's eclogues are eight in number: 'The Old Mansion House', 'The Grandmother's Tale', 'Hannah', 'The Sailor's Mother', 'The Witch', 'The Ruined Cottage', 'The Last of the Family' and 'The Alderman's Funeral'. Southey was followed by Wordsworth in 'The Brothers' and 'Michael'. Southey has nothing of the charm, grace and classical finish of his disciple, but how nearly Tennyson follows him, as copy and model, may be seen by anyone who compares Tennyson's studies with 'The Ruined Cottage'. But Tennyson's real master was Theocritus, whose influence pervades these poems not so much directly in definite imitation as indirectly in colour and tone.

'The Gardener's Daughter' was written as early as 1835, as it was read to Fitzgerald in that year ('Life of Tennyson', i., 182). Tennyson originally intended to insert a prologue to be entitled 'The Antechamber', which contained an elaborate picture of himself, but he afterwards suppressed it. It is given in the 'Life', i., 233-4. This poem stands alone among the Idylls in being somewhat overloaded with ornament. The text of 1842 remained unaltered through all the subsequent editions except in line 235. After 1851 the form "tho" is substituted for "though".

This morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.
My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little;--Juliet, she [1]
So light of foot, so light of spirit--oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,

And said to me, she sitting with us then,
"When will _you_ paint like this?" and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest),
"'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March."
And Juliet answer'd laughing, "Go and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece ".
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.
Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings. [2]
In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen: not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.
And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them sweeter than the dream
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.
And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud [3]
Drew downward: but all else of heaven was pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now,
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these),
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap [4] whistled; [5] and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.
And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,
"Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing
Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they sing?
And would they praise the heavens for what they have?"
And I made answer, "Were there nothing else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise".
Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,
And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.
"Eustace," I said, "This wonder keeps the house."
He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.
For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft--

Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape--
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist--
Ah, happy shade--and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.
So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a Rose
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd
Into the world without; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her: "Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips
Less exquisite than thine." She look'd: but all
Suffused with blushes--neither self-possess'd
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet--paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound
Her looser hair in braid, and stir'd her lips
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks. I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.
So home we went, and all the livelong way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
"Now," said he, "will you climb the top of Art;
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you,--the Master,
Love, A more ideal Artist he than all."

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving--such a noise of life
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such

A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchmen peal
The sliding season: all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odours on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me: sometimes a
Dutch love For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city-rooms; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more
A word could bring the colour to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased. The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd:
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known, [6]
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep "I will,"
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, [7] till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.
There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows: from them clash'd
The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd;
We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there. [8]
Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,

The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering [9] "I am thine".
Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfilled itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, "Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those, who setting wide the doors, that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart.
Let in the day". Here, then, my words have end.
Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells--
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale--in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her [10] sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of vows,
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.
But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veil'd picture--veil'd, for what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul;
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time
Is come to raise the veil. Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

[Footnote 1: 'Cf. Romeo and Juliet', ii., vi.:-]

O so light a foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.]

[Footnote 2: 'Cf.' Keats, 'Ode to Nightingale':--

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.]

[Footnote 3: 'Cf.' Theocritus, 'Id'., vii., 143:--

[Greek: pant' _osden thereos mala pionos.]]

[Footnote 4: Provincial name for the goldfinch. See Tennyson's letter to the Duke of Argyll, 'Life', ii., 221.]

[Footnote 5: This passage is imitated from Theocritus, vii., 143 'seqq'.]

[Footnote 6: This passage originally ran:--\$

Her beauty grew till drawn in narrowing arcs
The southing autumn touch'd with sallower gleams
The granges on the fallows. At that time,
Tir'd of the noisy town I wander'd there.
The bell toll'd four, and by the time I reach'd
The wicket-gate I found her by herself.

But Fitzgerald pointing out that the autumn landscape was taken from the background of Titian (Lord Ellesmere's 'Ages of Man') Tennyson struck out the passage. If this was the reason he must have been in an unusually scrupulous mood. See his 'Life', i., 232.]

[Footnote 7: So Massinger, 'City Madam', iii., 3:--

I am sublim'd.
Gross earth
Supports me not.
'I walk on air'.]

[Footnote 8: Cf. Dante, 'Inferno', v., 81-83:--

Quali columbe dal desio chiamatŁ,
Con l' ali aperte e ferme, al dolce nido Volan.]

[Footnote 9: 1842-1850. Lising.]

[Footnote 10: In privately printed volume 1842. His.]

DORA

First published in 1842.

This poem had been written as early as 1835, when it was read to Fitzgerald and Spedding ('Life', i., 182). No alterations were made in the text after 1853. The story in this poem was taken even to the minutest details from a prose story of Miss Mitford's, namely, 'The Tale of Dora Creswell' ('Our Village', vol. in., 242-53), the only alterations being in the names, Farmer Creswell, Dora Creswell, Walter Creswell, and Mary Hay becoming respectively Allan, Dora, William, and Mary Morrison. How carefully the poet has preserved the picturesque touches of the original may be seen by comparing the following two passages:--

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

...

She rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat.

"A beautiful child lay on the ground at some distance, whilst a young girl, resting from the labour of reaping, was twisting a rustic wreath of enamelled cornflowers, brilliant poppies ... round its hat."

The style is evidently modelled closely on that of the 'Odyssey'.

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought "I'll make them man and wife".
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd towards William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora. Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said,
"My son: I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years." But William answer'd short;
"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,

I will not marry Dora". Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again."
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. [1] The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing,
Allan call'd His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
"It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father helped him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
"I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest, let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."
And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer passed into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, "This is William's child?"
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
"Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"
And Allan said: "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well--for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."
So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more".
Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now, I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back;
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child until he grows

Of age to help us." So the women kiss'd
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
 The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw
 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
 And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
 Like one that loved him; and the lad stretch'd out
 And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
 Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
 His mother, he cried out to come to her:
 And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
 "O Father!--if you let me call you so--
 I never came a-begging for myself,
 Or William, or this child; but now I come
 For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
 O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
 With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
 He could not ever rue his marrying me--
 I have been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
 That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
 'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
 The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he turn'd
 His face and pass'd--unhappy that I am!
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
 His father's memory; and take Dora back,
 And let all this be as it was before."
 So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs:
 "I have been to blame--to blame. I have kill'd my son.
 I have kill'd him--but I loved him--my dear son.
 May God forgive me!--I have been to blame.
 Kiss me, my children." Then they clung about
 The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
 And all the man was broken with remorse;
 And all his love came back a hundredfold;
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,
 Thinking of William. So those four abode
 Within one house together; and as years
 Went forward, Mary took another mate;
 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

[Footnote 1: In 1842 thus:--

"Look to't,
 Consider: take a month to think, and give
 An answer to my wish; or by the Lord
 That made me, you shall pack, and nevermore
 Darken my doors again." And William heard,
 And answered something madly; bit his lips,

And broke away.

All editions previous to 1853 have

"Look to't.]

AUDLEY COURT

First published in 1842.

Only four alterations were made in the text after 1842, all of which are duly noted. Tennyson told his son that the poem was partially suggested by Abbey Park at Torquay where it was written, and that the last lines described the scene from the hill looking over the bay. He saw he said "a star of phosphorescence made by the buoy appearing and disappearing in the dark sea," but it is curious that the line describing that was not inserted till long after the poem had been published. The poem, though a trifle, is a triumph of felicitous description and expression, whether we regard the pie or the moonlit bay.

"The Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room
For love or money. Let us picnic there
At Audley Court." I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat,
And breathing of the sea. "With all my heart,"
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' [1] the swarm,
And rounded by the stillness of the beach
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.
We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd
The griffin-guarded gates and pass'd thro' all
The pillar'd dusk [2] of sounding sycamores
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.
There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks [3]
Imbedded and injellied; last with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,

Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat
And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall:
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was
This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,
The fourfield system, and the price of grain; [4]
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang--
"Oh! who would fight and march and counter-march,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into a [5] bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.
"Oh! who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.
"Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.
"Oh! who would love? I wooed a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea: but let me live my life."
He sang his song, and I replied with mine:
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
His books--the more the pity, so I said--
Came to the hammer here in March--and this--
I set the words, and added names I knew.
"Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep and dream of me:
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.
"Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.
"Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:
I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.
"I go, but I return: I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me."
So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
The farmer's son who lived across the bay,
My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and everywhere, [6]
Did what I would; but ere the night we rose
And saunter'd home beneath a moon that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the gloomy quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down
The bay was oily-calm: the harbour buoy
With one green sparkle ever and anon [7]
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart. [8]

[Footnote 1: 1842 to 1850. Through.]

[Footnote 2: 'cf'. Milton, 'Paradise Lost', ix., 1106-7:--

A pillar'd shade
High overarch'd.]

[Footnote 3: 1842. Golden yokes.]

[Footnote 4: That is planting turnips, barley, clover and wheat, by
which land is kept constantly fresh and vigorous.]

[Footnote 5: 1872. Some.]

[Footnote 6: Inserted in 1857.]

[Footnote 7: Here was inserted, in 1872, the line--Sole star of
phosphorescence in the calm.]

[Footnote 8: Like the shepherd in Homer at the moonlit landscape,
'gegaethe de te phrena poimaen', 'Il'.., viii., 559.]

WALKING TO THE MAIL

First published in 1842. Not altered in any respect after 1853.

'John'. I'm glad I walk'd.
How fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.
Is yon plantation where this byway joins
The turnpike? [1]

'James'. Yes.

'John'. And when does this come by?

'James'. The mail? At one o'clock.

'John'. What is it now?

James'. A quarter to.

'John'. Whose house is that I see? [2]

No, not the County Member's with the vane:
Up higher with the yewtree by it, and half
A score of gables.

'James'. That? Sir Edward Head's:

But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

'John'. Oh, his. He was not broken?

'James'. No, sir, he,

Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face
From all men, and commercing with himself,
He lost the sense that handles daily life--
That keeps us all in order more or less--
And sick of home went overseas for change.

'John'. And whither?

'James'. Nay, who knows? he's here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,
As well as with his tenant, Jockey Dawes.

'John'. What's that?

'James-. You saw the man--on Monday, was it?--[3]

There by the hump-back'd willow; half stands up
And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;
And there he caught the younker tickling trout--
Caught in 'flagrante'--what's the Latin word?--
'Delicto'; but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,
And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,
And all his household stuff; and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,
Sets out, [4] and meets a friend who hails him,
"What! You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost
(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds).
"Oh, well," says he, "you flitting with us too--
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again". [5]

'John'. He left 'his' wife behind; for so I heard.

'James'. He left her, yes. I met my lady once:
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

'John'. Oh, yet, but I remember, ten years back--
'Tis now at least ten years--and then she was--
You could not light upon a sweeter thing:
A body slight and round and like a pear
In growing, modest eyes, a hand a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

'James'. Ay, ay, the blossom fades and they that loved
At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.
She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd
To what she is: a nature never kind!
Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say.
Kind nature is the best: those manners next
That fit us like a nature second-hand;
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

'John'. But I had heard it was this bill that past,
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

'James'. That was the last drop in the cup of gall.
I once was near him, when his bailiff brought
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince
As from a venomous thing: he thought himself
A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but, sir, you know
That these two parties still divide the world--
Of those that want, and those that have: and still
The same old sore breaks out from age to age
With much the same result. Now I myself, [6]
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I would.
I was at school--a college in the South:
There lived a flayflint near; we stole his fruit,
His hens, his eggs; but there was law for 'us';
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,
With meditative grunts of much content, [7]
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.
By night we dragg'd her to the college tower
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair
With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,
And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved,
As one by one we took them--but for this--
As never sow was higher in this world--

Might have been happy: but what lot is pure!
We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrowed to her sty.

'John.' They found you out?

'James.' Not they.

'John.' Well--after all--What know we of the secret of a man?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity--more from ignorance than will,
But put your best foot forward, or I fear
That we shall miss the mail: and here it comes
With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand
As you shall see--three pyebalds and a roan.

[Footnote 1: 1842.

'John'. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the country looks!
Is yonder planting where this byway joins
The turnpike?]

[Footnote 2: Thus 1843 to 1850:--

'John'. Whose house is that I see
Beyond the watermills?

'James'. Sir Edward Head's: But he's abroad, etc.]

[Footnote 3: Thus 1842 to 1851:--

'James'. You saw the man but yesterday:
He pick'd the pebble from your horse's foot.
His house was haunted by a jolly ghost
That rummaged like a rat.]

[Footnote 4: 1842. Sets forth. Added in 1853.]

[Footnote 5: This is a folk-lore story which has its variants, Mr. Alfred Nutt tells me, in almost every country in Europe. The Lincolnshire version of it is given in Miss Peacock's MS. collection of Lincolnshire folk-lore, of which she has most kindly sent me a copy, and it runs thus:--"There is a house in East Halton which is haunted by a

hob-thrush.... Some years ago, it is said, a family who had lived in the house for more than a hundred years were much annoyed by it, and determined to quit the dwelling. They had placed their goods on a waggon, and were just on the point of starting when a neighbour asked the farmer whether he was leaving. On this the hobthrus put his head out of the splash-churn, which was amongst the household stuff, and said, 'Ay, we're flitting'. Whereupon the farmer decided to give up the attempt to escape from it and remain where he was." The same story is told of a Cluricaune in Croker's 'Fairy Legends and Traditions' in the South of Ireland. See 'The Haunted Cellar' in p. 81 of the edition of 1862, and as Tennyson has elsewhere in 'Guinevere' borrowed a passage from the same story (see 'Illustrations of Tennyson', p. 152) it is probable that that was the source of the story here, though there the Cluricaune uses the expression, "Here we go altogether".]

[Footnote 6: 1842 and 1843. I that am. Now, I that am.]

[Footnote 7: 1842.

scored upon the part
Which cherubs want.]

THE EARLY POEMS OF

EDWIN MORRIS;

OR, THE LAKE

This poem first appeared in the seventh edition of the Poems, 1851. It was written at Llanberis. Several alterations were made in the eighth edition of 1853, since then none, with the exception of "breath" for "breaths" in line 66.

O Me, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three-quarters of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life! I was a sketcher then:
See here, my doing: curves of mountain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a rock,
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock:
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,
Here lived the Hills--a Tudor-chimnied bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.
O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake

With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull
The curate; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,
Long-learned names of agaric, moss and fern, [1]
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own--I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.[2]
And once I ask'd him of his early life,
And his first passion; and he answer'd me;
And well his words became him: was he not
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke.

"My love for Nature is as old as I;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.
My love for Nature and my love for her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew, [3]
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the sun,
And some full music seem'd to move and change
With all the varied changes of the dark,
And either twilight and the day between;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe." [4]

Or this or something like to this he spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull,
"I take it, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world,
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world."

"Parson," said I, "you pitch the pipe too low:
But I have sudden touches, and can run
My faith beyond my practice into his:
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce hear [5] other music: yet say on.
What should one give to light on such a dream?"
I ask'd him half-sardonically.
"Give? Give all thou art," he answer'd, and a light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;
"I would have hid her needle in my heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin: my ears could hear
Her lightest breaths: her least remark was worth
The experience of the wise. I went and came;
Her voice fled always thro' the summer land;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!
The flower of each, those moments when we met,
The crown of all, we met to part no more."

Were not his words delicious, I a beast
To take them as I did? but something jarr'd;
Whether he spoke too largely; that there seem'd
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,
Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said:--

"Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left? [6]
But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:
I have I think--Heaven knows--as much within;
Have or should have, but for a thought or two,
That like a purple beech [7] among the greens
Looks out of place: 'tis from no want in her:
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:
"God made the woman for the use of man,
And for the good and increase of the world".
And I and Edwin laugh'd; and now we paused
About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
And alders, garden-isles [8]; and now we left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lispig lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.
But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles. [9]

'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no more:
She sent a note, the seal an _Elle vous suit_, [10]
The close "Your Letty, only yours"; and this
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel;
And out I stept, and up I crept: she moved,

Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers: [11]
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,
 She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed
 In some new planet: a silent cousin stole
 Upon us and departed: "Leave," she cried,
 "O leave me!" "Never, dearest, never: here
 I brave the worst:" and while we stood like fools
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
 And poodles yell'd within, and out they came
 Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. "What, with him!
 "Go" (shrill'd the cottonspinning chorus) "him!"
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen "Him!"
 Again with hands of wild rejection "Go!--
 Girl, get you in!" She went--and in one month [12]
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
 And educated whisker. But for me,
 They set an ancient creditor to work:
 It seems I broke a close with force and arms:
 There came a mystic token from the king
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
 I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd:
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below:
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm;
 So left the place, [13] left Edwin, nor have seen
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.
 Nor cared to hear? perhaps; yet long ago
 I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,
 It may be, for her own dear sake but this,
 She seems a part of those fresh days to me;
 For in the dust and drouth of London life
 She moves among my visions of the lake,
 While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

[Footnote 1: Agaric (some varieties are deadly) is properly the fungus on the larch; it then came to mean fungus generally. Minshew calls it "a white soft mushroom". See Halliwell, 'Dict. of Archaic and Provincial Words, sub vocent'.]

[Footnote 2: The Latin factus 'ad unguem'. For Crichton, a half-mythical figure, see Tytler's 'Life' of him.]

[Footnote 3: 1851. Of different ages, like twin-sisters thrive.]

[Footnote 4: 1853. To breathe, to wake.]

[Footnote 5: 1872. Have.]

[Footnote 6: The reference is to the 'Acme' and 'Septimius' of Catullus,

xliv.--

Hoc ut dixit,
Amor, sinistram, ut ante,
Dextram sternuit approbationem.]

[Footnote 7: 1851. That like a copper beech.]

[Footnote 8: 1851.

garden-isles; and now we ran
By ripply shallows.]

[Footnote 9: 1851. The rainy isles.]

[Footnote 10: Cf. Byron, 'Don Juan', i., xcvi.:-

The seal a sunflower--'elle vous suit partout'.]

[Footnote 11: 'Cf'. Milton, 'Par. Lost', iv., 268-9:--

Not that fair field
Of Enna where Proserpine gathering flowers
...
Was gather'd.]

[Footnote 12: 1851.

"Go Sir!" Again they shrieked the burthen "Him!"
Again with hands of wild rejection "Go!
Girl, get you in" to her--and in one month, etc.]

[Footnote 13: 1851.

I read and wish'd to crush the race of man,
And fled by night; turn'd once upon the hills;
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake; and then
I left the place, etc.]

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

First published in 1842, reprinted in all the subsequent editions of the poems but with no alterations in the text, except that in eighth line from the end "my" was substituted for "mine" in 1846. Tennyson informed a friend that it was not from the 'Acta Sanctorum', but from Hone's

'Every-Day Book', vol. i., pp. 35-36, that he got the material for this poem, and a comparison with the narrative in Hone and the poem seems to show that this was the case.

It is not easy to identify the St. Simeon Stylites of Hone's narrative and Tennyson's poem, whether he is to be identified with St. Simeon the Elder, of whom there are three memoirs given in the 'Acta Sanctorum', tom. i., 5th January, 261-286, or with St. Simeon Stylites, Junior, of whom there is an elaborate biography in Greek by Nicephorus printed with a Latin translation and notes in the 'Acta Sanctorum', tom. v., 24th May, 298-401. It seems clear that whoever compiled the account popularised by Hone had read both and amalgamated them. The main lines in the story of both saints are exactly the same. Both stood on columns, both tortured themselves in the same ways, both wrought miracles, and both died at their posts of penance. St. Simeon the Elder was born at Sisan in Syria about A.D. 390, and was buried at Antioch in A.D. 459 or 460. The Simeon the Younger was born at Antioch A. D. 521 and died in A.D. 592. His life, which is of singular interest, is much more elaborately related.

This poem is not simply a dramatic study. It bears very directly on Tennyson's philosophy of life. In these early poems he has given us four studies in the morbid anatomy of character: 'The Palace of Art', which illustrates the abuse of aesthetic and intellectual enjoyment of self; 'The Vision of Sin', which illustrates the effects of similar indulgence in the grosser pleasures of the senses; 'The Two Voices', which illustrates the mischief of despondent self-absorption, while the present poem illustrates the equally pernicious indulgence in an opposite extreme, asceticism affected for the mere gratification of personal vanity.

Altho' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamour, morn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into Thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.
O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee. O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognise the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffered more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.
For not alone this pillar-punishment, [1]
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.[2]
Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damp for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy; cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee, [3]
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.
I think that I have borne as much as this--
Or else I dream--and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns--
So much--even so. And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones comes here, and say,
"Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!" then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked. But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in Heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.
O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:

And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles, [4]
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?
It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?
Yet do not rise: for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance: let him speak his wish.
Yes, I can heal. Power goes forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout
"St. Simeon Stylites". Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, "Behold a saint!"
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives. O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname Stylites, among men;
I, Simeon, The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve; [5]
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest:
They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book:
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,

Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
 God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
 Among the powers and princes of this world,
 To make me an example to mankind,
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
 But that a time may come--yea, even now,
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
 Of life--I say, that time is at the doors
 When you may worship me without reproach;
 For I will leave my relics in your land,
 And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
 When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.
 While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
 Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,
 In passing, with a grosser film made thick
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
 Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
 A flash of light. Is that the angel there
 That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come,
 I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
 My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
 'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown! [6]
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
 Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.
 Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
 Among you there, and let him presently
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
 And climbing up into my airy home,
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
 A quarter before twelve. [7] But thou, O Lord,
 Aid all this foolish people; let them take
 Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

[Footnote 1: For this incident 'cf. Acta', v., 317:

"Petit aliquando ab aliquo ad se invisente funem, acceptumque circa
 corpus convolvit constringitque tam arete ut, exesâcarne, quâstuc
 mollis admodum ac tenera est, nudâcostæexstarent".

The same is told also of the younger Stylites, where the incident of
 concealing the torture is added, 'Acta', i., 265.]

[Footnote 2: For this retirement to a mountain see 'Acta', i., 270, and
 it is referred to in the other lives:

"Post hæ egressus occulte perrexit in montem non longe a monasterio, ibique sibi clausulam de siccâpetrâfecit, et stetit sic annos tres."]

[Footnote 3: In accurate accordance with the third life, 'Acta', i., 277:

"Primum quidem columna ad sex erecta cubitos est, deinde ad duodecim, post ad viginti extensa est";

but for the thirty-six cubits which is assigned as the height of the last column Tennyson's authority, drawing on another account ('Id'., 271), substitutes forty:

"Fecerunt illi columnam habentem cubitos quadraginta".]

[Footnote 4: For the miracles wrought by him see all the lives.]

[Footnote 5: These details seem taken from the well-known stories about Luther and Bunyan. All that the 'Acta' say about St. Simeon is that he was pestered by devils.]

[Footnote 6: The 'Acta' say nothing about the crown, but dwell on the supernatural fragrance which exhaled from the saint.]

[Footnote 7: Tennyson has given a very poor substitute for the beautifully pathetic account given of the death of St. Simeon in 'Acta', i., 168, and again in the ninth chapter of the second Life, 'Ibid'., 273. But this is to be explained perhaps by the moral purpose of the poem.]

THE TALKING OAK

First published in 1842, and republished in all subsequent editions with only two slight alterations: in line 113 a mere variant in spelling, and in line 185, where in place of the present reading the editions between 1842 and 1848 read, "For, ah! the Dryad-days were brief".

Tennyson told Mr. Aubrey de Vere that the poem was an experiment meant to test the degree in which it is in the power of poetry to humanise external nature. Tennyson might have remembered that Ovid had made the same experiment nearly two thousand years ago, while Goethe had immediately anticipated him in his charming 'Der Junggesett und der Mühlbach'. There was certainly no novelty in such an attempt. The poem

is in parts charmingly written, but the oak is certainly "garrulously given," and comes perilously near to tediousness.

Once more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarised a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd, under Heaven
None else could understand;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.--

"O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

"Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek.

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence, [1]
And turn'd the cowls adrift:

"And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

"And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all too full in bud
For puritanic stays: [2]

"And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

"And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The Modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

"I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

"For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

"From when she gamboll'd on the greens,
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain
(And hear me with thine ears),

That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years--

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

"For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

"And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy:
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

"An hour had past--and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

"But, as for her, she stay'd [3] at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come,
She look'd with discontent.

"She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

"A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child:

"But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower she touch'd on dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

"And here she came, and round me play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my 'giant bole';

"And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist:
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

"I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

"Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace!
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs?

"O yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

"A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

"Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain;
But not a creature was in sight:

She kiss'd me once again.

"Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

"And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

"Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

"I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves [4]
With anthers and with dust:

"For, ah! my friend, the days were brief [5]
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

"But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

"She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

"'Tis little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.

I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life--
The music from the town--
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull'd them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

"A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ancle fine.

"Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow'd all her rest--
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

"And yet it was a graceful gift--
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetise
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow--
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth, [6]

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;

And more than England honours that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

[Footnote 1: Spence is a larder and buttery. In the 'Promptorium Parverum it is defined as "cellarium promptuarium".]

[Footnote 2: Cf. Burns' "godly laces," 'To the Unco Righteous'.]

[Footnote 3: All editions previous to 1853 have 'staid'.]

[Footnote 4: The phrase is Marvell's. 'Cf. To his Coy Mistress' (a favourite poem of Tennyson's), "my vegetable loves should grow".]

[Footnote 5: 1842 to 1850. "For, ah! the Dryad-days were brief.]"

[Footnote 6: A reference to the oracular oaks of Dodona which was, of course, in Epirus, but the Ancients believed, no doubt erroneously, that there was another Dodona in Thessaly. See the article "Dodona" in Smith's 'Dict. of Greek and Roman Geography'.]

LOVE AND DUTY

Published first in 1842.

Whether this beautiful poem is autobiographical and has reference to the compulsory separation of Tennyson and Miss Emily Sellwood, afterwards his wife, in 1840, it is impossible for this editor to say, as Lord Tennyson in his 'Life' of his father is silent on the subject.

Of love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?
Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout [1]
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law
System and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, become
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone

Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself!
 If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
 Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
 The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
 The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
 The set gray life, and apathetic end.
 But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
 O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
 Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years.
 The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
 Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring
 The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
 Of wisdom. [2] Wait: my faith is large in Time,
 And that which shapes it to some perfect end.
 Will some one say, then why not ill for good?
 Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
 My work shall answer, since I knew the right
 And did it; for a man is not as God,
 But then most Godlike being most a man.--
 So let me think 'tis well for thee and me--
 Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow
 To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,
 When eyes, love-languid thro' half-tears, would dwell
 One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
 Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,
 Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
 My own full-tuned,--hold passion in a leash,
 And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
 And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief!)
 Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd
 Upon my brain, my senses, and my soul!
 For love himself took part against himself
 To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love--
 O this world's curse--beloved but hated--came Like
 Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
 And crying, "Who is this? behold thy bride,"
 She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard
 To alien ears, I did not speak to these--
 No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:
 Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest it all.
 Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,
 To have spoken once? It could not but be well.
 The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good, [3]
 The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
 And all good things from evil, brought the night
 In which we sat together and alone,
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,
 Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
 That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears

As flow but once a life. The trance gave way
 To those caresses, when a hundred times
 In that last kiss, which never was the last,
 Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
 Then follow'd counsel, comfort and the words
 That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;
 Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
 The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
 In that brief night; the summer night, that paused
 Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung
 Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of Time
 Spun round in station, but the end had come.
 O then like those, who clench [4] their nerves to rush
 Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
 There-closing like an individual life--
 In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
 Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
 Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,
 And bade adieu for ever. Live--yet live--
 Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
 Life needs for life is possible to will--
 Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended by
 My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts
 Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold, [5]
 If not to be forgotten--not at once--
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,
 O might it come like one that looks content,
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
 And point thee forward to a distant light,
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
 And leave thee fr^oer, till thou wake refresh'd,
 Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
 Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl [6]
 Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

[Footnote 1: As this passage is a little obscure, it may not be superfluous to point out that "shout" is a substantive.]

[Footnote 2: The distinction between "knowledge" and "wisdom" is a favourite one with Tennyson. See 'In Memoriam', cxiv.; 'Locksley Hall', 141, and for the same distinction see Cowper, 'Task', vi., 88-99.]

[Footnote 3: Suggested by Theocritus, 'Id'., xv., 104-5.]

[Footnote 4: 1842 to 1845. O then like those, that clench.]

[Footnote 5: Pathos, in the Greek sense, "suffering". All editions up to and including 1850 have a small "s" and a small "m" for Shadow and Memory, and read thus:--

Too sadly for their peace, so put it back
For calmer hours in memory's darkest hold,
If unforgotten! should it cross thy dreams,
So might it come, etc.]

[Footnote 6: 'Cf. Princess', iii.:--

Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold,

and with both cf. Greene, 'Orlando Furioso', i., 2:--

Seest thou not Lycaon's son?
The hardy plough-swain unto mighty Jove
Hath _trac'd his silver furrows in the heaven_,

which in its turn is borrowed from Ariosto, 'Orl. Fur.', xx.,
lxxxii.:--

Apena aveva Licaonia prole
Per li solchi del ciel volto
L'aratro.]

THE GOLDEN YEAR

This poem was first published in the fourth edition of the poems 1846. No alterations were made in it after 1851. The poem had a message for the time at which it was written. The country was in a very troubled state. The contest between the Protectionists and Free-traders was at its acutest stage. The Maynooth endowment and the "godless colleges" had brought into prominence questions of the gravest moment in religion and education, while the Corn Bill and the Coercion Bill had inflamed the passions of party politicians almost to madness. Tennyson, his son tells us, entered heartily into these questions, believing that the remedies for these distempers lay in the spread of education, a more catholic spirit in the press, a partial adoption of Free Trade principles, and union as far as possible among the different sections of Christianity.

Well, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote:
It was last summer on a tour in Wales:
Old James was with me: we that day had been
Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis: [1] then we crost
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half-way up

The counterside; and that same song of his
He told me; for I banter'd him, and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
That, setting the _how much_ before the _how_,
Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, "Give, [2]
Cram us with all," but count not me the herd!
To which "They call me what they will," he said:
"But I was born too late: the fair new forms,
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught--
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd--
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yestermorn.
"We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.
"Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore, [3]
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.
"When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Thro' all the season of the golden year.
"Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.
"Fly happy happy sails and bear the Press;
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
Enrich the markets of the golden year.
"But we grow old! Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?"
Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon
"Ah, folly!" in mimic cadence answer'd James--
"Ah, folly! for it lies so far away.
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'Tis like the second world to us that live;
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven
As on this vision of the golden year."
With that he struck his staff against the rocks

And broke it,--James,--you know him,--old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourished with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat: "What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy season back,--
The more fools they,--we forward: dreamers both:
You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip [4]
His hand into the bag: but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."
He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

[Footnote 1: 1846 to 1850.

And joined him in Llanberis; and that same song
He told me, etc.]

[Footnote 2: Proverbs xxx. 15:

"The horseleach hath two daughters, crying,
Give, give".]

[Footnote 3: 1890. Altered to "Yet oceans daily gaining on the land".]

[Footnote 4: 'Selections', 1865. Plunge.]

ULYSSES

First published in 1842, no alterations were made in it subsequently.

This noble poem, which is said to have induced Sir Robert Peel to give Tennyson his pension, was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, presumably therefore in 1833. "It gave my feeling," Tennyson said to his son, "about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in 'In Memoriam'." It is not the 'Ulysses' of Homer, nor was it suggested by the 'Odyssey'. The germ, the spirit and the sentiment of the poem are from the twenty-sixth canto of

Dante's 'Inferno', where Ulysses in the Limbo of the Deceivers speaks from the flame which swathes him. I give a literal version of the passage:--

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

('Inferno', xxvi., 94-126).

But if the germ is here the expansion is Tennyson's; he has added elaboration and symmetry, fine touches, magical images and magical diction. There is nothing in Dante which answers to--

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

or

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Of these lines well does Carlyle say what so many will feel: "These lines do not make me weep, but there is in me what would till whole Lacrymatorics as I read".

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades [1]
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments, [2]

Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end, [3]
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus, [4]
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle--
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd and wrought, and thought with me--
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads--you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, [5]
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

[Footnote 1: Virgil, 'n', i., 748, and iii., 516.]

[Footnote 2: 'Odyssey', i., 1-4.]

[Footnote 3: 'Cf. Shakespeare, 'Troilus and Cressida':--

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

[Footnote 4: How admirably has Tennyson touched off the character of the Telemachus of the 'Odyssey'.]

[Footnote 5: The Happy Isles, the 'Fortunate Islands' of the Romans and the

[Greek: ai t_on Makar_on naesoi]

of the Greeks, have been identified by geographers as those islands in the Atlantic off the west coast of Africa; some take them to mean the Canary Islands, the Madeira group and the Azores, while they may have included the Cape de Verde Islands as well. What seems certain is that these places with their soft delicious climate and lovely scenery gave the poets an idea of a happy abode for departed spirits, and so the conception of the 'Elysian Fields'. The 'loca classici' on these abodes are Homer, Odyssey, iv., 563 'seqq.'--

[Greek: alla s' es Elysion pedion kai peirata gaaes athanatoi pempousin, hothi xanthos Rhadamanthus tae per rhaeistae biotae pelei anthr_ opousin, ou niphetos, out' ar cheim_on polus, oute pot' ombros all' aiei Zephuroio ligu pneiontas aetas _okeanos aniaesin anapsuchein anthr_ opous.

[But the Immortals will convey thee to the Elysian plain and the world's limits where is Rhadamanthus of the golden hair, where life is easiest for man; no snow is there, no nor no great storm, nor any rain, but always ocean sendeth forth the shrilly breezes of the West to cool and refresh men],

and Pindar, 'Olymp', ii., 178 'seqq.', compared with the splendid fragment at the beginning of the 'Dirges'. Elysium was afterwards placed in the netherworld, as by Virgil. Thus, as so often the suggestion was from the facts of geography, the rest soon became an allegorical myth, and to attempt to identify and localise "the Happy Isles" is as great an

absurdity as to attempt to identify and localise the island of Shakespeare's 'Tempest'.]

LOCKSLEY HALL

First published in 1842, and no alterations were made in it subsequently to the edition of 1850; except that in the Selections published in 1865 in the third stanza the reading was "half in ruin" for "in the distance". This poem, as Tennyson explained, was not autobiographic but purely imaginary, "representing young life, its good side, its deficiencies and its yearnings". The poem, he added, was written in Trochaics because the elder Hallam told him that the English people liked that metre. The hero is a sort of preliminary sketch of the hero in 'Maud', the position and character of each being very similar: both are cynical and querulous, and break out into tirades against their kind and society; both have been disappointed in love, and both find the same remedy for their afflictions by mixing themselves with action and becoming "one with their kind".

'Locksley Hall' was suggested, as Tennyson acknowledged, by Sir William Jones' translation of the old Arabian *Moālakā*, a collection from the works of pre-Mahommedan poets. See Sir William Jones' works, quarto edition, vol. iv., pp. 247-57. But only one of these poems, namely the poem of Amriolkais, could have immediately influenced him. In this the poet supposes himself attended on a journey by a company of friends, and they pass near a place where his mistress had lately lived, but from which her tribe had then removed. He desires them to stop awhile, that he may weep over the deserted remains of her tent. They comply with his request, but exhort him to show more strength of mind, and urge two topics of consolation, namely, that he had before been equally unhappy and that he had enjoyed his full share of pleasures. Thus by the recollection of his past delights his imagination is kindled and his grief suspended. But Tennyson's chief indebtedness is rather in the oriental colouring given to his poem, chiefly in the sentiment and imagery. Thus in the couplet--

Many a night I saw the Pleiads rising through the mellow shade
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangl'd in a silver braid,

we are reminded of "It was the hour when the Pleiads appeared in the firmament like the folds of a silken sash variously decked with gems".

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, [1] as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams [2] about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
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.

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;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.--

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's [3] 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.

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,
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".

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands. [4]

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,
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. [5]

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

Falsar than all fancy fathoms, falsar than all songs have sung,
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,
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.

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--
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!

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?
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. [6]

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?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:

Such a one do I remember, whom to look it 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,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow [7] 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.

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.
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.

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--
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.

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,
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;

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; [8]

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
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; [9]

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales; [10]

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue; [10]

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunderstorm;
[10]

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world. [10]

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

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, [11]
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?

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,
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--
[12]

Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:

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;--
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. [13]

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer [14] 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,
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;

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, [15]
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!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin [16] for ever down the ringing grooves [17]
of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe [18] we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay. [19]

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun:
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the
Sun--[20]

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.

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.

[Footnote 1: 1842. And round the gables.]

[Footnote 2: "Gleams," it appears, is a Lincolnshire word for the cry of the curlew, and so by removing the comma after call we get an interpretation which perhaps improves the sense and certainly gets rid of a very un-Tennysonian cumbrousness in the second line. But Tennyson had never, he said, heard of that meaning of "gleams," adding he wished he had. He meant nothing more in the passage than "to express the flying gleams of light across a dreary moorland when looking at it under peculiarly dreary circumstances". See for this, 'Life', iii., 82.]

[Footnote 3: 1842 and all up to and including 1850 have a capital 'R' to robin.]

[Footnote 4: Cf. W. R. Spencer ('Poems', p. 166):--

What eye with clear account remarks

The ebbing of his glass,
When all its sands are diamond sparks
That dazzle as they pass.

But this is of course in no way parallel to Tennyson's subtly beautiful image, which he himself pronounced to be the best simile he had ever made.]

[Footnote 5: Cf. Guarini, 'Pastor Fido':--

Ma i colpi di due labbre innamorate
Quando a ferir si va bocca con bocca,
... ove l' un alma e l'altra Corre.]

[Footnote 6: Cf. Horace's 'Annosa Cornix', Odes III., xvii., 13.]

[Footnote 7: The reference is to Dante, 'Inferno', v. 121-3:--

Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.

For the pedigree and history of this see the present editor's 'Illustrations of Tennyson', p. 63.]

[Footnote 8: The epithet "dreary" shows that Tennyson preferred realistic picturesqueness to dramatic propriety.]

[Footnote 9: See the introductory note to 'The Golden Year'.]

[Footnote 10: See the introductory note to 'The Golden Year'.]

[Footnote 11: Tennyson said that this simile was suggested by a passage in 'Pringle's Travels;' the incident only is described, and with thrilling vividness, by Pringle; but its application in simile is Tennyson's. See 'A Narrative of a Residence in South Africa', by Thomas Pringle, p. 39:

"The night was extremely dark and the rain fell so heavily that in spite of the abundant supply of dry firewood, which we had luckily provided, it was not without difficulty that we could keep one watchfire burning.... About midnight we were suddenly roused by the roar of a lion close to our tents. It was so loud and tremendous that for the moment I actually thought that a thunderstorm had burst upon us.... We roused up the half-extinguished fire to a roaring blaze ... this unwonted display probably daunted our grim visitor, for he gave us no further trouble that night."

[Footnote 12: With this 'cf'. Leopardi, 'Aspasia', 53-60:--

Non cape in quelle
Anguste fronti ugual concetto. E male
Al vivo sfolgora di quegli sguardi
Spera l'uomo ingannato, e mal chiede
Sensi profondi, sconosciuti, & molto
Più che virili, in chi dell' uomo al tutto
Da natura & minor. Che se più molli
E più tenui le membra, essa la mente
Men capace e men forte anco riceve.]

[Footnote 13: One wonders Tennyson could have had the heart to excise the beautiful couplet which in his MS. followed this stanza.]

All about a summer ocean, leagues on leagues of golden calm,
And within melodious waters rolling round the knolls of palm.]

[Footnote 14: 1842 and all up to and inclusive of 1850. Droops the trailer. This is one of Tennyson's many felicitous corrections. In the monotonous, motionless splendour of a tropical landscape the smallest movement catches the eye, the flight of a bird, the gentle waving of the trailer stirred by the breeze from the sea.]

[Footnote 15: 'Cf'. Shakespeare, "foreheads villainously low".]

[Footnote 16: 1842. Peoples spin.]

[Footnote 17: Tennyson tells us that when he travelled by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester in 1830 it was night and he thought that the wheels ran in a groove, hence this line.]

[Footnote 18: 1842. The world.]

[Footnote 19: Cathay, the old name for China.]

[Footnote 20: 'Cf'. Tasso, 'Gems', ix., st. 91:--

Nuova nube di polve ecco vicina
Che fulgori in grembo tiene.

(Lo! a fresh cloud of dust is near which
Carries in its breast thunderbolts.)]

First published in 1842. No alteration was made in any subsequent edition.

The poem was written in 1840 when Tennyson was returning from Coventry to London, after his visit to Warwickshire in that year. The Godiva pageant takes place in that town at the great fair on Friday in Trinity week. Earl Leofric was the Lord of Coventry in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and he and his wife Godiva founded a magnificent Benedictine monastery at Coventry. The first writer who mentions this legend is Matthew of Westminster, who wrote in 1307, that is some 250 years after Leofric's time, and what authority he had for it is not known. It is certainly not mentioned by the many preceding writers who have left accounts of Leofric and Godiva (see Gough's edition of Camden's 'Britannia', vol. ii., p. 346, and for a full account of the legend see W. Reader, 'The History and Description of Coventry Show Fair, with the History of Leofric and Godiva'). With Tennyson's should be compared Moultrie's beautiful poem on the same subject, and Landor's Imaginary Conversation between Leofric and Godiva.

[1] _I waited for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To match the three tall spires; [2] and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this: _
Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry: for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamouring, "If we pay, we starve!"
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, "If they pay this tax, they starve".
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as _these? _"--"But I would die," said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul;
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear;
"O ay, ay, ay, you talk!"--"Alas!" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, "Ride you naked thro' the town,
And I repeal it"; and nodding as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.
So left alone, the passions of her mind,

As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bad him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition; but that she would loose
The people: therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.
Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.
Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses: the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archways [3]in the wall.
Then she rode back cloth'd on with chastity:
And one low churl, [4] compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd--but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, pass'd: and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers, [5]
One after one: but even then she gain'd
Her bower; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

[Footnote 1: These four lines are not in the privately printed volume of 1842, but were added afterwards.]

[Footnote 2: St. Michael's, Trinity, and St. John.]

[Footnote 3: 1844. Archway.]

[Footnote 4: His effigy is still to be seen, protruded from an upper window in High Street, Coventry.]

[Footnote 5: A most poetical licence. Thirty-two towers are the very utmost allowed by writers on ancient Coventry.]

THE TWO VOICES

First published in 1842, though begun as early as 1833 and in course of composition in 1834. See Spedding's letter dated 19th September, 1834. Its original title was 'The Thoughts of a Suicide'. No alterations were made in the poem after 1842.

It adds interest to this poem to know that it is autobiographical. It was written soon after the death of Arthur Hallam when Tennyson's depression was deepest. "When I wrote 'The Two Voices' I was so utterly miserable, a burden to myself and to my family, that I said, 'Is life worth anything?'" It is the history--as Spedding put it--of the agitations, the suggestions and counter-suggestions of a mind sunk in hopeless despondency, and meditating self-destruction, together with the manner of its recovery to a more healthy condition. We have two singularly interesting parallels to it in preceding poetry. The one is in the third book of Lucretius (830-1095), where the arguments for suicide are urged, not merely by the poet himself, but by arguments placed by him in the mouth of Nature herself, and urged with such cogency that they are said to have induced one of his editors and translators, Creech, to put an end to his life. The other is in Spenser, in the dialogue between Despair and the Red Cross Knight, where Despair puts the case for self-destruction, and the Red Cross Knight rebuts the arguments ('Faerie Queene', I. ix., st. xxxviii.-liv.).

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
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
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."

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,
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,
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?"

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
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 [1] be less intense,
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.

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:
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,
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;

"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
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,
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.

"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
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
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.

"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,
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,
'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.

"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
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;
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!

"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,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

"I sung the joyful Paeon clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear--

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,
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--

"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,
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,
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;

"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.
And all the war is roll'd in smoke." [2]

"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 [2]
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.

"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.
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,
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.

"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 nights of hope,
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,
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;

"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?
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,
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:

"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, [3]
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head--

"Which did accomplish their desire,--
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,
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."

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
"Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd." [4]

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse. [5]

"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,
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?"

"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?
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:
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--

"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame,--
But he is chill to praise or blame. [6]

"He will not hear the north wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
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,
"These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up: the plant declines. [7]
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

"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:
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crown'd his head: [8]
'Omega! thou art Lord,' they
said; 'We find no motion in the dead.'

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
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?

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes, [9]
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
His heart forebodes a mystery:
He names the name Eternity.

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

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
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.

"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,
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.
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."

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,
A merry boy in sun and shade?

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

"Before the little ducts began
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:

"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
A vague suspicion of the breast:

"But if I grant, thou might'st defend
The thesis which thy words intend--
That to begin implies to end;

"Yet how should I for certain hold, [10]
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.

"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
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
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch. [11]

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

"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
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,
From cells of madness unconfined, [12]
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

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

"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,
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,
"Not with thy dreams.
Suffice it thee Thy pain is a reality."

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

"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
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.
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.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When 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,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

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

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good, [13]
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

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

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

I blest them, and they wander'd on:
I spoke, but answer came there none:
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,
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".

Like an Aeolian 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.
"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
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.

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,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seem'd all things wrought, [14]
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

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

[Footnote 1: The insensibility of Nature to man's death has been the eloquent theme of many poets. 'Cf'. Byron, 'Lara', canto ii. 'ad init'., and Matthew Arnold, 'The Youth of Nature'.]

[Footnote 2: 'Cf. Palace of Art', "the riddle of the painful earth".]

[Footnote 3: 'Seq'. The reference is to Acts of the Apostles vii. 54-60.]

[Footnote 4: Suggested by Shakespeare, 'Julius Caesar', Act v., Sc. 5:--

and _the elements_
So mix'd in' him that Nature, etc.]

[Footnote 5: An excellent commentary on this is Clough's

PerchØ pensa, pensando vecchia.]

[Footnote 6: 'Cf'. Job xiv. 21:

"His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them."]

[Footnote 7: So Bishop Butler, 'Analogy', ch. i.:

"We cannot argue _from the reason of the thing_ that death is the destruction of living agents because we know not at all what death is

in itself, but only some of its effects".]

[Footnote 8: So Milton, enfolding this idea of death, 'Paradise Lost', ii., 672-3:--

What seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.]

[Footnote 9: 'Cf'. Plato, 'Phaedo', x.:--

[Greek: ara echei alaetheian tina ophis te kai akoe tois anthr_ opois.
Ae ta ge toiauta kai oi poiaetai haemin aei thrlousin oti out
akouomen akribes ouden oute or_omen]

"Have sight and hearing any truth in them? Are they not, as poets are
always telling us, inaccurate witnesses?"

The proper commentary on the whole of this passage is Plato
'passim', but the 'Phaedo' particularly, 'cf. Republic',
vii., viii. and xiv.-xv.]

[Footnote 10: An allusion to the myth that when souls are sent to occupy
a body again they drink of Lethe that they may forget their previous
existence. See the famous passage towards the end of the tenth book of
Plato's 'Republic':

"All persons are compelled to drink a certain quantity of the water,
but those who are not preserved by prudence drink more than the
quantity, and each as he drinks forgets everything".

So Milton, 'Paradise Lost', ii., 582-4.]

[Footnote 11: The best commentary on this will be found in Herbert
Spencer's 'Psychology'.]

[Footnote 12: Compare with this Tennyson's first sonnet ('Works', Globe
Edition, 25), and the lines in the 'Ancient Sage' in the 'Passion of the
Past' ('Id'., 551). 'Cf'. too the lines in Wordsworth's ode on
'Intimations of Immortality':--

But there's a tree, of many one,
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone;
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat.

For other remarkable illustrations of this see the present writer's
'Illustrations of Tennyson', p. 38.]

[Footnote 13: 'Cf'. Coleridge, 'Ancient Mariner, iv'.:--

"O happy living things ... I blessed them
The self-same moment I could pray."

There is a close parallel between the former and the latter state described here and in Coleridge's mystic allegory; in both cases the sufferers "wake to love," the curse falling off them when they can "bless".]

[Footnote 14: 1884. And all so variously wrought (with semi-colon instead of full stop at the end of the preceding line).]

THE DAY-DREAM

First published in 1842, but written in 1835. In it is incorporated, though with several alterations, 'The Sleeping Beauty', published among the poems of 1830, but excised in subsequent editions. Half extravaganza and half apologue, like the 'Midsummer Night's Dream', this delightful poem may be safely left to deliver its own message and convey its own meaning. It is an excellent illustration of the truth of Tennyson's own remark: "Poetry is like shot silk with many glancing colours. Every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the poet."

PROLOGUE

(No alteration has been made in the Prologue since 1842.)

O, Lady Flora, let me speak:
A pleasant hour has past away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,
I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming--and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dream'd, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I had,
And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye--
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,
And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE

(No alteration since 1851.)

1

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and re-clothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

2

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

3

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:
In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

4

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honour blooming fair:
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

5

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king. [1]

6

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, misletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

7

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in there place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

[Footnote 1: All editions up to and including 1851:--He must have been a jolly king.]

(First printed in 1830, but does not reappear again till 1842. No alteration since 1842.)

1

Year after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purpled coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown, [1]
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

2

The silk star-broider'd [2] coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Gloweth forth each softly-shadow'd arm,
With bracelets of the diamond bright:
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

3

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart. [3]
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand [4] upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

[Footnote 1: 1830.

The while she slumbereth alone,
Over the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair hath grown.]

[Footnote 2: 1830. Star-braided.]

[Footnote 3: A writer in 'Notes and Queries', February, 1880, asks whether these lines mean that the lovely princess did _not_ snore

so loud that she could be heard from one end of the palace to the other and whether it would not have detracted from her charms had that state of things been habitual. This brings into the field Dr. Gatty and other admirers of Tennyson, who, it must be owned, are not very successful in giving a satisfactory reply.]

[Footnote 4: 1830. Side.]

THE ARRIVAL

(No alteration after 1853.)

1

All precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies
His mantle glitters on the rocks--
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter footed than the fox.

2

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on [1] the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
"They perish'd in their daring deeds."
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
"The many fail: the one succeeds".

3

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The colour flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear. [2]

More close and close his footsteps wind;
 The Magic Music [3] in his heart
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find
 The quiet chamber far apart.
 His spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops--to kiss her--on his knee.
 "Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
 How dark those hidden eyes must be!

[Footnote 1: 1842 to 1851. In.]

[Footnote 2: All editions up to and including 1850. In his ear.]

[Footnote 3: All editions up to and including 1851. Not capitals in magic music.]

THE REVIVAL

No alteration after 1853.

1

A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

2

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

3

And last with these [1] the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords,
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

4

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still
My joints are something [2] stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

[Footnote 1: 1842 to 1851. And last of all.]

[Footnote 2: 1863. Somewhat.]

THE DEPARTURE

(No alteration since 1842.)

1

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

2

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;"
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

3

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
"O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

4

"A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?"
"O seek my father's court with me!
For there are greater wonders there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL

(No alteration since 1842.)

1

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
Oh, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

But any man that walks the mead,
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
 According as his humours lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend; [1]
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
 Should hook it to some useful end.

[Foonote 1: So Wordsworth:--

O Reader! had you in your mind
 Such stores as silent thought can bring,
 O gentle Reader! you would find
 A tale in everything.

--'Simon Lee'.]

L'ENVOI

(No alteration since 1843 except in numbering the stanzas.)

1

You shake your head. A random string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well--were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men;
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep again;
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;
 And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes;

For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

2

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
Or gay quinqueniads would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

3

Ah, yet would I--and would I might!
So much your eyes my fancy take--
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake!
For, am I right or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care;
You'd have 'my' moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there:
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter world.

4

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes?
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fullness of the pensive mind;
Which all too dearly self-involved, [1]
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee [2] neither hear nor see:
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

[Foonote 1: 1842. The pensive mind that, self-involved.]

[Foonote 2: 1842. Which lets thee.]

EPILOGUE

(No alteration since 1842.)

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
"What wonder, if he thinks me fair?"
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue--
But take it--earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION

First published in 1842. No alteration since 1850.

In this humorous allegory the poet bewails his unhappy lot on having fallen on an age so unpropitious to poetry, contrasting it with the happy times so responsive to his predecessors who piped to a world prepared to dance to their music. However, he must toil and be satisfied if he can make a little garden blossom.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree
And waster than a warren:
Yet say the neighbours when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion, [1]

And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion!
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreathes that bind her,
And down the middle, buzz! she went,
With all her bees behind her. [2]
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

The birch-tree swang her fragrant hair,
The bramble cast her berry,
The gin within the juniper
Began to make him merry.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree:
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-caves

Look'd down, half-pleas'd, half-frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd!

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexile then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!
And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading:
O Lord!--'tis in my neighbour's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises.
And works on Gardening thro' there,
And Methods of transplanting trees
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbours clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy, [3]
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.

I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom:
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

[Footnote 1: Amphion was no doubt capable of performing all the feats here attributed to him, but there is no record of them; he appears to have confined himself to charming the stones into their places when Thebes was being built. Tennyson seems to have confounded him with Orpheus.]

[Footnote 2: Till 1857 these four lines ran thus:--

The birch-tree swang her fragrant hair,
The bramble cast her berry.
The gin within the juniper
Began to make him merry.]

[Footnote 3: All editions up to and including 1850. The poor things look unhappy.]

ST. AGNES

This exquisite little poem was first published in 1837 in the 'Keepsake', an annual edited by Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, and was included in the edition of 1842. No alteration has been made in it since 1842.

In 1857 the title was altered from "St. Agnes" to "St. Agnes' Eve," thus bringing it near to Keats' poem, which certainly influenced Tennyson in writing it, as a comparison of the opening of the two poems will show. The saint from whom the poem takes its name was a young girl of thirteen who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Diocletian: she is a companion to Sir Galahad.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapour goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:

Make Thou [1] my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in [2] my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows [3] her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits, [4]
To make me pure of sin. [5]
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide--
A light upon the shining sea--
The Bridegroom [6] with his bride!

[Footnote 1: In 'Keepsake': not capital in Thou.]

[Footnote 2: In 'Keepsake': On.]

[Footnote 3: In 'Keepsake': Strews.]

[Footnote 4: In 'Keepsake': not capitals in Heavenly and Bridegroom.]

[Footnote 5: In 'Keepsake': To wash me pure from sin.]

[Footnote 6: In 'Keepsake': capital in Bridegroom.]

Published in 1842. No alteration has been made in it since. This poem may be regarded as a prelude to 'The Holy Grail'. The character of Galahad is deduced principally from the seventeenth book of the 'Morte d'Arthur'. In the twenty-second chapter of that book St. Joseph of Arimathea says to him: "Thou hast resembled me in two things in that thou hast seen the marvels of the sangreal, and in that thou has been a clean maiden".

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:

They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:

I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

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

A maiden knight--to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near".
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY

First published in 1842 but written in or before 1840. See 'Life', i., 209. Not altered since.

Sweet Emma Moreland of yonder town
Met me walking on yonder way,
"And have you lost your heart?" she said;
"And are you married yet, Edward Gray?"

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
"Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will:
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray'.

"There I put my face in the grass--
Whisper'd, 'Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward Gray!'

"Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree:
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

"Bitterly wept I over the stone:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away;
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!

And there the heart of Edward Gray!"

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

First published 1842. The final text was that of 1853, which has not been altered since, except that in stanza 29 the two "we's" in the first line and the "thy" in the third line are not in later editions italicised. The Cock Tavern, No. 201 Fleet Street, on the north side of Fleet Street, stood opposite the Temple and was of great antiquity, going back nearly 300 years. Strype, bk. iv., h. 117, describes it as "a noted public-house," and Pepys' 'Diary', 23rd April, 1668, speaks of himself as having been "mighty merry there". The old carved chimney-piece was of the age of James I., and the gilt bird over the portal was the work of Grinling Gibbons. When Tennyson wrote this poem it was the favourite resort of templars, journalists and literary people generally, as it had long been. But the old place is now a thing of the past. On the evening of 10th April, 1886, it closed its doors for ever after an existence of nearly 300 years. There is an admirable description of it, signed A. J. M., in 'Notes and Queries', seventh series, vol. i., 442-6. I give a short extract:

"At the end of a long room beyond the skylight which, except a feeble side window, was its only light in the daytime, was a door that led past a small lavatory and up half a dozen narrow steps to the kitchen, one of the strangest and grimmest old kitchens you ever saw. Across a mighty hatch, thronged with dishes, you looked into it and beheld there the white-jacketed man-cook, served by his two robust and red-armed kitchen maids. For you they were preparing chops, pork chops in winter, lamb chops in spring, mutton chops always, and steaks and sausages, and kidneys and potatoes, and poached eggs and Welsh rabbits, and stewed cheese, the special glory of the house. That was the 'menu' and men were the only guests. But of late years, as innovations often precede a catastrophe, two new things were introduced, vegetables and women. Both were respectable and both were good, but it was felt, especially by the virtuous Smurthwaite, that they were 'de trop' in a place so masculine and so carnivorous."

O plump head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:

But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine;
Until the charm have power to make
New life-blood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly [1] blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days: [2]
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
The gas-light wavers dimmer;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them--
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' [3] all the world forsake,
Tho' [3] fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take

Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
If old things, there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time [4]
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;
With fair horizons bound:
This whole wide earth of light and shade
Comes out, a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And, set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But tho' [3] the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place?
Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,

Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' [3] soak'd and saturate, out and out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay:
Each month, a birthday coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,

Had relish, fiery-new,
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo;
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all:
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy,
That knuckled at the taw:
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement:
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire,
Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter, [5]
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks!
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than common;
As just and mere a serving-man
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down
Into the common day?
Is it the weight of that half-crown,
Which I shall have to pay?

For, something duller than at first,
Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit (my empty glass reversed),
And thrumming on the table:

Half-fearful that, with self at strife
I take myself to task;
Lest of the fullness of my life
I leave an empty flask:
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet;
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup:
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,
'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone: a thousand such have slipt
Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more;
With peals of genial clamour sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits--

Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
Had yet their native glow:
Not yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show:
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches;
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth!
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth?
I hold it good, good things should pass:
With time I will not quarrel:
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part: I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots:
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots:
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, _we_ fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes:
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,

Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more;
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven:
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
A pint-pot neatly graven.

[Footnote 1: 1842 and all previous to 1853. To full and kindly.]

[Footnote 2: All previous to 1853:--

Like Hezekiah's, backward runs
The shadow of my days.]

[Footnote 3: All previous to 1853. Though.]

[Footnote 4: The expression is Shakespeare's, 'Twelfth Night', v., i.,

"and thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges".]

[Footnote 5: 1842 to 1843. With motion less or greater.]

TO----

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

Originally published in the 'Examiner' for 24th March, 1849; then in the sixth edition of the poems, 1850, with the second part of the title and the alterations noted. When reprinted in 1851 one more slight alteration was made. It has not been altered since. The work referred to was Moncton Milne's (afterwards Lord Houghton) 'Letters and Literary Remains of Keats' published in 1848, and the person to whom the poem may have been addressed was Tennyson's brother Charles, afterwards Charles Tennyson Turner, to the facts of whose life and to whose character it would exactly apply. See Napier, 'Homes and Haunts of Tennyson', 48-50. But Sir Franklin Lushington tells me that it was most probably addressed to some imaginary person, as neither he nor such of Tennyson's surviving friends as he kindly consulted for me are able to identify the person.

You might have won the Poet's name
If such be worth the winning now,

And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;
But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown:
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

"Proclaim the faults he would not show:
Break lock and seal: betray the trust:
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know".

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing.
A song that pleased us from its worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on [1] clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet [2] to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

[Footnote 1: In Examiner and in 1850. My curse upon the.]

[Footnote 2: In Examiner. Sweeter seem. For the sentiment 'cf'. Goethe:--

Ich singe, wie der Vogel singt
Der in den Zweigen wohnt;
Das Lied das aus dem Seele dringt
Ist Lohn, der reichlich lohnet.

--'Der Sanger'.]

TO E. L.,

ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

This was first printed in 1853. It has not been altered since. The poem was addressed to Edward Lear, the landscape painter, and refers to his travels.

Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneian pass, [1]
The vast Akrokeraunian walls, [2]

Tomohrit, [3] Athos, all things fair,
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,
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
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

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.

[Footnote 1: 'Cf'. Lear's description of Tempe:

"It is not a vale, it is a narrow pass, and although extremely beautiful on account of the precipitous rocks on each side, the Peneus flowing deep in the midst between the richest overhanging plane woods,

still its character is distinctly that of a ravine."

--'Journal', 409.]

[Footnote 2: The Akrokeraunian walls: the promontory now called Glossa.]

[Footnote 3: Tomðr, Tomorit, or Tomohritt is a lofty mountain in Albania not far from Elbassan. Lear's account of it is very graphic:

"That calm blue plain with Tomðr in the midst like an azure island in a boundless sea haunts my mind's eye and varies the present with the past".]

LADY CLARE

First published 1842. After 1851 no alterations were made.

This poem was suggested by Miss Ferrier's powerful novel 'The Inheritance'. A comparison with the plot of Miss Ferrier's novel will show with what tact and skill Tennyson has adapted the tale to his ballad. Thomas St. Clair, youngest son of the Earl of Rossville, marries a Miss Sarah Black, a girl of humble and obscure birth. He dies, leaving a widow and as is supposed a daughter, Gertrude, who claim the protection of Lord Rossville, as the child is heiress presumptive to the earldom. On Lord Rossville's death she accordingly becomes Countess of Rossville. She has two lovers, both distant connections, Colonel Delmour and Edward Lyndsay. At last it is discovered that she was not the daughter of Thomas St. Clair and her supposed mother, but of one Marion La Motte and Jacob Leviston, and that Mrs. St. Clair had adopted her when a baby and passed her off as her own child, that she might succeed to the title. Meanwhile Delmour by the death of his elder brother succeeds to the title and estates forfeited by the detected foundling, but instead of acting as Tennyson's Lord Ronald does, he repudiates her and marries a duchess. But her other lover Lyndsay is true to her and marries her. Delmour not long afterwards dies without issue, and Lyndsay succeeds to the title, Gertrude then becoming after all Countess of Rossville. In details Tennyson follows the novel sometimes very closely. Thus the "single rose," the poor dress, the bitter exclamation about her being a beggar born, are from the novel.

The 1842 and all editions up to and including 1850 begin with the following stanza and omit stanza 2:--

Lord Ronald courted Lady Clare,
I trow they did not part in scorn;
Lord Ronald, her cousin, courted her
And they will wed the morrow morn.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lovers long-betroth'd were they:
They two will wed the morrow morn!
God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd!" said Alice the nurse,
"That all comes round so just and fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are not the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?"
Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so wild";
"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,
"I speak the truth: you are my child.

"The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, "if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.

Pull off, pull off, the brooch [1] of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret all ye can."
She said, "Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man".

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice the nurse,
"The man will cleave unto his right."
"And he shall have it," the lady replied,
"Tho' [2] I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."
"O mother, mother, mother," she said,
"So strange it seems to me.

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way. [3]

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are:
I am a beggar born," she said, [4]
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail:
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:
He turn'd, and kiss'd her where she stood:
"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the next in blood--

"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

[Footnote 1: All up to and including 1850. Brooch.]

[Footnote 2: All up to and including 1850. Though.]

[Footnote 3: The stanza beginning "The lily-white doe" is omitted in 1842 and 1843, and in the subsequent editions up to and including 1850 begins "A lily-white doe".]

[Footnote 4: In a letter addressed to Tennyson the late Mr. Peter Bayne ventured to object to the dramatic propriety of Lady Clare speaking of herself as "a beggar born". Tennyson defended it by saying: "You make no allowance for the shock of the fall from being Lady Clare to finding herself the child of a nurse". But the expression is Miss Ferrier's: "Oh that she had suffered me to remain the beggar I was born"; and again to her lover: "You have loved an impostor and a beggar".]

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

Written, as we learn from 'Life', i., 182, by 1835. First published in 1842. No alteration since with the exception of "tho'" for "though".

This poem tells the well-known story of Sarah Hoggins who married under the circumstances related in the poem. She died in January, 1797, sinking, so it was said, but without any authority for such a statement, under the burden of an honour "unto which she was not born". The story is that Henry Cecil, heir presumptive to his uncle, the ninth Earl of Exeter, was staying at Bolas, a rural village in Shropshire, where he met Sarah Hoggins and married her. They lived together at Bolas, where the two eldest of his children were born, for two years before he came into the title. She bore him two other children after she was Countess of Exeter, dying at Burleigh House near Stamford at the early age of twenty-four. The obituary notice runs thus: "January, 1797. At Burleigh

House near Stamford, aged twenty-four, to the inexpressible surprise and concern of all acquainted with her, the Right Honbl. Countess of Exeter." For full information about this romantic incident see Walford's 'Tales of Great Families', first series, vol. i., 65-82, and two interesting papers signed W. O. Woodall in 'Notes and Queries', seventh series, vol. xii., 221-23; 'ibid.', 281-84, and Napier's 'Homes and Haunts of Tennyson', 104-111.

In her ear he whispers gaily,
"If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well".
She replies, in accents fainter,
"There is none I love like thee".
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
Presses his without reproof:
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
"I can make no marriage present;
Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life."
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand:
Summer woods, about them blowing,
Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
"Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell".
So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer:
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly!
He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns;

Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before:
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
"All of this is mine and thine".
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin:
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove:
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirits sank:
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank:
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honour
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
As she murmur'd "Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter
Which did win my heart from me!"
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side:
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he look'd at her and said,
"Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed".
Then her people, softly treading,

Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

First published in 1842. Not altered since 1853.

See for what may have given the hint for this fragment *_Morte D'Arthur_*,
bk. xix., ch. i., and bk. xx., ch. i., and *_cf. Coming of Arthur:_*--

And Launcelot pass'd away among the flowers,
For then was latter April, and return'd
Among the flowers in May with Guinevere.

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
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree [1] gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
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
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;
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 [2] with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
And fleeter now [3] she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast 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
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.

[Footnote 1: Up to 1848. Linden.]

[Footnote 2: All editions up to and including 1850. On mosses thick.]

[Footnote 3: 1842 to 1851. And now more fleet,]

A FAREWELL

First published in 1842. Not altered since 1843.

This poem was dedicated to the brook at Somersby described in the 'Ode to Memory' and referred to so often in 'In Memoriam'. Possibly it may have been written in 1837 when the Tennysons left Somersby. 'Cf. In Memoriam', sect. ci.

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,
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;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns [1] will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

[Footnote 1: 1842. A hundred suns.]

THE BEGGAR MAID

First published in 1842, not altered since.

Suggested probably by the fine ballad in Percy's *Reliques*, first series, book ii., ballad vi.

Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say:
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day".

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien:
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

THE VISION OF SIN

First published in 1842. No alteration made in it after 1851, except in the insertion of a couplet afterwards omitted.

This remarkable poem may be regarded as a sort of companion poem to 'The Palace of Art'; the one traces the effect of callous indulgence in mere intellectual and aesthetic pleasures, the other of profligate indulgence in the grosser forms of sensual enjoyment. At first all is ecstasy and intoxication, then comes satiety, and all that satiety brings in its train, cynicism, pessimism, the drying up of the very springs of life. "The body chilled, jaded and ruined, the cup of pleasure drained to the dregs, the senses exhausted of their power to enjoy, the spirit of its wish to aspire, nothing left but loathing, craving and rottenness." See Spedding in 'Edinburgh Review' for April, 1843. The poem concludes by leaving as an answer to the awful question, "can there be final salvation for the poor wretch?" a reply undecipherable by man, and dawn breaking in angry splendour. The best commentary on the poem would be Byron's lyric: "There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away," and 'Don Juan'; biography and daily life are indeed full of comments on the truth of this fine allegory.

1

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, [1]
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
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,
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.

2

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground; [2]
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;
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;
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,
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,
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,
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.

3

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, [3]
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,
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,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

4

"Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
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.

"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;
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,
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?
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?

"Thou shalt 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:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born. [4]

"We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
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,
Banded 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.

"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
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:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born. [4]

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

"He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's [5] power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

"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,
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:
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
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.

"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;
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
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,
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.

"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?
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,
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
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness--the ground-plan--
Neither modell'd, glazed, or framed:
Buss me thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

"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,
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;
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:
Yet we will not die forlorn."

5

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;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss,
Then some one spake [6]: "Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time".
[7] Another said: "The crime of sense became
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?"
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. [8]

[Footnote 1: A reference to the famous passage in the 'Phaedrus' where
Plato compares the soul to a chariot drawn by the two-winged steeds.]

Footnote 2: Imitated apparently from the dance in Shelley's 'Triumph of
Life':--

The wild dance maddens in the van; and those
...
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
To savage music, wilder as it grows.

They, tortur'd by their agonising pleasure,
Convuls'd, and on the rapid whirlwinds spun
...
Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air.

As their feet twinkle, etc.]

[Footnote 3: See footnote to last line.]

[Footnote 4: All up to and including 1850 read:--

Every _minute_ dies a man,
Every _minute_ one is born.

Mr. Babbage, the famous mathematician, is said to have addressed the following letter to Tennyson in reference to this couplet:--

"I need hardly point out to you that this calculation would tend to keep the sum total of the world's population in a state of perpetual equipoise, whereas it is a] **[Footnote: well-known fact that the said sum total is constantly on the increase. I would therefore take the liberty of suggesting that, in the next edition of your excellent poem, the erroneous calculation to which I refer should be corrected as follows:--

Every moment dies a man,
And one and a sixteenth is born.

I may add that the exact figures are 1.167, but something must, of course, be conceded to the laws of metre."]

[Footnote 5: 1842 and 1843. The tyrant's.]

[Footnote 6: 1842. Said.]

[Footnote 7: In the Selection published in 1865 Tennyson here inserted a couplet which he afterwards omitted:--

Another answer'd: "But a crime of sense!"
"Give him new nerves with old experience."]

[Footnote 8: In Professor Tyndall's reminiscences of Tennyson, inserted in Tennyson's 'Life', he says he once asked him for some explanation of this line, and the poet's reply was:

"The power of explaining such concentrated expressions of the imagination was very different from that of writing them".

And on another occasion he said very happily:

"Poetry is like shot silk with many glancing colours. Every reader must find his own interpretation, according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the poet".

Poetry in its essential forms always suggests infinitely more than it

expresses, and at once inspires and kindles the intelligence which is to comprehend it; if that intelligence, which is perhaps only another name for sympathy, does not exist, then, in Byron's happy sarcasm:--

"The gentle readers wax unkind,
And, not so studious for the poet's ease,
Insist on knowing what he 'means', a hard
And hapless situation for a bard".

Possibly Tennyson may have had in his mind Keats's line:--

"There was an awful rainbow once in heaven"]

COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD...

First published in 'The Keepsake' for 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;
But thou, go by. [1]

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, [2]
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie:
Go by, go by.

[Footnote 1: 'The Keepsake':--But go thou by.]

[Footnote 2: 'The Keepsake' has a small 't' for Time.]

THE EAGLE

{FRAGMENT}

First published in 1851. It has not been altered.

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

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls; [1]
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

[Footnote 1: One of Tennyson's most magically descriptive lines; nothing could exceed the vividness of the words "wrinkled" and "crawls" here.]

MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH...

First published in 1842.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,
O, happy planet, eastward go;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly [1] borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

[Footnote 1: 1842 to 1853. Lightly.]

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK...

First published in 1842. No alteration.

This exquisite poem was composed in a very different scene from that to which it refers, namely in "a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges". See 'Life of Tennyson', vol. i., p. 223.

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

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

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

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

THE POET'S SONG

First published in 1842.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee, [1]
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away".

[Footnote 1: 1889, Fly.]

APPENDIX

The Poems published in MDCCCXXX and in MDCCCXXXIII which were temporarily or finally suppressed.

POEMS PUBLISHED IN MDCCCXXX

ELEGIACS

Reprinted in Collected Works among 'Juvenilia', with title altered to 'Leonine Elegiacs'. The only alterations made in the text were "wood-dove" for "turtle," and the substitution of "or" for "and" in the last line but one.

Lowflowing breezes are roaming the broad valley dimm'd in the
gloaming:
Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only the far river shines.
Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blowing bushes,
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerily; the grasshopper carolleth clearly;
Deeply the turtle coos; shrilly the owlet halloos;
Winds creep; dews fell chilly: in her first sleep earth breathes
stilly:
Over the pools in the burn watergnats murmur and mourn.
Sadly the far kine loweth: the glimmering water outfloweth:
Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to the dark hyaline.
Lowthroned Hesper is stayed between the two peaks; but the Naiad
Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all things bringeth,
Smoothing the wearied mind: bring me my love, Rosalind.
Thou comest morning and even; she cometh not morning or even.
False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet Rosalind?

THE "HOW" AND THE "WHY"

I am any man's suitor,
If any will be my tutor:

Some say this life is pleasant,
Some think it speedeth fast:
In time there is no present,
In eternity no future,
In eternity no past.
We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,
Who will riddle me the _how_ and the _why_?

The bulrush nods unto its brother,
The wheatears whisper to each other:
What is it they say? What do they there?
Why two and two make four? Why round is not square?
Why the rocks stand still, and the light clouds fly?
Why the heavy oak groans, and the white willows sigh?
Why deep is not high, and high is not deep?
Whether we wake, or whether we sleep?
Whether we sleep, or whether we die?
How you are you? Why I am I?
Who will riddle me the _how_ and the _why_?

The world is somewhat; it goes on somehow;
But what is the meaning of _then_ and _now_?
I feel there is something; but how and what?
I know there is somewhat; but what and why?
I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.

The little bird pipeth, "why? why?"
In the summerwoods when the sun falls low
And the great bird sits on the opposite bough,
And stares in his face and shouts, "how? how?"
And the black owl scuds down the mellow twilight,
And chaunts, "how? how?" the whole of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is spilt?
What the life is? where the soul may lie?
Why a church is with a steeple built;
And a house with a chimneypot?
Who will riddle me the how and the what?
Who will riddle me the what and the why?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND NOT IN UNITY WITH ITSELF

There has been only one important alteration made in this poem, when it was reprinted among the 'Juvenilia' in 1871, and that was the suppression of the verses beginning "A grief not uninformed and dull" to

"Indued with immortality" inclusive, and the substitution of "rosy" for "waxen". Capitals are in all cases inserted in the reprint where the Deity is referred to, "through" is altered into "thro" all through the poem, and hyphens are inserted in the double epithets. No further alterations were made in the edition of 1830.

Oh God! my God! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that thou
Didst die for me, for such as _me_,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn
Among the thorns that girt thy brow,
Wounding thy soul.--That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summernoon
While I do pray to thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow!
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?
And what is left to me, but thou,
And faith in thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances--
And children all seem full of thee!
And women smile with saint-like glances
Like thine own mother's when she bow'd
Above thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And thou and peace to earth were born.
Goodwill to me as well as all--
I one of them: my brothers they:
Brothers in Christ--a world of peace
And confidence, day after day;
And trust and hope till things should cease,
And then one Heaven receive us all.
How sweet to have a common faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!
And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound and eat
Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,
With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!

A grief not uninformed, and dull
Hearted with hope, of hope as full
As is the blood with life, or night
And a dark cloud with rich moonlight.
To stand beside a grave, and see
The red small atoms wherewith we
Are built, and smile in calm, and say--

"These little moles and graves shall be
Clothed on with immortality
More glorious than the noon of day--
All that is pass'd into the flowers
And into beasts and other men,
And all the Norland whirlwind showers
From open vaults, and all the sea
O'er washes with sharp salts, again
Shall fleet together all, and be
Indued with immortality."

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee!
Who lets his waxen fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day;
They light his little life alway;
He hath no thought of coming woes;
He hath no care of life or death,
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness
And perfect rest so inward is;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,
Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose dullness would make visible
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
Which mixing with the infant's blood,
Fullfills him with beatitude.
Oh! sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,
To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with brows
Propped on thy knees, my hands upheld
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer--
For me unworthy!--and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining through.
Oh! wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep? why dare
Paths in the desert? Could not I
Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,

To th' earth--until the ice would melt
Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
What Devil had the heart to scathe
Flowers thou hadst rear'd--to brush the dew
From thine own lily, when thy grave
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
So little love for thee? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why pray
To one who heeds not, who can save
But will not? Great in faith, and strong
Against the grief of circumstance
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
Thro' utter dark a fullsailed skiff,
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
Unto the death, not sunk! I know
At matins and at evensong,
That thou, if thou were yet alive,
In deep and daily prayers wouldst strive
To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
At heart, thou wouldst murmur still--
"Bring this lamb back into thy fold,
My Lord, if so it be thy will".
Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod,
And chastisement of human pride;
That pride, the sin of devils, stood
Betwixt me and the light of God!
That hitherto I had defied
And had rejected God--that grace
Would drop from his o'erbrimming love,
As manna on my wilderness,
If I would pray--that God would move
And strike the hard hard rock, and thence,
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's life. Alas!
I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea
At midnight, when the crisp slope waves
After a tempest, rib and fret
The broadimbas'd beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can

Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hues and paves
The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

"Yet" said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunned freshness of my strength,
When I went forth in quest of truth,
"It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,
An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summerheats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Through his warm heart; and then, from whence
He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that seem,
And things that be, and analyse
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be?" Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,
Whom call I Idol? Let thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins
Be unremembered, and thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod

Weighs on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharpheaded worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!
O spirit and heart made desolate!
O damnØd vacillating state!

THE BURIAL OF LOVE

His eyes in eclipse,
Pale cold his lips,
The light of his hopes unfed,
Mute his tongue,
His bow unstrung
With the tears he hath shed,
Backward drooping his graceful head,

Love is dead;
His last arrow is sped;
He hath not another dart;
Go--carry him to his dark deathbed;
Bury him in the cold, cold heart--
Love is dead.

Oh, truest love! art thou forlorn,
And unrevenged? thy pleasant wiles
Forgotten, and thine innocent joy?
Shall hollowhearted apathy,
The cruellest form of perfect scorn,
With languor of most hateful smiles,
For ever write
In the withered light
Of the tearless eye,
An epitaph that all may spy?
No! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,
Nor the round sun that shineth to all;
Her light shall into darkness change;
For her the green grass shall not spring,
Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet birds sing,
Till Love have his full revenge.

TO--

Sainted Juliet! dearest name!
If to love be life alone,
Divinest Juliet,
I love thee, and live; and yet
Love unreturned is like the fragrant flame
Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice
Offered to gods upon an altar throne;
My heart is lighted at thine eyes,
Changed into fire, and blown about with sighs.

SONG

I

I' the glooming light
Of middle night
So cold and white,
Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning wave;
Beside her are laid
Her mattock and spade,
For she hath half delved her own deep grave.
Alone she is there:
The white clouds drizzle: her hair falls loose;
Her shoulders are bare;
Her tears are mixed with the bearded dews.

II

Death standeth by;
She will not die;
With glazed eye
She looks at her grave: she cannot sleep;
Ever alone
She maketh her moan:
She cannot speak; she can only weep;
For she will not hope.
The thick snow falls on her flake by flake,
The dull wave mourns down the slope,
The world will not change, and her heart will not break.

SONG

The lintwhite and the throstlecock
Have voices sweet and clear;
All in the bloomed May.
They from the blosmy brere
Call to the fleeting year,
If that he would them hear
And stay. Alas! that one so beautiful
Should have so dull an ear.

II

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,
But thou art deaf as death;
All in the bloom'd May.
When thy light perisheth
That from thee issueth,
Our life evanisheth: Oh! stay.
Alas! that lips so cruel-dumb
Should have so sweet a breath!

III

Fair year, with brows of royal love
Thou comest, as a king,
All in the bloom'd May.
Thy golden largess fling,
And longer hear us sing;
Though thou art fleet of wing,
Yet stay. Alas! that eyes so full of light
Should be so wandering!

IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen
In rings of gold yronne, [1]
All in the bloom'd May,
We pri'thee pass not on;
If thou dost leave the sun,
Delight is with thee gone, Oh! stay.
Thou art the fairest of thy feres,
We pri'thee pass not on.

[Footnote 1: His crisp hair in ringis was yronne.--Chaucer, _Knight's Tale._ (Tennyson's note.)]

SONG

I

Every day hath its night:
Every night its morn:
Thorough dark and bright
Wing'd hours are borne;
Ah! welaway!

Seasons flower and fade;
Golden calm and storm
Mingle day by day.
There is no bright form
Doth not cast a shade--
Ah! welaway!

II

When we laugh, and our mirth
Apes the happy vein,
We're so kin to earth,
Pleasaunce fathers pain--
Ah! welaway!
Madness laugheth loud:
Laughter bringeth tears:
Eyes are worn away
Till the end of fears
Cometh in the shroud,
Ah! welaway!

III

All is change, woe or weal;
Joy is Sorrow's brother;
Grief and gladness steal
Symbols of each other;
Ah! welaway!
Larks in heaven's cope
Sing: the culvers mourn
All the livelong day.
Be not all forlorn;

Let us weep, in hope--
Ah! welaway!

NOTHING WILL DIE

Reprinted without any important alteration among the 'Juvenilia' in 1871 and onward. No change made except that "through" is spelt "thro'," and in the last line "and" is substituted for "all".

When will the stream be weary of flowing
Under my eye?
When will the wind be weary of blowing
Over the sky?
When will the clouds be weary of fleeting?
When will the heart be weary of beating?
And nature die?
Never, oh! never, nothing will die?
The stream flows,
The wind blows,
The cloud fleets,
The heart beats,
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;
All things will change
Through eternity.
'Tis the world's winter;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago;
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring, a new comer,
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Through and through,
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be filled with life anew.

The world was never made;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Through eternity.

Nothing was born;
Nothing will die;
All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE

Reprinted among 'Juvenilia' in 1872 and onward, without alteration.

Clearly the blue river chimes in its flowing
Under my eye;
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing
Over the sky.
One after another the white clouds are fleeting;
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating
Full merrily;
Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow;
The wind will cease to blow;
The clouds will cease to fleet;
The heart will cease to beat;
For all things must die.

All things must die.
Spring will come never more.
Oh! vanity!
Death waits at the door.
See! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merrymaking.
We are called--we must go.
Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.
Oh! misery!
Hark! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing;
Ice with the warm blood mixing;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell:
Ye merry souls, farewell.
The old earth

Had a birth,
As all men know,
Long ago.
And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore;
For even and morn
Ye will never see
Through eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.

HERO TO LEANDER

Oh go not yet, my love,
The night is dark and vast;
The white moon is hid in her heaven above,
And the waves climb high and fast.
Oh! kiss me, kiss me, once again,
Lest thy kiss should be the last.
Oh kiss me ere we part;
Grow closer to my heart.
My heart is warmer surely than the bosom of the main.

Oh joy! O bliss of blisses!
My heart of hearts art thou.
Come bathe me with thy kisses,
My eyelids and my brow.
Hark how the wild rain hisses,
And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy limbs
So gladly doth it stir;
Thine eye in drops of gladness swims.
I have bathed thee with the pleasant myrrh;
Thy locks are dripping balm;
Thou shalt not wander hence to-night,
I'll stay thee with my kisses.
To-night the roaring brine
Will rend thy golden tresses;
The ocean with the morrow light
Will be both blue and calm;
And the billow will embrace thee with a kiss as soft as mine.

No western odours wander
On the black and moaning sea,

And when thou art dead, Leander,
My soul must follow thee!
Oh go not yet, my love
Thy voice is sweet and low;
The deep salt wave breaks in above
Those marble steps below.
The turretstairs are wet
That lead into the sea.
Leander! go not yet.
The pleasant stars have set:
Oh! go not, go not yet,
Or I will follow thee.

THE MYSTIC

Angels have talked with him, and showed him thrones:
Ye knew him not: he was not one of ye,
Ye scorned him with an undiscerning scorn;
Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,
The still serene abstraction; he hath felt
The vanities of after and before;
Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
The stern experiences of converse lives,
The linked woes of many a fiery change
Had purified, and chastened, and made free.
Always there stood before him, night and day,
Of wayward vary colored circumstance,
The imperishable presences serene
Colossal, without form, or sense, or sound,
Dim shadows but unwaning presences
Fourfaced to four corners of the sky;
And yet again, three shadows, fronting one,
One forward, one respectant, three but one;
And yet again, again and evermore,
For the two first were not, but only seemed,
One shadow in the midst of a great light,
One reflex from eternity on time,
One mighty countenance of perfect calm,
Awful with most invariable eyes.
For him the silent congregated hours,
Daughters of time, divinely tall, beneath
Severe and youthful brows, with shining eyes
Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent light
Of earliest youth pierced through and through with all
Keen knowledges of low-embowed eld)
Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud
Which droops low hung on either gate of life,
Both birth and death; he in the centre fixt,
Saw far on each side through the grated gates

Most pale and clear and lovely distances.
He often lying broad awake, and yet
Remaining from the body, and apart
In intellect and power and will, hath heard
Time flowing in the middle of the night,
And all things creeping to a day of doom.
How could ye know him? Ye were yet within
The narrower circle; he had wellnigh reached
The last, with which a region of white flame,
Pure without heat, into a larger air
Upburning, and an ether of black blue,
Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

THE GRASSHOPPER

I

Voice of the summerwind,
Joy of the summerplain,
Life of the summerhours,
Carol clearly, bound along.
No Tithon thou as poets feign
(Shame fall 'em they are deaf and blind)
But an insect lithe and strong,
Bowing the seeded summerflowers.
Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,
Vaulting on thine airy feet.
Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.
Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and strength complete;
Armed cap-a-pie,
Full fair to see;
Unknowing fear,
Undreading loss,
A gallant cavalier
'Sans peur et sans reproche,'
In sunlight and in shadow,
The Bayard of the meadow.

II

I would dwell with thee,
Merry grasshopper,
Thou art so glad and free,
And as light as air;
Thou hast no sorrow or tears,

Thou hast no compt of years,
No withered immortality,
But a short youth sunny and free.
Carol clearly, bound along,
Soon thy joy is over,
A summer of loud song,
And slumbers in the clover.
What hast thou to do with evil
In thine hour of love and revel,
In thy heat of summerpride,
Pushing the thick roots aside
Of the singing flowered grasses,
That brush thee with their silken tresses?
What hast thou to do with evil,
Shooting, singing, ever springing
In and out the emerald glooms,
Ever leaping, ever singing,
Lighting on the golden blooms?

LOVE, PRIDE AND FORGETFULNESS

Ere yet my heart was sweet Love's tomb,
Love laboured honey busily.
I was the hive and Love the bee,
My heart the honey-comb.
One very dark and chilly night
Pride came beneath and held a light.

The cruel vapours went through all,
Sweet Love was withered in his cell;
Pride took Love's sweets, and by a spell,
Did change them into gall;
And Memory tho' fed by Pride
Did wax so thin on gall,
Awhile she scarcely lived at all,
What marvel that she died?

CHORUS

In an unpublished drama written very early.

The varied earth, the moving heaven,

The rapid waste of roving sea,
The fountainpregnant mountains riven
To shapes of wildest anarchy,
By secret fire and midnight storms
That wander round their windy cones,
The subtle life, the countless forms
Of living things, the wondrous tones
Of man and beast are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

The day, the diamonded light,
The echo, feeble child of sound,
The heavy thunder's griding might,
The herald lightning's starry bound,
The vocal spring of bursting bloom,
The naked summer's glowing birth,
The troublous autumn's sallow gloom,
The hoarhead winter paving earth
With sheeny white, are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

Each sun which from the centre flings
Grand music and redundant fire,
The burning belts, the mighty rings,
The murmurous planets' rolling choir,
The globefilled arch that, cleaving air,
Lost in its effulgence sleeps,
The lawless comets as they glare,
And thunder thro' the sapphire deeps
In wayward strength, are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

LOST HOPE

You cast to ground the hope which once was mine,
But did the while your harsh decree deplore,
Embalming with sweet tears the vacant shrine,
My heart, where Hope had been and was no more.

So on an oaken sprout
A goodly acorn grew;
But winds from heaven shook the acorn out,
And filled the cup with dew.

THE TEARS OF HEAVEN

Heaven weeps above the earth all night till morn,
In darkness weeps, as all ashamed to weep,
Because the earth hath made her state forlorn
With selfwrought evils of unnumbered years,
And doth the fruit of her dishonour reap.
And all the day heaven gathers back her tears
Into her own blue eyes so clear and deep,
And showering down the glory of lightsome day,
Smiles on the earth's worn brow to win her if she may.

LOVE AND SORROW

O Maiden, fresher than the first green leaf
With which the fearful springtide flecks the lea,
Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee
That thou hast half my heart, for bitter grief
Doth hold the other half in sovranity.
Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystalline:
Yet on both sides at once thou canst not shine:
Thine is the bright side of my heart, and thine
My heart's day, but the shadow of my heart,
Issue of its own substance, my heart's night
Thou canst not lighten even with 'thy' light,
All powerful in beauty as thou art.
Almeida, if my heart were substanceless,
Then might thy rays pass thro' to the other side,
So swiftly, that they nowhere would abide,
But lose themselves in utter emptiness.
Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep;
They never learnt to love who never knew to weep.

TO A LADY SLEEPING

O Thou whose fringed lids I gaze upon,
Through whose dim brain the winged dreams are borne,
Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,
In honour of the silverflecked morn:
Long hath the white wave of the virgin light
Driven back the billow of the dreamful dark.
Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,

Though long ago listening the poised lark,
With eyes dropt downward through the blue serene,
Over heaven's parapets the angels lean.

SONNET

Could I outwear my present state of woe
With one brief winter, and induc i' the spring
Hues of fresh youth, and mightily outgrow
The wan dark coil of faded suffering--
Forth in the pride of beauty issuing
A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,
Moving his crest to all sweet plots of flowers
And watered vallies where the young birds sing;
Could I thus hope my lost delights renewing,
I straightly would commend the tears to creep
From my charged lids; but inwardly I weep:
Some vital heat as yet my heart is wooing:
This to itself hath drawn the frozen rain
From my cold eyes and melted it again.

SONNET

Though Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon,
And bitter blasts the screaming autumn whirl,
All night through archways of the bridged pearl
And portals of pure silver walks the moon.
Wake on, my soul, nor crouch to agony,
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to joy,
And dross to gold with glorious alchemy,
Basing thy throne above the world's annoy.
Reign thou above the storms of sorrow and ruth
That roar beneath; unshaken peace hath won thee:
So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms of truth;
So shall the blessing of the meek be on thee;
So in thine hour of dawn, the body's youth,
An honourable old shall come upon thee.

SONNET

Shall the hag Evil die with child of Good,
Or propagate again her loathed kind,
Thronging the cells of the diseased mind,
Hateful with hanging cheeks, a withered brood,
Though hourly pastured on the salient blood?
Oh! that the wind which bloweth cold or heat
Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen beat
Of their broad vans, and in the solitude
Of middle space confound them, and blow back
Their wild cries down their cavernthroats, and slake
With points of blastborne hail their heated eyne!
So their wan limbs no more might come between
The moon and the moon's reflex in the night;
Nor blot with floating shades the solar light.

SONNET

The pallid thunderstricken sigh for gain,
Down an ideal stream they ever float,
And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,
Drown soul and sense, while wistfully they strain
Weak eyes upon the glistening sands that robe
The understream. The wise could he behold
Cathedralled caverns of thick-ribbed gold
And branching silvers of the central globe,
Would marvel from so beautiful a sight
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate could flow:
But Hatred in a gold cave sits below,
Pleached with her hair, in mail of argent light
Shot into gold, a snake her forehead clips
And skins the colour from her trembling lips.

LOVE

Thou, from the first, unborn, undying love,
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories near,
Before the face of God didst breathe and move,
Though night and pain and ruin and death reign here.
Thou foldest, like a golden atmosphere,
The very throne of the eternal God:
Passing through thee the edicts of his fear
Are mellowed into music, borne abroad
By the loud winds, though they uprend the sea,
Even from his central deeps: thine empery
Is over all: thou wilt not brook eclipse;
Thou goest and returnest to His Lips
Like lightning: thou dost ever brood above
The silence of all hearts, unutterable Love.

II

To know thee is all wisdom, and old age
Is but to know thee: dimly we behold thee
Athwart the veils of evil which enfold thee.
We beat upon our aching hearts with rage;
We cry for thee: we deem the world thy tomb.
As dwellers in lone planets look upon
The mighty disk of their majestic sun,
Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling gloom,
Making their day dim, so we gaze on thee.
Come, thou of many crowns, white-robed love,
Oh! rend the veil in twain: all men adore thee;
Heaven crieth after thee; earth walleth for thee:
Breathe on thy winged throne, and it shall move
In music and in light o'er land and sea.

III

And now--methinks I gaze upon thee now,
As on a serpent in his agonies
Awestricken Indians; what time laid low
And crushing the thick fragrant reeds he lies,
When the new year warm breathed on the earth,
Waiting to light him with his purple skies,
Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.
Already with the pangs of a new birth
Strain the hot spheres of his convulsed eyes,
And in his writhings awful hues begin
To wander down his sable sheeny sides,
Like light on troubled waters: from within
Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,
And in him light and joy and strength abides;
And from his brows a crown of living light
Looks through the thickstemmed woods by day and night.

THE KRAKEN

Reprinted without alteration, except in the spelling of "antient," among 'Juvenilia' in 1871 and onward.

Below the thunders of the upper deep;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His antient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides: above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

ENGLISH WAR SONG

Who fears to die? Who fears to die?
Is there any here who fears to die
He shall find what he fears, and none shall grieve
For the man who fears to die;
But the withering scorn of the many shall cleave
To the man who fears to die.

Chorus.--

Shout for England!
Ho! for England!
George for England!
Merry England!
England for aye!

The hollow at heart shall crouch forlorn,
He shall eat the bread of common scorn;
It shall be steeped in the salt, salt tear,
Shall be steeped in his own salt tear:
Far better, far better he never were born
Than to shame merry England here.

Chorus.--Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;
Hark! he shouteth--the ancient enemy!
On the ridge of the hill his banners rise;
They stream like fire in the skies;
Hold up the Lion of England on high
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

Chorus.--Shout for England! etc.

Come along! we alone of the earth are free;
The child in our cradles is bolder than he;
For where is the heart and strength of slaves?
Oh! where is the strength of slaves?
He is weak! we are strong; he a slave, we are free;
Come along! we will dig their graves.

Chorus.--Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;
Will he dare to battle with the free?
Spur along! spur amain! charge to the fight:
Charge! charge to the fight!
Hold up the Lion of England on high!
Shout for God and our right!

Chorus.-Shout for England! etc.

NATIONAL SONG

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be.

Chorus. For the French the Pope may shrive 'em,
For the devil a whit we heed 'em,
As for the French, God speed 'em
Unto their hearts' desire,
And the merry devil drive 'em
Through the water and the fire.

Our glory is our freedom,
We lord it o'er the sea;
We are the sons of freedom,
We are free.

There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no wives like English wives,
So fair and chaste as they be.
There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no maids like English maids,
So beautiful as they be.

Chorus.--For the French, etc.

DUALISMS

Two bees within a chrystal flowerbell rocked
Hum a lovelay to the westwind at noontide.
Both alike, they buzz together,
Both alike, they hum together
Through and through the flowered heather.

Where in a creeping cove the wave unshocked
Lays itself calm and wide,
Over a stream two birds of glancing feather
Do woo each other, carolling together.
Both alike, they glide together
Side by side;
Both alike, they sing together,
Arching blue-glossed necks beneath the purple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love, adown the lea are singing,
As they gambol, lilygarlands ever stringing:
Both in blosmwhite silk are frock&ld:
Like, unlike, they roam together
Under a summervault of golden weather;
Like, unlike, they sing together
Side by side,
Mid May's darling goldenlock&ld,
Summer's tanling diamondeyed.

WE ARE FREE

Reprinted among 'Juvenilia' in 1871 and onward without alteration, except that it is printed as two stanzas.

The winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, "We are Free";
The streams through many a lily row,
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Atween the blossoms, "We are free".

[Greek: Oi Rheontes]

I

All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true,
All visions wild and strange;
Man is the measure of all truth
Unto himself. All truth is change:
All men do walk in sleep, and all
Have faith in that they dream:
For all things are as they seem to all,
And all things flow like a stream.

II

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,
Nor good nor ill, nor light nor shade,
Nor essence nor eternal laws:
For nothing is, but all is made.
But if I dream that all these are,
They are to me for that I dream;
For all things are as they seem to all,
And all things flow like a stream.

Argal--This very opinion is only true relatively to the flowing philosophers. (Tennyson's note.)

"MINE BE THE STRENGTH OF SPIRIT..."

Reprinted without any alteration, except that Power is spelt with a small p, among the Juvenilia in 1871 and onward.

Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free,
Like some broad river rushing down alone,
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea:--
Which with increasing might doth forward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.
Mine be the Power which ever to its sway
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow;
Even as the great gulfstream of Florida
Floats far away into the Northern Seas
The lavish growths of Southern Mexico.

TO--

When this poem was republished among the Juvenilia in 1871 several alterations were made in it. For the first stanza was substituted the following:--

My life is full of weary days,
But good things have not kept aloof,
Nor wander'd into other ways:
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

The second began "And now shake hands". In the fourth stanza for "sudden laughters" of the jay was substituted the felicitous "sudden scritchess," and the sixth and seventh stanzas were suppressed.

I

All good things have not kept aloof
Nor wandered into other ways:
I have not lacked thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise.
But life is full of weary days.

II

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.

III

When in the darkness over me
The fourhanded mole shall scrape,
Plant thou no dusky cypresstree,
Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful crape,
But pledge me in the flowing grape.

IV

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,

V

Then let wise Nature work her will,
And on my clay her darnels grow;
Come only, when the days are still,
And at my headstone whisper low,
And tell me if the woodbines blow.

VI

If thou art blest, my mother's smile
Undimmed, if bees are on the wing:
Then cease, my friend, a little while,
That I may hear the throstle sing
His bridal song, the boast of spring.

VII

Sweet as the noise in parch'd plains
Of bubbling wells that fret the stones,
(If any sense in me remains)
Thy words will be: thy cheerful tones
As welcome to my crumbling bones.

BUONAPARTE

Reprinted without any alteration among 'Early Sonnets' in 1872, and unaltered since.

He thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,
Madman!--to chain with chains, and bind with bands
That island queen who sways the floods and lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,
When from her wooden walls, lit by sure hands,
With thunders and with lightnings and with smoke,
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden fires
Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once more
We taught him: late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with briers.

SONNET

I

Oh, Beauty, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet!
How canst thou let me waste my youth in sighs?
I only ask to sit beside thy feet.
Thou knowest I dare not look into thine eyes,
Might I but kiss thy hand! I dare not fold
My arms about thee--scarcely dare to speak.
And nothing seems to me so wild and bold,
As with one kiss to touch thy blessed cheek.
Methinks if I should kiss thee, no control
Within the thrilling brain could keep afloat
The subtle spirit. Even while I spoke,
The bare word KISS hath made my inner soul
To tremble like a lute-string, ere the note
Hath melted in the silence that it broke.

Reprinted in 1872 among 'Early Sonnets' with two alterations, "If I were loved" for "But were I loved," and "tho'" for "though".

But were I loved, as I desire to be,
 What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
 And range of evil between death and birth,
 That I should fear--if I were loved by thee?
 All the inner, all the outer world of pain
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine,
 As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
 Fresh water-springs come up through bitter brine.
 'Twere joy, not fear, clasped hand in hand with thee,
 To wait for death--mute--careless of all ills,
 Apart upon a mountain, though the surge
 Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
 Below us, as far on as eye could see.

THE HESPERIDES

Hesperus and his daughters three
 That sing about the golden tree.

(Comus).

The Northwind fall'n, in the newstarred night
 Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond
 The hoary promontory of Solo^o
 Past Thymiaterion, in calm'd bays,
 Between the Southern and the Western Horn,
 Heard neither warbling of the nightingale,
 Nor melody o' the Lybian lotusflute
 Blown seaward from the shore; but from a slope
 That ran bloombright into the Atlantic blue,
 Beneath a highland leaning down a weight
 Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedarshade,
 Came voices, like the voices in a dream,
 Continuous, till he reached the other sea.

I

The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmed root.
Round about all is mute,
As the snowfield on the mountain-peaks,
As the sandfield at the mountain-foot.
Crocodiles in briny creeks
Sleep and stir not: all is mute.
If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,
We shall lose eternal pleasure,
Worth eternal want of rest.
Laugh not loudly: watch the treasure
Of the wisdom of the West.
In a corner wisdom whispers.
Five and three
(Let it not be preached abroad) make an awful mystery.
For the blossom unto three-fold music bloweth;
Evermore it is born anew;
And the sap to three-fold music floweth,
From the root
Drawn in the dark,
Up to the fruit,
Creeping under the fragrant bark,
Liquid gold, honeysweet thro' and thro'.
Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,
Looking warily
Every way,
Guard the apple night and day,
Lest one from the East come and take it away.

II

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, ever and aye,
Looking under silver hair with a silver eye.
Father, twinkle not thy steadfast sight;
Kingdoms lapse, and climates change, and races die;
Honour comes with mystery;
Hoarded wisdom brings delight.
Number, tell them over and number
How many the mystic fruittree holds,
Lest the redcombed dragon slumber
Rolled together in purple folds.
Look to him, father, lest he wink, and the golden apple be stol'n away,
For his ancient heart is drunk with over-watchings night and day,
Round about the hallowed fruit tree curled--
Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the wind, without stop,
Lest his scaled eyelid drop, For he is older than the world.

If he waken, we waken,
Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
If he sleep, we sleep,
Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.
If the golden apple be taken
The world will be overwise.
Five links, a golden chain, are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Bound about the golden tree.

III

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, night and day,
Lest the old wound of the world be healed,
The glory unsealed,
The golden apple stol'n away,
And the ancient secret revealed.
Look from west to east along:
Father, old Himala weakens,
Caucasus is bold and strong.
Wandering waters unto wandering waters call;
Let them clash together, foam and fall.
Out of watchings, out of wiles,
Comes the bliss of secret smiles.
All things are not told to all,
Half-round the mantling night is drawn,
Purplefringed with even and dawn.
Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth morn.

IV

Every flower and every fruit the redolent breath
Of this warm seawind ripeneth,
Arching the billow in his sleep;
But the landwind wandereth,
Broken by the highland-steep,
Two streams upon the violet deep:
For the western sun and the western star,
And the low west wind, breathing afar,
The end of day and beginning of night
Make the apple holy and bright,
Holy and bright, round and full, bright and blest,
Mellowed in a land of rest;
Watch it warily day and night;
All good things are in the west,
Till midnight the cool east light
Is shut out by the round of the tall hillbrow;
But when the fullfaced sunset yellowly
Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,
The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,
Goldenkernelled, goldencored,

Sunset-ripened, above on the tree,
The world is wasted with fire and sword,
But the apple of gold hangs over the sea,
Five links, a golden chain, are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Daughters three,
Bound about
All round about
The gnarled bole of the charmed tree,
The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Watch it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmed root.

ROSALIND

Not reprinted till 1884 when it was unaltered, as it has remained since:
but the poem appended and printed by Tennyson (in the footnote) has not
been reprinted.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind?

II

The quick lark's closest-carolled strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightningflash atween the rain,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,
And flashes off a thousand ways,

Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawkeyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me through with pointed light;
And oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind:
Too long you keep the upper skies;
Too long you roam, and wheel at will;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touched with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you love:
When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,
From North to South;
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth. [1]

[Footnote 1: Perhaps the following lines may be allowed to stand as a separate poem; originally they made part of the text, where they were manifestly superfluous:--

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,
Is one of those who know no strife
Of inward woe or outward fear;
To whom the slope and stream of life,
The life before, the life behind,
In the ear, from far and near,
Chimeth musically clear.
My falconhearted Rosalind,
Fullsailed before a vigorous wind,
Is one of those who cannot weep
For others' woes, but overleap
All the petty shocks and fears
That trouble life in early years,
With a flash of frolic scorn

And keen delight, that never falls
Away from freshness, self-upborne
With such gladness, as, whenever
The freshflushing springtime calls
To the flooding waters cool,
Young fishes, on an April morn,
Up and down a rapid river,
Leap the little waterfalls
That sing into the pebbled pool.
My happy falcon, Rosalind;
Hath daring fancies of her own,
Fresh as the dawn before the day,
Fresh as the early seasmell blown
Through vineyards from an inland bay.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Because no shadow on you falls
Think you hearts are tennis balls
To play with, wanton Rosalind?]

SONG

Who can say
Why To-day
To-morrow will be yesterday?
Who can tell
Why to smell
The violet, recalls the dewy prime
Of youth and buried time?
The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

KATE

Reprinted without alteration among the 'Juvenilia' in 1895.

I know her by her angry air,
Her brightblack eyes, her brightblack hair,
Her rapid laughters wild and shrill,
As laughter of the woodpecker
From the bosom of a hill.
'Tis Kate--she sayeth what she will;
For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,
Clear as the twanging of a harp.
Her heart is like a throbbing star.
Kate hath a spirit ever strung

Like a new bow, and bright and sharp
As edges of the scymetar.
Whence shall she take a fitting mate?
For Kate no common love will feel;
My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,
As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith "the world is void of might".
Kate saith "the men are gilded flies".
Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;
Kate will not hear of lover's sighs.
I would I were an arm'd knight,
Far famed for wellwon enterprise,
And wearing on my swarthy brows
The garland of new-wreathed emprise:
For in a moment I would pierce
The blackest files of clanging fight,
And strongly strike to left and right,
In dreaming of my lady's eyes.
Oh! Kate loves well the bold and fierce;
But none are bold enough for Kate,
She cannot find a fitting mate.

SONNET

Written, on hearing of the outbreak of the Polish Insurrection.

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar
The hosts to battle: be not bought and sold.
Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold;
Break through your iron shackles--fling them far.
O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar
Grew to this strength among his deserts cold;
When even to Moscow's cupolas were rolled
The growing murmurs of the Polish war!
Now must your noble anger blaze out more
Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,
The Moslem myriads fell, and fled before--
Than when Zamoysky smote the Tartar Khan,
Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

POLAND

Reprinted without alteration in 1872, except the removal of italics in "now" among the 'Early Sonnets'.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,
And trampled under by the last and least
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown
The fields; and out of every smouldering town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown:--
Cries to thee, "Lord, how long shall these things be?
How long this icyhearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?" Us, O Just and Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three;
Us, who stand now, when we should aid the right--
A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

TO--

Reprinted without alteration as first of the 'Early Sonnets' in 1872; subsequently in the twelfth line "That tho'" was substituted for "Altho'," and the last line was altered to--

"And either lived in either's heart and speech,"

and "hath" was not italicised.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused dream
To states of mystical similitude;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, "All this hath been before,
All this hath been, I know not when or where".
So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,
Our thought gave answer each to each, so true--
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each--
Altho' I knew not in what time or place,
Methought that I had often met with you,
And each had lived in the other's mind and speech.

O DARLING ROOM

I

O darling room, my heart's delight,
Dear room, the apple of my sight,
With thy two couches soft and white,
There is no room so exquisite,
No little room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
Musical Lurlei; and between
The hills to Bingen have I been,
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhene
Curves towards Mentz, a woody scene.

III

Yet never did there meet my sight,
In any town, to left or right,
A little room so exquisite,
With two such couches soft and white;
Not any room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH

You did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame and praise,
Rusty Christopher.
When I learnt from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could not forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher.

THE SKIPPING ROPE

This silly poem was first published in the edition of 1842, and was retained unaltered till 1851, when it was finally suppressed.

Sure never yet was Antelope
Could skip so lightly by,
Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
Will hit you in the eye.
How lightly whirls the skipping-rope!
How fairy-like you fly!
Go, get you gone, you muse and mope--
I hate that silly sigh.
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,
Or tell me how to die.
There, take it, take my skipping-rope,
And hang yourself thereby.

TIMBUCTOO

A POEM WHICH OBTAINED THE CHANCELLOR'S MEDAL AT THE 'Cambridge Commencement' M.DCCCXXIX BY A. TENNYSON Of Trinity College.

Printed in the Cambridge 'Chronicle and Journal' for Friday, 10th July, 1839, and at the University Press by James Smith, among the 'Profusiones Academicae Praemiis annuis dignatae, et in Curiâ Cantabrigiensi Recitatae Comitii Maximis' A.D. M.DCCCXXIX. Reprinted in an edition of the 'Cambridge Prize Poems' from 1813 to 1858 inclusive, by Messrs. Macmillan in 1859, but without any alteration, except in punctuation and the substitution of small letters for capitals where the change was appropriate; and again in 1893 in the appendix to the reprint of the 'Poems by Two Brothers'.

Deep in that lion-haunted island lies
A mystic city, goal of enterprise.

(Chapman.)

I stood upon the Mountain which o'erlooks
The narrow seas, whose rapid interval
Parts Afric from green Europe, when the Sun
Had fall'n below th' Atlantick, and above

The silent Heavens were blench'd with faery light,
Uncertain whether faery light or cloud,
Flowing Southward, and the chasms of deep, deep blue
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars
Were flooded over with clear glory and pale.
I gaz'd upon the sheeny coast beyond,
There where the Giant of old Time infix'd
The limits of his prowess, pillars high
Long time eras'd from Earth: even as the sea
When weary of wild inroad buildeth up
Huge mounds whereby to stay his yeasty waves.
And much I mus'd on legends quaint and old
Which whilome won the hearts of all on Earth
Toward their brightness, ev'n as flame draws air;
But had their being in the heart of Man
As air is th' life of flame: and thou wert then
A center'd glory--circled Memory,
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves
Have buried deep, and thou of later name
Imperial Eldorado roof'd with gold:
Shadows to which, despite all shocks of Change,
All on-set of capricious Accident,
Men clung with yearning Hope which would not die.
As when in some great City where the walls
Shake, and the streets with ghastly faces throng'd
Do utter forth a subterranean voice,
Among the inner columns far retir'd
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis.
Before the awful Genius of the place
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep faith, the while
Above her head the weak lamp dips and winks
Unto the fearful summoning without:
Nathless she ever clasps the marble knees,
Bathes the cold hand with tears, and gazeth on
Those eyes which wear no light but that wherewith
Her phantasy informs them. Where are ye
Thrones of the Western wave, fair Islands green?
Where are your moonlight halls, your cedarn glooms,
The blossoming abysses of your hills?
Your flowering Capes and your gold-sanded bays
Blown round with happy airs of odorous winds?
Where are the infinite ways which, Seraph-trod,
Wound thro' your great Elysian solitudes,
Whose lowest depths were, as with visible love,
Fill'd with Divine effulgence, circumfus'd,
Flowing between the clear and polish'd stems,
And ever circling round their emerald cones
In coronals and glories, such as gird
The unfading foreheads of the Saints in Heaven?
For nothing visible, they say, had birth
In that blest ground but it was play'd about
With its peculiar glory. Then I rais'd
My voice and cried "Wide Afric, doth thy Sun

Lighten, thy hills enfold a City as fair
As those which starr'd the night o' the Elder World?
Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo
A dream as frail as those of ancient Time?"
A curve of whitening, flashing, ebbing light!
A rustling of white wings! The bright descent
Of a young Seraph! and he stood beside me
There on the ridge, and look'd into my face
With his unutterable, shining orbs,
So that with hasty motion I did veil
My vision with both hands, and saw before me
Such colour'd spots as dance athwart the eyes
Of those that gaze upon the noonday Sun.
Girt with a Zone of flashing gold beneath
His breast, and compass'd round about his brow
With triple arch of everchanging bows,
And circled with the glory of living light
And alternation of all hues, he stood.

"O child of man, why muse you here alone
Upon the Mountain, on the dreams of old
Which fill'd the Earth with passing loveliness,
Which flung strange music on the howling winds,
And odours rapt from remote Paradise?
Thy sense is clogg'd with dull mortality,
Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond of clay:
Open thine eye and see." I look'd, but not
Upon his face, for it was wonderful
With its exceeding brightness, and the light
Of the great angel mind which look'd from out
The starry glowing of his restless eyes.
I felt my soul grow mighty, and my spirit
With supernatural excitation bound
Within me, and my mental eye grew large
With such a vast circumference of thought,
That in my vanity I seem'd to stand
Upon the outward verge and bound alone
Of full beautitude. Each failing sense
As with a momentary flash of light
Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. I saw
The smallest grain that dappled the dark Earth,
The indistinctest atom in deep air,
The Moon's white cities, and the opal width
Of her small glowing lakes, her silver heights
Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,
And the unsounded, undescended depth
Of her black hollows. The clear Galaxy
Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful,
Distinct and vivid with sharp points of light
Blaze within blaze, an unimagined depth
And harmony of planet-girded Suns
And moon-encircled planets, wheel in wheel,
Arch'd the wan Sapphire. Nay, the hum of men,

Or other things talking in unknown tongues,
And notes of busy life in distant worlds
Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear.
A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling thoughts
Involving and embracing each with each
Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd,
Expanding momentarily with every sight
And sound which struck the palpitating sense,
The issue of strong impulse, hurried through
The riv'n rapt brain: as when in some large lake
From pressure of descendant crags, which lapse
Disjointed, crumbling from their parent slope
At slender interval, the level calm
Is ridg'd with restless and increasing spheres
Which break upon each other, each th' effect
Of separate impulse, but more fleet and strong
Than its precursor, till the eye in vain
Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade
Dappled with hollow and alternate rise
Of interpenetrated arc, would scan
Definite round.

I know not if I shape
These things with accurate similitude
From visible objects, for but dimly now,
Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,
The memory of that mental excellence
Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine
The indecision of my present mind
With its past clearness, yet it seems to me
As even then the torrent of quick thought
Absorbed me from the nature of itself
With its own fleetness. Where is he that borne
Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,
Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge,
And muse midway with philosophic calm
Upon the wondrous laws which regulate
The fierceness of the bounding element?
My thoughts which long had grovell'd in the slime
Of this dull world, like dusky worms which house
Beneath unshaken waters, but at once
Upon some earth-awakening day of spring
Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft
Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides
Double display of starlit wings which burn
Fanlike and fibred, with intensest bloom:
E'en so my thoughts, ere while so low, now felt
Unutterable buoyancy and strength
To bear them upward through the trackless fields
Of undefin'd existence far and free.

Then first within the South methought I saw
A wilderness of spires, and chrystal pile

Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,
Illimitable range of battlement
On battlement, and the Imperial height
Of Canopy o'er-canopied.

Behind,

In diamond light, upsprung the dazzling Cones
Of Pyramids, as far surpassing Earth's
As Heaven than Earth is fairer. Each aloft
Upon his narrow'd Eminence bore globes
Of wheeling suns, or stars, or semblances
Of either, showering circular abyss
Of radiance. But the glory of the place
Stood out a pillar'd front of burnish'd gold
Interminably high, if gold it were
Or metal more ethereal, and beneath
Two doors of blinding brilliance, where no gaze
Might rest, stood open, and the eye could scan
Through length of porch and lake and boundless hall,
Part of a throne of fiery flame, where from
The snowy skirting of a garment hung,
And glimpse of multitudes of multitudes
That minister'd around it--if I saw
These things distinctly, for my human brain
Stagger'd beneath the vision, and thick night
Came down upon my eyelids, and I fell.

With ministering hand he rais'd me up;
Then with a mournful and ineffable smile,
Which but to look on for a moment fill'd
My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,
In accents of majestic melody,
Like a swol'n river's gushings in still night
Mingled with floating music, thus he spake:

"There is no mightier Spirit than I to sway
The heart of man: and teach him to attain
By shadowing forth the Unattainable;
And step by step to scale that mighty stair
Whose landing-place is wrapt about with clouds
Of glory of Heaven. [1] With earliest Light of Spring,
And in the glow of fallow Summertime,
And in red Autumn when the winds are wild
With gambols, and when full-voiced Winter roofs
The headland with inviolate white snow,
I play about his heart a thousand ways,
Visit his eyes with visions, and his ears
With harmonies of wind and wave and wood--
Of winds which tell of waters, and of waters
Betraying the close kisses of the wind--
And win him unto me: and few there be
So gross of heart who have not felt and known
A higher than they see: They with dim eyes

Behold me darkling. Lo! I have given thee
To understand my presence, and to feel
My fullness; I have fill'd thy lips with power.
I have rais'd thee nigher to the Spheres of Heaven,
Man's first, last home: and thou with ravish'd sense
Listenest the lordly music flowing from
Th'illimitable years. I am the Spirit,
The permeating life which courseth through
All th' intricate and labyrinthine veins
Of the great vine of Fable, which, outspread
With growth of shadowing leaf and clusters rare,
Reacheth to every corner under Heaven,
Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth:
So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in
The fragrance of its complicated glooms
And cool impleached twilights. Child of Man,
See'st thou yon river, whose translucent wave,
Forth issuing from darkness, windeth through
The argent streets o' the City, imaging
The soft inversion of her tremulous Domes.
Her gardens frequent with the stately Palm,
Her Pagods hung with music of sweet bells.
Her obelisks of ranged Chrysolite,
Minarets and towers? Lo! how he passeth by,
And gulphs himself in sands, as not enduring
To carry through the world those waves, which bore
The reflex of my City in their depths.
Oh City! Oh latest Throne! where I was rais'd
To be a mystery of loveliness
Unto all eyes, the time is well nigh come
When I must render up this glorious home
To keen 'Discovery': soon yon brilliant towers
Shall darken with the waving of her wand;
Darken, and shrink and shiver into huts,
Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,
Low-built, mud-wall'd, Barbarian settlement,
How chang'd from this fair City!"

Thus far the Spirit:

Then parted Heavenward on the wing: and I
Was left alone on Calpe, and the Moon
Had fallen from the night, and all was dark!

[Footnote 1: Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.]

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Wilson, 1830.

1832. Poems by Alfred Tennyson. London: Edward Moxon, 1833 (published at
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1837. In the 'Keepsake', an Annual, appears the poem "St. Agnes' Eve,"
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1842. 'Morte d'Arthur, Dora, and other Idyls'. (Privately printed for
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1843. 'Id'. 2 vols. Second Edition, 1843.

1845. 'Id'. Third Edition, 1845.

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1849. In the 'Examiner' for 24th March, 1849, appeared the poem "To----,
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Woolner, and illustrations by Thomas Creswick, John Everett
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Horsley, Dante Gabriel Rosetti, Clarkson Stanfield, and Daniel
Maclise. Pp. xiii., 375. London: Edward Moxon, 1857. 8vo.

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1893. Poems. Illustrated. I vol. (This contains the poems and
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