

may, and generally do, fail to move the higher intellects which are readily captivated by the Muse. Yet, as the great poet must have some turn for dramatic narrative, so the very great romancer must be essentially a poet. Characters, motives, incidents, all must be elaborated by the poet; and when he has done that his all is done; so we may safely conclude that a story in poetry differs from a story in prose only in the sense that poetry itself differs from prose; that is to say, it is more ideal in its conception, more impassioned in its expression, and more brilliant and retentive in its imagery. In all other respects, except that of continued dialogue, to which poetry does not lend itself, it is governed by the same main laws of composition as prose, in as much as it concerns itself with feelings, motives, and actions which are within the range of human experience and sympathy.

If those principles were more generally understood, there would be, I have no doubt, far more readers of poetry, especially of narrative poetry; but, unfortunately, they are little known and less practiced, even by persons from whom a large amount of artistic knowledge might naturally be expected. For instance, it would be of incalculable benefit for such poets as Swinburne, whose genius as a musician in words, it were idle to deny, had they discovered for themselves and rigorously applied to their work the broad principles underlying the whole art of narration whether in verse or prose; for we should then probably be spared the too extensive literature, at once vague, rambling and inconclusive, of which "*Tristram of Lyonesse*" is an example and a warning, and be placed in possession of more models of pure narrative poetry, like the "*Enoch Arden*" of Lord Tennyson and the "*Foray of Queen Meave*" of Aubrey de Vere.

This latter poem, whether we consider its theme or its execution, must justly be assigned a most important position. When it was given to the public in 1882, Aubrey de Vere had arrived at the advanced age of sixty-eight years. The bard is now eighty-five, but yet "wears the rose of youth upon him," and delights his hosts of friends by showing every indication of making it impossible for anyone to say of him for many years what Lord Melbourne said of another poet. On Crabbe's death, Lord Melbourne rubbed his hands and took a view of it which was more than con-