

But perhaps the best piece of criticism evoked by the controversy was the "*Maud*" *Vindicated* of Dr. Robert James Mann. This paper-covered pamphlet of seventy-eight pages is a masterly defence of the poem, so good that Tennyson wrote to the author: "Thanks for your vindication. No one with this essay before him can in future pretend to misunderstand my dramatic poem *Maud*; your commentary is as true as it is full." The little book is written with calmness and deliberation, and none the less with enthusiasm and intense reverence for the poet and his work. The criticism is acute, the argument admirably sustained.

About the same time, William Cory, aroused to indignation by the abuse showered on *Maud* in contrast to the favour with which Tennyson's productions had hitherto been received, published in a volume entitled *Ionica* a poem *After Reading "Maud."* The lines are so altogether admirable in feeling and expression that they are quoted in full:—

"Twelve years ago, if he had died,
His critic friends had surely cried:
'Death does us wrong, the fates are cross;
Nor will this age repair the loss.
Fine was the promise of his youth;
Time would have taught him deeper truth.
Some earnest of his wealth he gave,
Then hid his treasures in the grave.'
And proud that they alone on earth
Perceived what might have been his worth,
They would have kept their leader's name
Linked with a fragmentary fame.
Forsooth the beeches' knotless stem,
If early felled, were dear to them.
But the fair tree lives on, and spreads
Its scatheless boughs above their heads,