

Flash! the vicar has found his box of vestas, and a tiny glare flickers apologetically through the darkness that seems bent on overwhelming so puny an intruder upon its domains.

"Good gracious! Whatever's the meaning of this!" and the vicar hurries forward to where the spare white locks of the old schoolmaster glitter back the feeble rays of the little gleam.

For a moment the stern austere man shudders in every fibre as the extended fingers of his hand recoil from that icy touch, then bracing himself, as with a mighty effort, he turns back through the stifling darkness—for his match has dropped from his grasp—to the doorway, where his daughter still stands.

"Lydia, my dear, run and tell Copp, the blacksmith, to come to me, and then go home and wait till I come. No, no, no, my darling, never mind about the concert; no questions; do as I tell you." And Lydia wondered, as she went, at the hollow voice and chastened manner with which her father had bidden her obey him.

—So poetically splendid was the burial of Tennyson in Westminster Abbey that the morning dirge resounding among the Gothic arches overhead was like a song of triumph chanted at the coronation of a king. England, though in tears, was glad that another of her sons, the greatest in his day, had come safely home to his inheritance in the Abbey where the grand old mother guards the ashes of her poets, her statesmen, her warriors, and her kings. Solemn, dignified, and mournful, as every part of the funeral was, there was also an air of spiritual exultation in the anthem, as if the poet himself were singing it. Surely his living genius was in the notes of the great organ when it said:

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark;
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

For though from out our bourne of time and place,
The flood shall bear me far,
I hope to meet my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar."

Only a great spirit, innocent, and therefore fearless, could say "face to face" as the harbour of eternity appeared before him, and he could almost hear the moaning of the breakers on the bar. It was all characteristic and harmonious, for "face to face," is a very English phrase, as Tennyson was a very English man. Willing to meet "face to face" whomsoever or whatsoever might be "across the bar," serene as a philosopher, he died with Cymbeline in his hand; and with poetic fitness