

throws all at once those sudden illuminations into passionate souls."

The germ of the poem is found in the passage beginning "O that 'twere possible." Part II., Canto iv., which was contributed by the author, in the year 1837, to "The Tribute," a collection of Miscellaneous Poems edited by Lord Northampton, and has been declared by Mr. Swinburne to be "the poem of the deepest charm, and fullest delight of pathos and melody, ever written even by Mr. Tennyson." It is said that "Maud" was written to explain this poem; and we imagine that the fragment, if we may call it so, was never republished, until it appeared as part of the larger poem.

A good many changes have been introduced into "Maud" since its first publication. In the first place it has been divided into three parts, bringing out more clearly the process of the story. At least ten alterations, usually in the way of additions, have been made to the text. In Part I. we have three new stanzas (I. 14, 15, 16) beginning, "What! am I raging?" In I. 19, instead of, "I will bury myself in my books," we have "in myself," an excellent and significant alteration. In X. 7, we have two new lines. In Canto X. we have a new stanza (4) and two new lines forming stanza 6. In XIII. 2, for "earnestly," we have "heartily." Canto XIX., consisting of ten stanzas, is altogether new and important. In Part II., Canto III., is new, as is also the concluding stanza of the volume, beginning, "Let it flame or fade."

We might consider the poem as a profound psychological study of a morbid, heartbroken man, striving to rise out of his malady; or we might look upon it as indicating an insight into the characteristic evils of the age to which it belongs; or we might dwell upon the fitness of the language, and the remarkable power of poetical expression, or upon the splendid command of metres varying in accordance with the nature of the thoughts; or, once more, we might refer to the songs of a marvellous beauty, not unworthy of a place beside those in "The Princess"; and more could not be said.

The hero of "Maud" was the son of a man who had been partner with Maud's father in some commercial concern, and apparently the wealthier partner. For, when Maud was born, the hero, then eight years old, heard "half in a doze," and remembered, long years after, men "drinking together," "drinking and talking of me," and evidently his father saying:—

Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty; so let it be.

But "a vast speculation had failed," and he says:—

That old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drained.

Soon afterwards his father was found in a "ghastly pit," and a "rock fell with him when he fell." It was not quite certain that he had committed suicide; but, as he had gone about railing at the world and its treachery, it was supposed that he had.

The hero of the story, living by himself near the Hall, heard of the return of the family, of the preparations for their reception, remembered Maud, his old playfellow, heard of her beauty, wondered what she would be like, but is quite sure that she will be nothing to him. At this point begins a very wonderful series of experiences and emotions—starting from blank indifference, which, however, is not altogether indifference, since, although the hero finds Maud "faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null," yet, in escaping "heart free," it is "with the least little touch of the spleen"; and the "cold and clear-cut face" comes back breaking his slumbers. Soon we find the morbid discontent of the hero's character in conflict with nascent passion. He would flee from men, but "most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love."

But again the voice of Maud stirs him with a fresh inspiration. A voice by the cedar tree is heard:—

She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

As she goes on "singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die," he feels that he could "weep for a time so sordid and mean, and myself so languid and base." Soon he meets Maud, and discovers that the discourtesy which she seemed to show him on a former occasion was not on her part voluntary, but had been the effect of her brother's influence; and she made amends:—

And she touched my hand with a smile so sweet
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not returned. (vi. 2.)

Yet again suspicion arises. Perhaps she only meant to weave "a snare of some coquettish deceit." And yet again he reproaches himself for his suspiciousness:—

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

And the same thought, expressed in the same words, returns on another token of her favour, and he felt

The new strong wine of love
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip.

Again they were together in the village church, and

Once she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blushed
To find they were met by my own.

Again he met her riding with her brother and the new lord, and though she waved to him with her hand, the old passion of doubt and jealousy returned upon him. For how could he hope to prevail against such a rival—one who was

Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore? (x. 1.)

Yet again hope arises within him, and he asks that the solid ground may not fail beneath his feet, until he finds love (xi. 1.); and this is followed by the charming poem of the meeting with Maud "in our wood," "gathering woodland lilies." This little piece is full of beauties, for example:—

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touched the meadows
And left the daisies rosy. (xi. 6.)

At last he hears that her brother has gone away from home,

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight,

and he resolves to take advantage of the opportunity, and tell her of his love:—

For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her or die. (xvi. 3.)

And here let us note the changes of metre with the change of thought. Thus in the charming verses (xvii.) beginning "Go not, happy day," there is the most admirable adaptation of the sound to the sentiment. Here, too, we have the hyperbole of delight over the success of love, set forth under the image of a wave that passes from East to West and West to East:—

When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
O'er the blowing ships,
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West,
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap beyond the sea.

And this is followed by the beautiful lines beginning:—

I have led her home, my love, my only friend,
There is none like her, none.

But alas! this cannot be forever. The brother returns, breaking up the dream of delight. And now there is to be a grand political dinner to the half-squirelings near, "and Maud will wear her jewels, and the bird of prey will hover"—a dinner and then a dance, and every eye but his will see Maud in all her glory; for he is not invited; yet for a minute she will come out and show herself to her "own true lover." The rivulet which flows down from the Hall and crosses his ground brings him down a rose from Maud, which seems to invite him to come up and see her; and they meet.

There is no portion of this great poem better known than the splendid canto or song (xxii.) beginning

Come into the garden, Maud.

It is full of beauties, of picturesque descriptions, of the most charming fancy, of the most perfect mellifluous language, the whole pervaded by a depth and strength of compressed and suppressed passion which is sometimes overlooked in Tennyson. There is hardly a line which does not present a happy phrase. "The black bat night has flown" is an example. Again he says the March wind

Sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes.

Again:—

Queen rose of the roselud garden of girls.

and

Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls

But the last stanza could hardly be equalled:—

She is coming, my own, my sweet:
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

She comes and it is their last meeting. "For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word," when they were interrupted by her brother and the "babe-faced lord." Her brother upbraided her, gave the lie to her lover, and on receiving a fierce rejoinder struck him—an insult which could be effaced only by blood. The brother fell. "The fault was mine, he whispered, fly." And the ghastly wraith of the sister glided out of the wood,

And there rang on a sudden, a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

(Part ii. i. 1.)

He flies, and we meet him on the coast of Brittany, absorbed in the contemplation of a tiny shell, "small and pure as a pearl," "frail but a work divine." Meditating upon this he wondered over the former inhabitant, and wondered as he thought how this slight thing which could be crushed by a tap of his finger nail, yet was of force to withstand, year after year, the shocks of the ocean, shocks which could "snap the three-decker's oaken spine." And then the image of Maud rises before him; and afterwards he goes "back to the dark sea-line, looking,

thinking of all I have lost," with the sense of blood-guiltiness upon him. And then it strikes him as strange that a mind, burdened as his was, should be absorbed in the contemplation of a shell; and then he remembered how, when Maud's brother lay dying,

I noticed one of his many rings,
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

But perhaps he was not dead after all, and he need not have fled, for he may not be guilty of blood; and then he breaks out into the passionate pleading:—

However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

(Part ii. ii. 9.)

Reference has already been made to the germ of the whole poem, now part ii. iv. 1, beginning

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

The beauty, the variety, the pathos, of this poem are indescribable, and quotation would give but little notion of its charm. Here, however, is one other stanza (ii.):

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evening fall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

And then, after this burst of grief, there comes a period of insensibility, when he fancies himself dead—long dead, and his heart a handful of dust, and buried, and the wheels go over his head; and then he raves at the babbler who told of Maud being in the garden with him. "Prophet, curse me the babbling lip, and curse me the British vermin, the rat." And then, again, Maud is standing at his head, "not beautiful now, not even kind;" and a beautiful stanza follows (8) "But I know where a garden grows"; but this only leads to the thought of the "Sultan of brutes"; the dead man with "that hole in his side"; and this again to the old man who had caused the death of "a friend of mine" (his father), and what he would think when he came "to the second corpse in the pit."

The third part is short, comprising one brief canto of five stanzas, telling how the dead Maud appeared and "spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars" and bid him in that hope "let trouble have rest, knowing I tarry for thee"; and she pointed to Mars, "as he glowed like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast." And, although this was a dream, yet it lightened his despair.

When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease.

And at last the patriotic sentiment flashed up in his heart, and the "old hysterical mock disease" began to die, and the mind recovered its health, and he began to accept his destiny and to believe in the government of God. Thus the poem closes:—

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

PARIS LETTER.

THE opening of a new Parliamentary session, which has just taken place, brings with it many journalistic changes. Three new evening journals are announced at one sou each; this generally means the birth of as many political sects, whose leaders are candidate premiers or presidents, as a matter of course. One relatively important evening paper has reduced its price from two to one sou. Paris has now seventy dailies; perhaps not more than half a dozen of these pay their way on legitimate trade principles; the others depend for their existence by farming a page to a financial establishment to indulge in bulls and bears to its heart's content. Some journals are supported by the votaries of an idea, or the devotees of a cause. A few are the organs of persons with a crank, or some vengeance on the brain to be wreaked on society, on a party, or a public character. In any case, the cost of bringing out a "broad sheet" is not extravagant; three sides are generally stereotyped matter, the fourth contains a one or two-column article by the head of the combination, but with a reputation more or less known. The advertisements, when not dummies, bring him little grist to the mill. As a rule the French do not care for piping hot news.

One of the "little strangers" is a veritable curiosity; it is called *Le Vrai Journal*, and the price is 2½ centimes, or one farthing; it consists of four pages; each page is 23x16 inches, and there are four columns to the page. It is set up and machined in a provincial town, contains illustrations, some original matter and a few advertisements. It does not appear to supply the historical "long felt want"; it does not look as if it came to stay; it runs no firm's goods, rides no hobby, offers no insurance policy in case you are smashed in a railway collision and on your remains a copy of the paper be found serving as