

assigns to the Crimean War in the redemption of his hero, and by the constant references throughout the poem to the purifying effects of war, touched upon current politics, and roused the antagonism of the peace-party in general and the opponents of the war in particular. John Churton Collins well says: "By representing the Crimean War as having roused his hero from his egotism and despair, as well as by the commentaries on that war which he puts into his mouth, Tennyson made the poem bear very immediately on contemporary politics. It was composed and appeared when the excitement about the Crimean War was at its height, when the 'peace-party,' headed by John Bright and others, was clamouring in opposition to the war, and the Government and the 'war-party' were on their defence. Tennyson's own sympathies, as his other writings show, were enthusiastically on the side of the war-party, and it was not perhaps very skilful advocacy to make so crazy a person as the hero of the poem, the mouthpiece, in all seriousness, of the opinions and sentiments of that party. Thus the poem was in some respects the manifesto of a political faction, and, into the very unfavourable contemporary critiques of the work political feeling undoubtedly entered. It has passed now into a serener atmosphere."¹

¹ Mr. Gladstone, who published in *The Quarterly Review* for October, 1859, a somewhat scathing article dealing with *Maud*, twenty years later added a note: —

"In this attempt at a criticism upon *Maud*, I can now see, and I at once confess, that a feeling, which had reference to the growth of the war-spirit in the outer world at the date of this article, dislocated my frame of mind, and disabled me from dealing even tolerably with the work as a work of imagination. Whether it is to be desired that a poem should require from common men a good deal of effort in order to comprehend it; whether all that is put into the mouth of the Soliloquist in *Maud* is within the lines of poetical verisimilitude; whether