

he valued in reality, what is best worth doing and being in life. All that he wrote, in verse or prose romance, is a tale of his own great adventure through a world that he wished to change; and we cannot yet tell how great a change he has worked or will work upon it. But we know already that he was one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century and, with Tolstoy, the most lonely and distinct of them all. In this book I have tried to give some description of his greatness rather than to write his life, for that has been well done by Mr. Mackail already. He is the subject of a volume in this series, not because he was a poet or an artist, but because the minds of men would have been different from what they are if he had never been born. Yet his art and his poetry were a great part of his action; indeed he was artist and poet before he had any conscious intention of changing the world, and the world has listened to his advice because he was an artist and a poet.

He was also, I believe, a greater and far more various poet than most people think. He is commonly known as a spinner of agreeable but shadowy romances, both in verse and in prose. I have therefore written at