

In deference to the fame of an illustrious contemporary, I may be permitted to observe that when, in my college days, I proposed to my ambition the task of a narrative poem, having King Arthur for its hero, I could not have even guessed that the same subject would occur to a Poet somewhat younger than myself, and then unknown to the Public; and though, when my work was first printed in 1848, Mr. Tennyson's "*Morte d'Arthur*" had appeared, I was not aware of any intention on his part to connect it with other poems illustrating selected fables of the legendary King. Fortunately for me, the point of view from which the subject had already presented itself to my imagination, and the design and plan I had proposed to myself in the treatment of it, were so remote from the domains of romance to which the genius of Mr. Tennyson has resorted, that I may claim one merit rare in those who have come after him,—I have filled no pitcher from fountains hallowed to himself.

In constructing from the confused myths that surround the image of Arthur, a continuous narrative poem, preserving unity of action, and aiming at something of national colouring and purpose, the detached romances of the Round Table, taken "out of certeyn bookes of Frenshe and reduced into Englysshe," by Sir Thomas Malory, appeared to me but little available. The unconnected character of these stories is thus accurately described by Southey:—

"Nothing can be more inartificial in structure than the Romances of the Round Table. Adventure produces adven-