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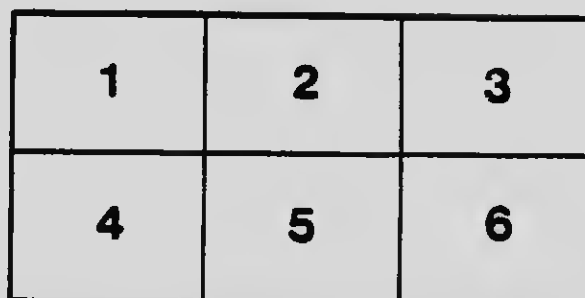
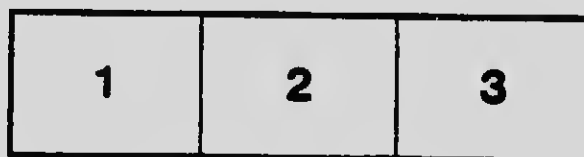
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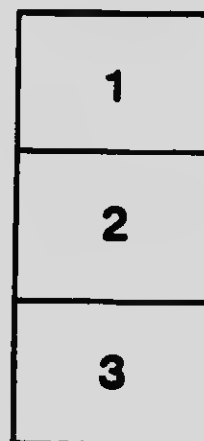
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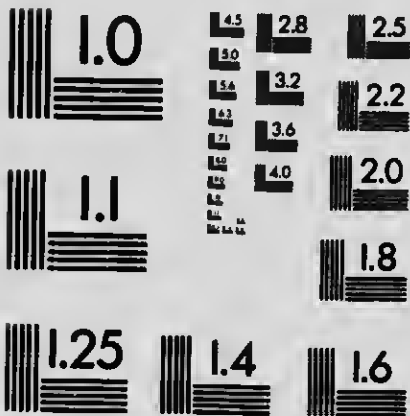
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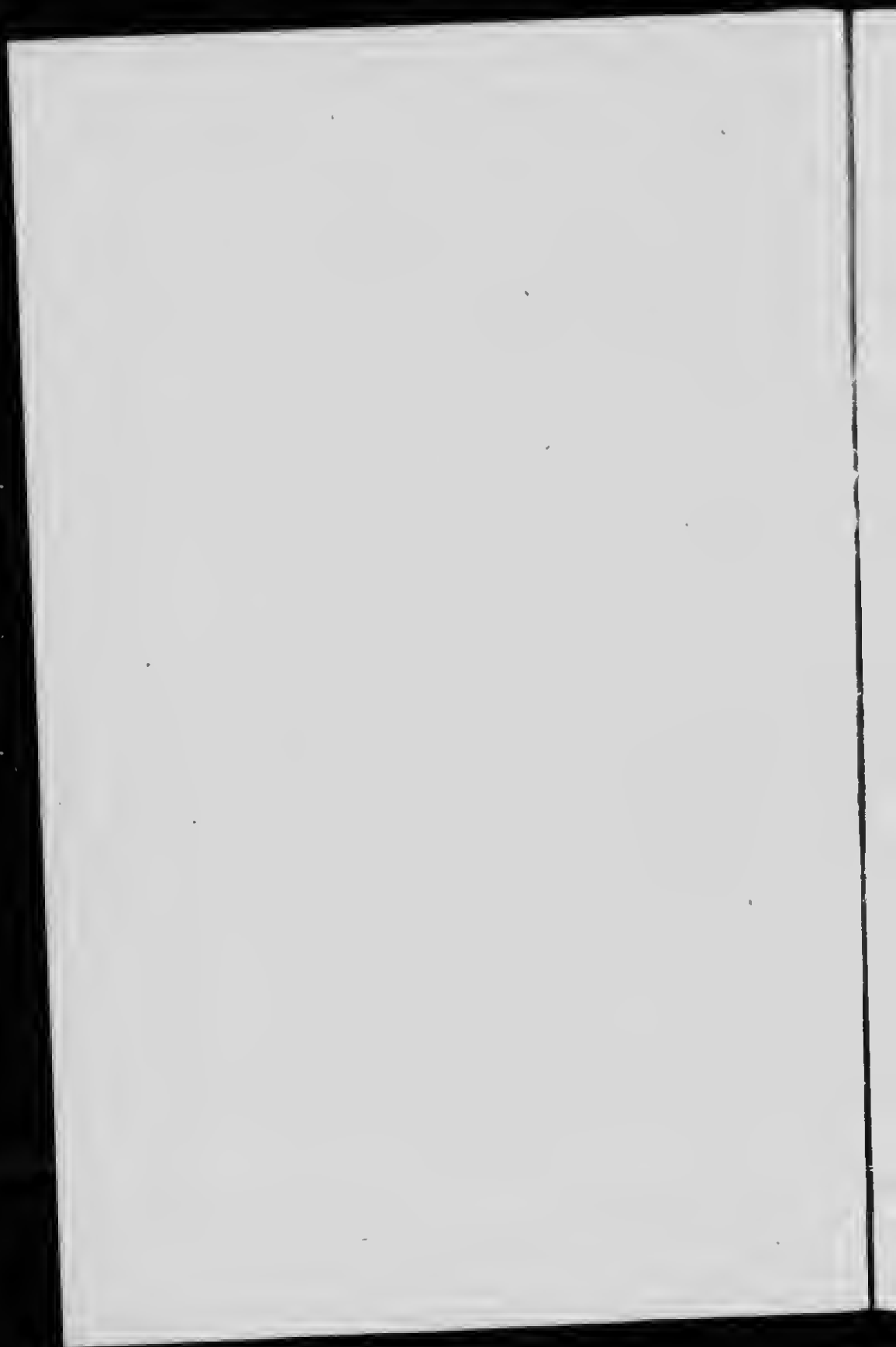
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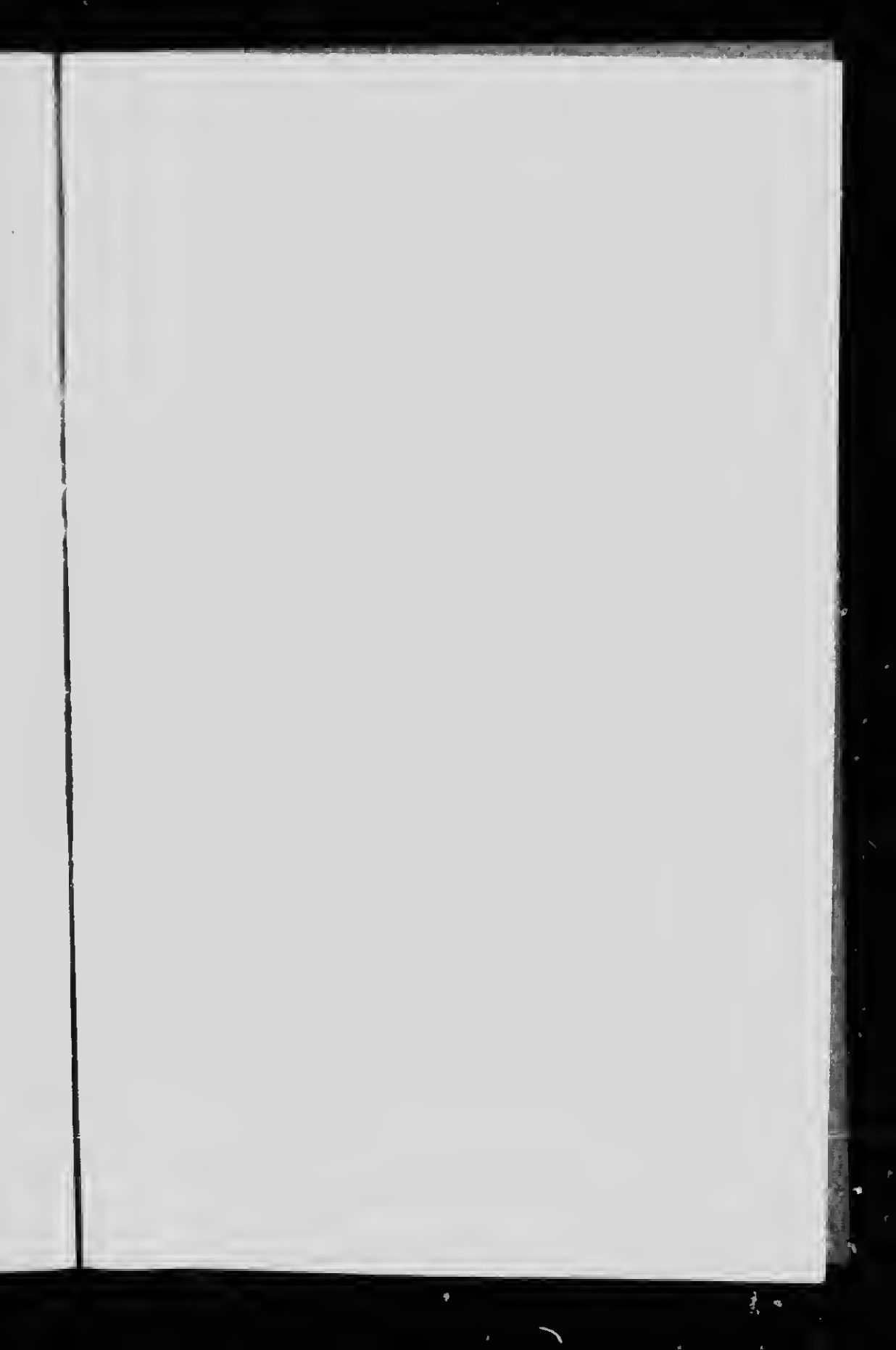


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Browning.

SELECT POEMS
FROM
TENNYSON AND BROWNING

EDITED WITH BRIEF NOTES

BY

W. J. ALEXANDER, PH.D.,
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TORONTO :
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TENNYSON.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs hy
To many-tower'd Camelot; 5
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd 20
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot;
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand? 25
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy 35
 Lady of Shalott.'

PART II.

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colours gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay 40
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott. 45

And moving thro' a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot: 50
 There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, 55
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,

Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60
 The knights come riding two and two :
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights, 65
 For often thro' the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot :
 Or when the moon was overhast,
 Came two young lovers lately wed ; 70
 'I am half sick of shadows,' said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves, 75
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily 85
 As he rode down to Camelot :

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

90

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one hurning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

95

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

100

105

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

110

115

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining, 120
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot ;
 Down she came and found a boat
 Beneath a willow left afloat,
 And round about the prow she wrote 125
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
 Like some bold seer in a trance,
 Seeing all his own mischance—
 With a glassy countenance 130
 Did she look to Camelot.
 And at the closing of the day
 She loosed the chain and down she lay ;
 The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott. 135

Lying, robed in snowy white
 That loosely flew to left and right—
 The leaves upon her falling light—
 Thro' the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot : 140
 And as the boat-head wound along
 The willowy hills and fields among,
 They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy, 145
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
 For ere she reach'd upon the tide
 150
 The first house by the water-side,
 Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
 By garden-wall and gallery,
 155
 A gleaming shape she floated by,
 Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
 160
 And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
 And in the lighted palace near
 Died the sound of royal cheer;
 165
 And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:

But Lancelot mused a little space;
 He said, 'She has a lovely face;
 God in his mercy lend her grace,
 170
 The Lady of Shalott.'

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon :
 My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
 May my soul follow soon !
 The shadows of the convent-towers 5
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord :
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies, 10
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
 To yonder shining ground ;
 As this pale taper's earthly spark, 15
 To yonder argent round ;
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,
 My spirit before Thee ;
 So in mine earthly house I am,
 To that I hope to be. 20
 Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ; 25
 The flashes come and go ;
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,
 And strows her lights below,
 And deepens on and up ! the gates
 Roll back, and far within 30

For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
 To make me pure of sin,
 The sabbaths of Eternity,
 One sabbath deep and wide—
 A light upon the shining sea—
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

35

‘COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD.’

Come not, when I am dead,
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
 To trample round my fallen head,
 And vex the unhappy dust thou would’st not save.
 There let the wind sweep and the plover cry :
 But thou, go by.

5

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
 I care no longer, being all unblest :
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
 And I desire to rest.
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :
 Go by, go by.

10

“BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.”

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman’s boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play !
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay !

5

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ—ELAINE.

11

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

10

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

15

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

5

10

ELAINE.

Elaine the fair, Elaine the loveable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam:
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon

5

All the devices blazon'd on the shield
 In their own tinct, and added, of her wit, 10
 A border fant of branch and flower,
 And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day
 Leaving her household and good father climb'd
 That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door, 15
 Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
 Now made a pretty history to herself
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
 And every scratch a lance had made upon it, 20
 Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
 That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God 25
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down
 And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt 30
 For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
 Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,
 Long ere the people chose him for their king, 35
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyornesse,
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
 Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
 For here two brothers, one a king, had met 40
 And fought together; but there names were lost.

And each had slain his brother at a blow,
 And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd :
 And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
 And lichen'd into colour with the crags : 45
 And one of these, the king, had on a crown
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
 And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull 50
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rim
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn :
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
 And set it on his head, and in his heart 55
 Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,
 Saying "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
 Divinely, are the kingdom's not the king's— 60
 For public use : henceforward let there be,
 Once every year, a joust for one of these :
 For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
 In use of arms and manhood, till we drive 65
 The Heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
 Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he spoke :
 And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
 Had Lancelot won the d'iamond of the year,
 With purpose to present them to the Queen, 70
 When all were won ; but meaning all at once
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his court 75
 Hard on the river nigh the place which now
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
 Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
 "Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move 80
 To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "you know it."
 "Then will you miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
 A sight you love to look on." And the Queen
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly 85
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
 He thinking that he read her meaning there,
 "Stay with me, I am sick ; my love is more
 Than many diamonds," yielded, and a heart,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen 90
 (However much he yearn'd to make complete
 The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)
 Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
 "Sir King, my ancient wound is hardly whole,
 And lets me from the saddle ;" and the King 95
 Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
 No sooner gone than suddenly she began.

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame.
 Why go you not to these fair jousts? the knights
 Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd 100
 Will murmur, Lo the shameless ones, who take
 Their pastime now the trustful king is gone!"
 Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain :
 "Are you so wise? you were not once so wise,
 My Queen, that summer, when you loved me first. 105
 Then of the crowd you took no more account

- 75 Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
 When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
 And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
 Them surely can I silence with all ease. 110
 But now my loyal worship is allow'd
 Of all men : many a bard, without offence,
 80 Has link'd our names together in his lay,
 Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
 The pearl of beauty : and our knights at feast 115
 Have pledged us in this union, while the king
 Would listen smiling. How then ? is there more ?
 85 Has Arthur spoken aught ? or would yourself,
 Now weary of my service and devoir,
 Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord ?" 120
- She broke into a little scornful laugh.
 90 " Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
 That passionate perfection, my good lord—
 But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven ?
 He never spake word of reproach to me, 125
 He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
 95 He cares not for me : only here to-day
 There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes :
 Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else
 Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round, 130
 And swearing men to vows impossible,
 To make them like himself : but, friend, to me
 He is all fault who hath no fault at all :
 For who loves me must have a touch of earth ;
 The low sun makes the colour : I am yours, 135
 Not Arthur's, as you know, save by the bond.
 And therefore hear my words : go to the jousts :
 105 The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
 When sweetest ; and the vermin voices bere
 May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting." 140

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights,
 "And with what face, after my pretext made,
 Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
 Before a king who honours his own word,
 As if it were his God's?"

145

"Yea," said the Queen,
 "A moral child without the craft to rule,
 Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
 If I must find you wit: we hear it said
 That men go down before your spear at a touch,
 But knowing your are Lancelot; your great name,
 This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
 Win! by this kiss you will: and our true king
 Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
 As all for glory; for to speak him true,
 You know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
 No keener hunter after glory breathes.
 He loves it in his knights more than himself:
 They prove to him his work: win and return."

150

155

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
 Wroth at himself: not willing to be known,
 He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
 Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
 And there among the solitary downs,
 Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
 Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
 That all in loops and links among the dales
 Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
 Thither he made and wound the gateway horn.
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
 Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
 And issuing found the Lord of Astolat

160

165

170

With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court ;

175

And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house

145 There was not : some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight

Approach'd them : then the Lord of Astolat :

180

" Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips ? for by thy state

150 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the king, who eat in Arthur's halls.

Him have I seen : the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

185

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights.

155 " Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,

What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.

But since I go to joust as one unknown

190

At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,

Hereafter you shall know me—and the shield—

160 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,

Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, " Here is Torre's :

195

Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.

And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.

165 His you can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,

" Yea since I cannot use it, you may have it."

Here laugh'd the father saying, " Fie, Sir Churl.

200

Is that an answer for a noble knight ?

Allow him : but Lavaine, my younger here,

He is so full of lustihood, he will ride

Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour

And set it in this damsel's golden hair,

205

170 To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not
 Before this noble knight," said young Lavaino,
 "For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre :
 He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go : 210
 A jest, no more : for, knight, the maiden dreamt
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,
 And that it was too slippery to be held,
 And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
 The castle-well, belike ; and then I said 215
 That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it
 (But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
 Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
 But, father, give me leave, and if he will,
 To ride to Camelot with this noble knight : 220
 Win shall I not, but do my best to win :
 Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So you will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
 Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
 O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself, 225
 Then were I glad of you as guide and friend ;
 And you shall win this diamond—as I hear,
 It is a fair large diamond,—if you may,
 And yield it to this maiden, if you will."
 "A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre, 230
 "Such be for Queens and not for simple maids."
 Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
 Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
 Before the strang'r knight, who, looking at her, 235
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd :
 "If what is fair be but for what is fair,
 And only Queens are to be counted so,
 Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like." 240

210 He spoke and ceased : the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen, 245
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.

215 Another sirning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it : but in him 250
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.

220 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in Hall, 255
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.

225 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom. 260

230 Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind : 265

235 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he :
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere, 270
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,

The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
 "He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd ; 275
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill." 280
 "O there, great Lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
 Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
 O tell us ; for we live apart, you know
 Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke 285
 And answer'd him at full, as having been
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem ;
 And in the four wild battles by the shore
 Of Douglas ; that on Bassa ; then the war 290
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
 Of Celidon the forest ; and again
 By castle Gurnion where the glorious King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
 Carved of one emerald, center'd in a sun 295
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed ;
 And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
 When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;
 And up in Agned Cathregonion too, 300
 And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
 Where many a heathen fell ; "and on the mount
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King
 Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
 And all his legions crying Christ and him, 305
 And break them ; and I saw him, after, stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
 Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
 275 And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
 'They are broken, they are broken !' for the King, 310
 However mild he seems at home, nor cares
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
 For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
 280 Saying, his knights are better men than he—
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of God 315
 Fills him : I never saw his like : there lives
 No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,
 285 Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
 "Save your great self, fair lord ;" and when he fell
 From talk of war to traits of pleasantry — 320
 Being mirthful he but in a stately kind—
 She still took note that when the living smile
 290 Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
 Of melancholy severe, from which again,
 Whenever in her hovering to and fro 325
 The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
 There brake a sudden beaming tenderness
 295 Of manners and of nature : and she thought
 That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
 And all night long his face before her lived, 330
 As when a painter, poring on a face,
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
 300 Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
 The shape and colour of a mind and life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its best 335
 And fullest ; so the face before her lived,
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
 305 Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought

She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine. 340
 First as in fear, step after step, she stole
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating :
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
 "This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from out the tower. 345
 There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd
 The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon him, saw 350
 The maiden standing in the dewy light.
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's. 355
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
 That he should wear her favour at the tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
 "Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest—will you wear 360
 My favour at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
 "Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
 Favour of a lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."
 "Yea, so," she answer'd ; "then in wearing mine 365
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
 That those who know should know you." And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd, "True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me : 370
 What is it?" and she told him "A red sleeve
 Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile

340 Saying, "I never yet have done so much
 For any maiden living," and the blood 375
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight ;
 But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
 345 His brother's ; which he gave to Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair Elaine ; 380
 "Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
 In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
 She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your Squire."
 350 Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid 385
 In earnest, let me bring your colour back ;
 Once, twice, and thrice : now get you hence to bed :"
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
 355 And thus they mov'd away : she stay'd a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there— 390
 Her bright hair blown about the serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
 Paused in the gateway, standing by the shield
 360 In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs. 395

Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

365 Meanwhile the new companions past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight 400
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,
 And ever labouring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave, 405
 And cells and chambers : all were fair and dry ;

The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs ;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers. 410
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away :
Then Lancelot saying, " Hear, but hold my name 415
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, " Is it indeed ?"
And after muttering " The great Lancelot," 420
At last he got his breath and answer'd, " Ono,
One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there — then were I stricken blind 425
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass, 430
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept 435
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found

The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work :

440

And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.
Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,

410

"Me you call great : mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance : but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am

445

And overcome it ; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great :
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him

415

450

As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew ; and then did either side,
They that assail'd, and they that hehl the lists,

420

Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,

455

If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.

425

And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker ; then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger : little need to speak

460

Of Lancelot in his glory : King, duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

430

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight

465

Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot ; and one said to the other, "Lo !
What is he ? I do not mean the force alone,

435

470

The grace and versatility of the man—
Is it not Lancelot ?" "When nas Lancelot worn

- Favour of any lady in the lists?
 Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know."
 "How then? who then?" a fury seized on them, 475
 A fiery family passion for the name
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds and thus,
 Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
 In moving, all together down upon him 480
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,
 Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
 Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
 Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
 And him that helms it, so they overbore 485
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
 Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snap'd, and remain'd.
- Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully , 490
 He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
 And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
 He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
 But thought to do while he might yet endure,
 And being lustily bolpen by the rest, 495
 His party,—tho' it seemed half-miracle
 To those he fought with—drave his kith and kin,
 And all the Table Round that held the lists,
 Back to the barrier; then the heralds blew
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve 500
 Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,
 His party, cried "Advance, and take your prize
 The diamond;" but he answer'd, "Diamond me
 No diamond! for God's love, a little air!
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not." 505

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
With young Lavalne into the poplar grove.

There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavalne, "Draw the lance-head:"

"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."

But he, "I die already with it: draw—

Draw"—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.

Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week

Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,

His party, knights of utmost North and West,

Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,

Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,

"Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won the day

Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize

Untaken, crying that his prize is death."

"Heaven hinder," said the King "that such an one,

So great a knight as we have seen to-day—

Ho seem'd to me another Lancelot—

Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—

He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, rise,

My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.

Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.

I charge you that you get at once to horse.

And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you

Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:

His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
 No customary honour : since the knight
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
 Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take
 This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
 And bring us what he is and how he fares,
 And cease not from your quest, until you find.'

545

So saying, from the carven flower above,
 To which it made a restless heart, he took,
 And gave, the diamond : then from where he sat
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
 With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince,
 In the mid night and flourish of his May,
 Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
 And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint
 And Lamorack, a good knight, but therewithal
 Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,
 Nor often loyal to his word, and now
 Wroth that the king's command to sally forth
 In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
 The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

550

555

560

So all in wrath he got to horse and went ;
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
 Past, thinking " Is it Lancelot who has come
 Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
 Of glory, and has added wound to wound,
 And ridd'n away to die ?" So fear'd the King,
 And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
 Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
 " Love, are you yet so sick ?" " Nay, lord," she said.
 " And where is Lancelot ?" Then the Queen amazed,
 " Was he not with you ? won he not your prize ?"
 " Nay, but one like him." " Why that like was he."

565

570

And when the King demanded how she knew,
 Said, "Lord, no sooner had you parted from us,
 Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
 That men went down before his spear at a touch,
 But knowing he was Lancelot ; his great name
 Conquer'd ; and therefore would he hide his name
 From all men, ev'n the king, and to this end
 Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
 That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
 If his old prowess were in aught decay'd :
 And added, ' Our true Arthur, when he learns,
 Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
 Of purer glory.' "

Then replied the King :

" Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
 To have trusted me as he has trusted you.
 Surely his king and most familiar friend
 Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
 Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
 Must needs have moved my laughter : now remains
 But little cause for laughter : his own kin—
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, these !
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him ;
 So that he went sore wounded from the field :
 Yet good news too : for goodly hopes are mine
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
 He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
 A sleeve of scarlet, brodered with great pearls,
 Some gentle maiden's gift."

" Yea, lord," she said,
 " Your hopes are mine," and saying that she choked,
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,

Moved to her chamber, and there flung herself
 Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
 And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
 And shriek'd out "Traitor" to the unhearing wall,
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
 And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

610

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
 Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove.
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat :
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
 Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot, lord ?
 What of the knight with the red sleeve ?" "He won."
 "I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
 Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath ;
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go ;
 Thereon she smote her hand : well-nigh she swoon'd :
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
 The lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
 Reported who he was, and on what quest
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
 The victor, but had ridden wildly round
 To seek him, and was wearied of the search.
 To whom the lord of Astolat, "Bide with us,
 And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince !
 Here was the knight, and here he left a shield ;
 This will he send or come for : furthermore
 Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon,
 Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it.
 And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine :
 Where could be found face daintier ? then her shape
 From forehead down to foot perfect—again

615

620

625

630

635

From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :
 " Well—if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for me ! " 640
 And oft they met among the garden yews,
 And there he set himself to play upon her
 With sallying wit, freeo flashes from a height 610
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence 645
 And amorous adulation, till the maid.
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him, " Prince,
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,
 615 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
 Whence you might learn his name ? Why slight your King,
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
 No surer than our falcion yesterday,
 Who lost the hern we slipt him at, and went
 620 To all the winds ? " " Nay, by mine head," said he,
 " I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
 O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes :
 But an you will it, let me see the shield."
 625 And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold, 660
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd ;
 " Right was the King ! our Lancelot ! that true man ! "
 " And right was I," she answer'd merrily, " I,
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."
 630 " And if I dream'd," said Gawain, " that you love
 This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo, you know it !
 Speak therefore : shall I waste myself in vain ? "
 Full simple was her answer, " What know I ?
 My brethren have been all my fellowship,
 635 And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd, 670
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so myself—
 I know not if I know what true love is,

But if I know, then, if I love not him,
 Methinks there is none other I can love." 675
 "Yea, by God's death," said he, "you love him well,
 But would not, knew you what all others know,
 And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,
 And lifted her fair face and moved away :
 But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little ! 680
 One golden minute's grace ? ho wore your sleeve :
 Would he break faith with one I may not name ?
 Must our true man change like a leaf at last ?
 May it be so ? why then, far be it from me
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves ! 685
 And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
 Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
 My quest with you ; the diamond also : here !
 For if you love, it will be sweet to give it ;
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have it 690
 From your own hand ; and whether he love or not,
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
 A thousand times !—a thousand time farewell !
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
 May meet at court hereafter : there, I think, 695
 So you will learn the courtesies of the court,
 We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
 The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went 700
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past ; there told the King
 What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
 And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt ;
 But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all round 705
 The region : but I lighted on the maid,

675

Whose sleeve he wore ; she loves him ; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond : she will render it ;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

710

680

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
"Too courteous truly ? you shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that you forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

685

He spake and parted. Wroth but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him ;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.

715

690

All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed :
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."

720

695

Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranquillity.

725

700

So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder flared :
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen who sat
With lips severely placid felt the knot

730

705

Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

735

740

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said, 745
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore let me hence,"
She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine." 750
"You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, whereso'er he be, 755
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left tho quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it wore the skeleton of himself, 760
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as you know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence 765
I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit you well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high 770
For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
 And while she made her ready for her ride, 775
 Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
 "Being so very wilful you must go,"
 745 And changed itself and echoed in her heart,
 "Being so very wilful you must die."
 But she was happy enough and shook it off, 780
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us ;
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
 750 "What matter, so I help him back to life?"
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs 785
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates
 Came on her brother with a happy face
 755 Making a roan horse caper and curvet
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers :
 Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine 790
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
 "Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
 760 How know you my lord's name is Lancelot?"
 But when the maid had told him all her tale,
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods 795
 Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
 765 Past up the still rich city to his kin,
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot ;
 And her Lavaine across the poplar grove 800
 Led to the caves : there first she saw the casque
 Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve,
 770 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
 Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart she laugh'd,
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm, 805
 But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
 And when they gain'd the cell in which he slept,

His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his onemy made them move. 810
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Uttered a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes 815
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying
"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King :"
His eyes glisten'd : she fancied "Is it for me ?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest 820
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face. 825
At once she slipt like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride has wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said ;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that ? his large black eyes, 830
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colours on her simple face ;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in mind,
And being weak in body said no more ; 835
But did not love the colour ; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And past beneath the wildly-sculptured gates 840
Far up the dim rich city to her kin ;

- There bode the night : but woke with dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
 810 Thence to the cave : so day by day she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro 845
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,
 And likewise many a night : and Lancelot
 815 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem 850
 Uncourteous, even he : but the meek maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
 820 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,
 And never woman yet, since man's first fall, 855
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
 Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all
 825 The simples and the science of that time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush, 860
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and regret
 830 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
 And loved her with all love except the love
 Of man and woman when they love their best 865
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her first
 835 She might have made this and that other world
 Another world for the sick man ; but now 870
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
 His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.
 840 Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve. 875

These, as hut born of sickness, could not live :
 For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
 Full often the sweet image of one face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud. 880
 Then if the maiden, while that ghostly graco
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
 Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
 What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight, 885
 And drave her ere her time across the fields
 Far into the rich city, where alone
 She murmur'd, " Vain, in vain : it cannot be.
 He will not love me : how then ? must I die ?"
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird, 890
 That has hut one plain passage of few notes,
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
 For all an April morning, till the ear
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
 Went half the night repeating, " Must I die ?" 895
 And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
 And found no ease in turning or in rest ;
 And " Him or death," she mutter'd, " death or him,"
 Again and like a hurthen, " Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole, 900
 To Astolat returning rode the three.
 There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought
 " If I be loved, these are my festal robes, 905
 If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
 That she should ask some goodly gift of him
 For her own self or hers ; " and do not shun

- To speak the wish most near to your true heart ; 910
 Such service have you done me, that I make
 My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I
 In mine own land, and what I will I can."
- 880 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
 But like a ghost without the power to speak. 915
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
 And bode among them yet a little space
 Till he should learn it ; and one morn it chanced
- 885 He found her in among the garden yews,
 He said, " Delay no longer, speak your wish, 920
 Seeing I must go to-day : " then out she brake ;
 " Going ? and we shall never see you more.
 And I must die for want of one bold word."
- 890 " Speak : that I live to hear," he said, " is yours."
 Then suddenly and passionately she spake : 925
 " I have gone mad, I love you : let me die."
 " Ah sister," answer'd Lancelot, " what is this ?"
 And innocently extending her white arms,
- 895 " Your love," she said, " your love—to be your wife."
 And Lancelot answer'd, " Had I chos'n to wed, 930
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :
 But now there never will be wife of mine."
 " No, no," she cried, " I care not to be wife,
 But to be with you still, to see your face,
- 900 To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world." 935
 And Lancelot answer'd, " Nay, the world, the world,
 All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
 To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
 To blare its own interpretation—nay,
- 905 Full ill then should I quit your brother's love, 940
 And your good father's kindness." And she said,
 " Not to be with you, not to see your face—
 Alas for me then, my good days are done."

"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay I
 This is not love: but love's first flash in youth, 945
 Most common: yea I know it of mine own self:
 And you yourself will smile at your own self
 Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
 To one more fitly yours, not thrice your ago:
 And then will I, for true you are and sweet 950
 Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
 More specially should your good knight be poor,
 Endow you with broad land and territory
 Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
 So that would make you happy: furthermore, 955
 Ev'n to the death, as tho' you were my blood,
 In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
 This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
 And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
 She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale 960
 Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied:
 "Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,
 And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
 Their talk had pierced, her father. "Ay, a flash, 965
 I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
 Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.
 I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
 To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
 "That were against me: what I can I will;" 970
 And there that day remain'd, and towards even
 Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
 Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield:
 Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,

945 Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
 Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
 And Lancelot knew tho little clinking sound ;
 And she by tact of love was well aware
 That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
 And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
 950 Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode away.
 This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maidon sat :
 His very shield was gone ; only the case,
 955 Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.
 But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
 And grew between her and the pictured wall.
 Then came her father, saying in low tones,
 " Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
 Then came her brethren saying, " Peace to thee,
 960 Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm.
 But when they left her to herself again,
 Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
 Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd ; the owls
 Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
 965 Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
 Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
 And call'd her song " The Song of Love and Death,"
 And sang it : sweetly could she make and sing.

970 " Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain ;
 And sweet is death who puts an end to pain :
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

" Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter death must be :
 Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to me.
 O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be ; 1010
I needs must follow death, who calls for me ;
Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought 1015
With shuddering "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo ! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die !" 1020

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face and thought
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell, 1025
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods, 1030
And when you used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only you would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it : there you fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide. 1035
And yet I cried because you would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the king.

And yet you would not ; but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood, 1040
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will :'
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the king. 1045
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me ;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me ;
Gawain, who had a thousand farewells to me, 1050
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bad me one :
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest ! " 1055

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, you seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick ? and wherefore would you look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all ?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move, 1060
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
"I never loved him : an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down,
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead, 1065
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To which the gentle sister made reply,
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love 1070
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing "highest?"
 (He meant to break the passion in her) "nay,
 Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
 But this I know, for all the people know it, 1075
 He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
 And she returns his love in open shame.
 If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat;
 "Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I 1080
 For anger: these are slanders: never yet
 Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
 He makes no friend who never made a foe.
 But now it is my glory to have loved
 One peerless, without stain: so let me pass, 1085
 My father, howsoever I seem to you,
 Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
 And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
 Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
 Thanks, but you work against your own desire; 1090
 For if I could believe the things you say
 I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
 Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
 Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone 1095
 She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
 A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd
 'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
 Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied, 1100
 "For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
 But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
 The letter she devised; which being writ
 And folded. "O sweet father, tender and true,

Deny me not," she said—"you never yet
 Denied my fancies—this, however strange, 1105
 My latest: lay the letter in my hand
 A little ere I die, and close the hand
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
 And when the heat is gone from out my heart, 1110
 Then take the little bed on which I died
 For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
 For richness, and me also like the Queen
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier 1115
 To take me to the river, and a barge
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
 There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
 And none of you can speak for me so well. 1120
 And therefore let our dumb old man alone
 Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
 Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death 1125
 Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
 So that day there was dole in Astolat. 1130

But when the next sun brake from underground,
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge, 1135
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
 There sat the lifelong creature of the house,

Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took 1140
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again 1445
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down— 1150
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled. 1155

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own, 1160
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he, 1165
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart. 1170

All in an oriel on the summer side,
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, "Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for you,
 These jewels, and make me happy, making them
 An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's : these are words :
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
 In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words
 Perchance, we both can pardon : hut, my Queen,
 I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
 Should have in it an absoluter trust
 To make up that defect : let rumours be :
 When did not rumours fly ? these, as I trust
 That you trust me in your own nohleness,
 I may not well believe that you believe."
 1175
 1180
 1185
 1190

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
 Till all the place whereon she stood was green ;
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
 Received at once and laid aside the gems
 There on a table near her, and replied.
 1195

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
 Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
 It can be broken easier. I for you
 This many a year have done despite and wrong
 1200

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
 I did acknowledg nobler. What aro these? 1205
 Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
 Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
 To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
 For her! for your new fancy. Only this 1210
 Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
 I doubt not that however changed, you keep
 So much of what is graceful: and myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
 In which as Arthur's queen I move and rule: 1215
 So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
 A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
 Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:
 An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's 1220
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
 O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
 Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—
 Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
 Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will— 1225
 She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
 And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
 Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream,
 Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
 Diamonds to meet them, and they past away. 1230
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disgust
 At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
 Close underneath his eyes, and right across
 Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat 1235
 Lay smiling, like a star in the blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
 To weep and wail in secret ; and the barge
 On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the door ; to whom, 1240
 All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
 Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd
 " What is it ? " but that oarsman's haggard face,
 As hard and still as is the face that men
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks 1245
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,
 " He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,
 Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair !
 Yea, but how pale ! what are they ? flesh and blood ?
 Or come to take the King to fairy land ? 1250
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
 But that he passes into fairy land."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
 Came girt with knights : then turn'd the tongueless man
 From the half-face to the full eye, and rose 1255
 And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.
 So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;
 And reverently they bore her into hall.
 Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her, 1260
 And Lancelot later came and inused at her,
 And last the Queen herself and pitied her :
 But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it ; this was all :

" Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake, 1265
 I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
 I loved you, and my love had no return,

And therefore my true love has been my death. 1270
 And therefore to our lady Guinevere,
 And to all other ladies, I make moan.
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
 As thou art a knight peerless." 1275

Thus he read,
 And ever in the reading, lords and dames
 Wept, looking often from his face who read
 To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
 So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,
 Who had devised the letter, moved again. 1280

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all ;
 " My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
 Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
 Right heavy am I ; for good she was and true,
 But loved me with a love beyond all love 1285
 In women, whomsoever I have known.
 Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;
 Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
 I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
 No cause, not willingly, for such a love : 1290
 To this I call my friends in testimony,
 Her brethren, and her father, who himself
 Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
 To break her passion, some discourtesy
 Against my nature : what I could, I did. 1295
 I left her and I bade her no farewell.
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
 I might have put my wits to some rough use,
 And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen
 (Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm) 1300
 " You might at least have done her so much grace,

Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."
 He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
 He adding,

"Queen, she would not be content
 Save that I wedded her, which could not be. 1305
 Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd ;
 It could not be. I told her that her love
 Was but the flash of youth, would darken down .
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
 Toward one more worthy of her—then would I, 1310
 More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
 Estate them with large land and territory
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
 To keep them in all joyance : more than this
 I could not ; this she would not, and she died." 1315

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,
 It will be to your worship, as my knight,
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
 To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm 1320
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
 The marshall'd order of their Table Round,
 And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
 The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies, 1325
 And mass, and rolling music, like a Queen.
 And when the knights had laid her comely head
 Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
 Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb
 Be costly, and her image thereupon. 1330
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
 Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
 And let the story of her dolorous voyage

For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
 In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought 1335
 Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
 And people, from the high door streaming, brake
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
 Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot, 1340
 Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
 "That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven,"
 But Arthur who behold his cloudy brows
 Approach'd him, and with full affection flung 1345
 One arm about his neck, and spake and said:

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
 Most love and most affiance, for I know
 What thou hast been in battle by my side,
 And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt 1350
 Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,
 And let the younger and unskill'd go by
 To win his honour and to make his name,
 And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
 Made to be loved;—but now I would to God, 1355
 For the wild people say wild things of thee,
 Thou could'st have loved this maiden, shap'd, it seems,
 By God for thee alone, and from her face,
 If one may judge the living by the dead,
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair, 1360
 Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
 Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
 Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."
 Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she was, my King, 1365
 Pure, as you ever wish your knight to be.

To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
 To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—
 Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
 Could bind him, but free love will not be bound." 1370

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said the King.
 "Let love be free; free love is for the best:
 And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee 1375
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd 1380
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
 Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and sweet,
 You loved me, damsel, surely with a love 1385
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
 Farewell, fair lily, 'Jealousy in love?'
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love, 1390
 May not your crescent fear for name and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
 Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the lake 1395
 Stole from his mother—as the story runs—
 She chanted snatches of mysterious song
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
 She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,

As a king's son,' and often in her arms 1400
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain; 1405
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break 1410
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? Nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far, 1415
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

BROWNING.

SONG.

All service ranks the same with God :
If now, as formerly He trod
Paradise, His presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we ; there is no last nor first.

5

Say not "a small event!" Why "small?"
Costs it more pain this thing ye call
A "great event" should come to pass.
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in, or exceed!

10

(From *Pippa Passes*.)

CAVALIER TUNES.

I. MARCHING ALONG.

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing :
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

5

God for King Charles! - Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take, nor sup,
Till you're—

10

CHORUS.—*Marching along, fifty score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!*

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well !
 England, good cheer ! Rupert is near !
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

15

CHO.—*Marching along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song ?*

Then, God for King Charles ! Pym and his snarls
 To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles !
 Hold by the right, you double your might ;
 So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

20

CHO.—*March we along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song !*

II. GIVE A ROUSE.

King Charles, and who'll do him right now ?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ?
 Give a rouse : here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles !

Who gave me the goods that went since ?
 Who raised me the house that sank once ?
 Who helped me to gold I spent since ?
 Who found me in wine you drank once ?

5

CHO.—*King Charles, and who'll do him right now ?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ?
 Give a rouse : here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles !*

10

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
 By the old fool's side that begot him ?
 For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
 While Noll's damned troopers shot him ?

15

CHO.—*King Charles, and who'll do him right now ?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ?
 Give a rouse : here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles !*

20

MY LAST DUCHESS.

57

III. BOOT AND SADDLE.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !
Rescue my castle before the bot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.

CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !*

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say ;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—

CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !*"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array :
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,

CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !*"

Who? My wife Gertrude ; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay !
I've better counsellors ; what counsel they ?

CHO.—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !*"

MY LAST DUCHESS.

FERRARA.

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now : Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)

And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there ; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
 Her hushand's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek : perhaps 15
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say, " Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or " Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat : " such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart—how shall I say ?—too soon made glad,
 Too easily impressed : she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one ! My favour at her breast, 25
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good ! hut thanked
 Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to hlame
 This sort of trifling ? Even had you skill 35
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, " Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me ; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark "—and if she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
 —E'en then would be some stooping ; and I choose
 Never to stoop. O sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her ; but who passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands; 45
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat,
 The Count your master's known munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence 50
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

 THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

Morning, evening, noon and night,
 "Praise God!" sang Theocrite.
 Then to his poor trade he turned
 Whereby the daily meal was earned.
 Hard he laboured, long and well; 5
 O'er his work the boy's curls fell.
 But ever, at each period
 He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"
 Then back again his curls he threw,
 And cheerful turned to work anew. 10
 Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done;
 "I doubt not thou art heard, my son:
 "As well as if thy voice to-day
 "Were praising God, the Pope's great way.
 "This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome 15
 "Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
 "Might praise him, that great way, and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
 And Theocrite was gone.

20

With God a day endures alway,
 A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor night
 "Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gahriel, like a rainbow's birth,
 Spread his wings and sank to earth;

25

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
 Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon and night,
 Praised God in place of Theocrite.

30

And from a boy, to youth he grew:
 The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away
 Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
 And ever lived on earth content.

35

(He did God's will; to him, all one
 If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;
 "There is no doubt in it, no fear:"

40

"So sing old worlds, and so
 "New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:
 "I miss my little human praise."

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

61

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

45

'Twas Easter Day ; he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

50

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite.

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

55

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

60

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell
"And set thee here : I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel-sphere,

65

"Vain was thy dream of many a 'year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak ; it dropped—
"Creation's chorus stopped !

"Go back and praise again

"The early way, while I remain.

70

"With that weak voice of our disdain

"Take ~~up~~ creation's pausing strain.

"Back to the cell and poor employ :
 "Resume the craftsman and the boy !

Theocrite grew old at home
 A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

75

One vanished as the other died :
 They sought God side by side.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

I.

Oh, to be in England
 Now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees, some morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England—now !

5

II.

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
 Hark ! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
 That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice over
 Lest you should think he never could recapture
 The first fine careless rapture !
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower !

10

15

20

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY.

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY.)

I.

Had I hut plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
Tho house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square ;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there !

II.

Something to see, hy Bacchus, something to hear, at least !
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast ; 5
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a
beast.

III.

Well now, look at our villa ! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull !
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned
wool. 10

IV.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses ! Why ?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to
take the eye !
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry ;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries
by ;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun
gets high ; 15
And the shops with fanciful signs, which are painted properly.

V.

What of a villa ? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'T is May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off
the heights :

You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam
and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-
trees. 20

VI.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers
well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick
and sell. 25

VII.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and
splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foambows
flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle
and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a
sort of a sash. 30

VIII.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you
linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted fore-
finger.
Some think fire-flies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and
mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill, 35

And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous
firs on the hill.

Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of the fever
and chill.

IX.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells
begin :

No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in :

You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin. 40

By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood,
draws teeth ;

Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.

At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping
hot !

And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves
were shot.

Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes, 45

And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law
of the Duke's !

Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,

Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome, and Cicero

“And moreover,” (the sonnet goes rhyming,) “the skirts of
Saint Paul has reached,

Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous
than ever he preached.” 50

Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession ! our Lady borne
smiling and smart

With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck
in her heart !

Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife ;

No keeping one's haunches still : it's the greatest pleasure in
life.

X.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the
rate. 55

They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays
passing the gate

It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the pity, the
pity!

Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls
and sandals,

And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow
candles; 60

One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with
handles,

And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better pre-
vention of scandals:

Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.

Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

1.

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles

On the solitary pastures where our sheep,
Half-asleep,

Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop . 5
As they crop—

Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)

Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since 10

Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

II.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
 As you see,
 To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills 15
 From the hills
 Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
 Into one,)
 Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
 Up like fires 20
 O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
 Bounding all,
 Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
 Twelve abreast.

III.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass 25
 Never was!
 Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
 And embeds
 Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
 Stock or stone— 30
 Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
 Long ago;
 Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
 Struck them tame:
 And that glory and that shame alike, the gold 35
 Bought and sold.

IV.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
 On the plains,
 By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
 Overscored, 40
 While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
 Through the chinks—

Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
 Sprang sublime,
 And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced 45
 As they raced,
 And the monarch and his minions and his dames
 Viewed the games.

V.

And I know, while thus the quiet colored eve
 Smiles to leave 50
 To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
 In such peace,
 And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
 Melt away—
 That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair 55
 Waits me there
 In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
 For the goal,
 When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless,
 dumb
 Till I come. 60

VI.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
 Far and wide,
 All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
 Colonnades,
 All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then, 65
 All the men!
 When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
 Either hand
 On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
 Of my face, 70
 Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
 Each on each.

VII.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
 South and North,
 And they huilt their gods a brazen pillar high 75
 As the sky,
 Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
 Gold of course !
 Oh heart ! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns !
 Earth's returns 40
 For whole centuries of folly, noiso, and sin !
 Shut them in,
 With their triumphs and their glories and the rest !
 Love is best.

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

A PICTURE AT FANO.

I.

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
 That child, when thou hast done with him, for me !
 Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
 Shall find performed thy special ministry,
 And time come for departure, thou, suspending 5
 Thy flight, mayst see another child for tending,
 Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

II.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
 From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
 —And suddenly my head is covered o'er 10
 With those wings, white above the child who prays
 Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
 Me, out of all the world ; for me, discarding
 Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

III.

I would not look up thither past thy head 15
 Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
 For I should have thy gracious face instead,
 Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
 Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
 And lift them up to pray, and gently tether 20
 Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garments spread?

IV.

If this was ever granted, I would rest
 My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
 Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
 Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands, 25
 Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
 Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
 And all lay quiet, happy, and suppressed.

V.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
 I think how I should view the earth and skies 30
 And sea, when once again my brow was bared
 After thy healing, with such different eyes.
 O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
 And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
 What further may be sought for or declared? 35

VI.

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
 (Alfred, dear friend!)—that little child to pray,
 Holding the little hands up, each to each
 Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away 40
 Over the earth where so much lay before him
 Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
 And he was left at Fano by the beach.

PROSPICE.

71

VII.

We were at Fano, and three times we went
 To sit and see him in his chapel there,
 And drink his beauty to our soul's content
 —My angel with me too : and since I care
 For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
 And glory comes this picture for a dower,
 Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)—

45

VIII.

And since he did not work thus earnestly
 At all times, and has also endured some wrong—
 I took one thought his picture struck from me,
 And spread it out, translating it to song.
 My Love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
 How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
 This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

50

55

PROSPICE.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
 The mist in my face,
 When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
 I am nearing the place,
 The power of the night, the press of the storm,
 The post of the foe ;
 Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
 Yet the strong man must go :
 For the journey is done and the summit attained,
 And the barriers fall,
 Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
 The reward of it all.
 I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
 The best and the last !

5

10

I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and
forebore, 15
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold. 20
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain, 25
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

NOTES ON TENNYSON.

ALFRED TENNYSON was the third son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, rector of Somershy, a small village in Lincolnshire not far from the sea-coast. Though in the neighbourhood of the fen country, Somershy itself lies "in a pretty pastoral district of sloping hills and large ash trees." "To the north rises the long peak of the wold, with its steep white road that climbs the hill above Thetford; to the south, the land slopes gently to a small deep-channelled brook, which rises not far from Somershy and flows just below the parsonage garden." The scenery of his native village and its neighbourhood, where he spent his youth and early manhood,—the scenery of wold, and fen, and sandy coast—made a deep impress on the poet's mind, and is reflected again and again in his earlier writings. In the parsonage of Somershy, which was then the only considerable house in the little hamlet, Alfred was born August 6th, 1809. His father was a man of ability, with intellectual and artistic interests; books were at hand, and the three elder boys not only became great readers, but from childhood were accustomed to write original verses. The life of the Tennysons was a somewhat secluded one; Alfred was naturally shy, with a bent towards solitary and imaginative pursuits. These tendencies may have been fostered by the character of his early education. He was not sent to a great public school, like most English boys of his class, but attended the village school at Somershy, then the grammar school at the neighbouring town of Louth, and was finally prepared for entering college by home tuition. Already before he had become an undergraduate, he was an author, having, along with his elder brother Charles, written a volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*, which was published at Louth in 1827 by a local bookseller. The work is creditable to such youthful poets (the poems contributed by Alfred were composed between his fifteenth and his seventeenth year), but more remarkable for the absence of marked immaturity than for the presence of positive merits. The breadth of the authors' reading is attested by quotations prefixed to the various pieces: Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, Lucretius, Sallust, Tacitus, Byron, Cowper, Gray, Hume, Moore, Scott, Beattie and Addison being all put under contribution.

In 1828 Charles and Alfred entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where the eldest brother, Frederick, was already a student. There the Tenny-

sons were associated with some of the most brilliant and promising of their contemporaries. Alfred formed an especially warm friendship with Arthur Henry Hallam, a young man of extraordinary endowments, whose premature death he subsequently commemorated in *the Memoriam*. In 1829 Tennyson won the Chancellor's prize for English verse by a poem on "Timbuctoo," where for the first time in his work, there is some promise of future excellence, and some faint touches of his later style. Next year his poetic career may be said really to have begun with a small volume entitled *Poems Chiefly Lyric*, which in such poems as *Claribel*, *The Dying Swan*, *Mariana*, and *The Poet*, clearly exhibits some of his characteristic qualities. The volume was favourably reviewed by Leigh Hunt and Hallam, but severely criticized by "Christopher North" in *Blackwood*. In the same year the author embarked on a very different undertaking, going with Hallam to Spain in order to carry, to the revolutionists there, money and letters from English sympathizers. In 1831 his college career was brought to a close by the death of his father, and he returned to Somersby. Here he completed a second volume of poems, published in 1832. This marks another advance in poetic art, and contains some of his most characteristic pieces: *The Lady of Shalott*, *Oenone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Lotus-Eaters*, *The Two Voices*. It should be remembered, however, that several of these do not now appear in their original form, and that much of their perfection is due to revisions later than 1832. This volume, as well as its predecessor, was severely criticized, especially by the *Quarterly*. But although in this article justice was not done to the merits of the volume, the strictures upon defects were in the main well grounded, as the poet himself tacitly acknowledged by omitting or amending in subsequent editions the objectionable passages. Another result of the hostility of the critics was that Tennyson, who was always morbidly sensitive to criticism even from the most friendly source, ceased publishing for almost ten years, except that verses from his pen occasionally appeared in the pages of *Literary Annuals*. This ten-years silence is characteristic of the man, of his self-restraint and power of patient application—potent factors in the ultimate perfection of his work.

The sudden death of his friend Hallam, in September 1833, plunged Tennyson for a time in profound sorrow, but was doubtless effective in maturing and deepening his emotional and intellectual life. The poet's sister had been betrothed to Hallam; over the household at Somersby, of which Alfred, in the absence of his elder brothers,

was now the head, there gathered a deep gloom. The feelings and ideas which centred about this great sorrow of his youthful days, the poet soon began to embody in short lyrics; these through successive years grew in number and variety, and finally took shape in what by many is considered Tennyson's greatest work, *In Memoriam*.

It was in 1836, when Charles Tennyson was married to Louisa Sellwood, that in all probability Alfred fell in love with the bride's sister, to whom in course of time he became engaged. The small fortune which he had inherited was insufficient to provide a maintenance for a married pair; poetry, to which he had devoted his life, seemed unlikely ever to yield him a sufficient income. Yet, characteristically enough, Tennyson neither attempted to find a more lucrative profession, nor even departed from his resolve to refrain from again seeking public notice until his genius and his work had become fully matured. In consequence, the friends of his betrothed put an end to the correspondence of the lovers; and a long period of trial began for the poet, when his prospects in love, in worldly fortune, in poetic success, seemed almost hopelessly overcast. In 1837 the family removed from Somershy to High Beech in Epping Forest, then to Tunbridge Wells, and then to the neighbourhood of Maidstone. The change of residence brought Tennyson into closer proximity with the capital, and henceforward, he frequently resorted thither to visit old friends like Spedding, and gradually became personally known in the literary circles of London. Among other notable men he met with Carlyle, found pleasure in the company of this uncouth genius and his clever wife, and, in turn, was regarded with unusual favour by a keen-eyed and censorious pair of critics. Tennyson was one of the very few distinguished men whose personality impressed Carlyle favourably. The account which the latter gives of Tennyson in a letter to Emerson, dated August 1844, is worth quoting at length:—

"Moxon informs me that Tennyson is now in Town, and means to come and see me. Of this latter result I shall be very glad. Alfred is one of the few British and Foreign Figures (a not increasing number, I think!) who are and remain beautiful to me—a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother? However, I doubt he will not come; he often skips me in these brief visits to Town; skips everybody, indeed; being a man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom,—carrying a bit of chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. Alfred is the son of a Lincolnshire Gentleman Farmer, I think; indeed you see in his verses that he is a native of 'moated granges,' and green flat pastures, not of mountains and their torrents and storms. He had his breeding at Cambridge, as for the Law or Church; being master of a small annuity on his Father's decease, he preferred clubbing with his Mother and some

Writers, to live unpromoted and write poems. In this way he lives still, now here, now there; the family always within reach of London, never in it; he himself making rare and brief visits, lodging in some old comrade's rooms. I think he must be under forty—not much under it. One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough, dusty-dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical metallic—fit for loud laughter and piercing wall, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous: I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to. He is often unwell; very chaotic—his way is through Chaos and the Bottomless and Pathless; not handy for making out many miles upon."

Meanwhile, in 1842, two years before this letter was written, Tennyson gave conclusive evidence of the power that was in him, by the publication of two volumes containing, in the first place, a selection from the poems of 1830 and of 1832, and, secondly, a large number of new pieces. Among the latter are *Morte d'Arthur*, *Ulysses*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *The Talking Oak*, *Locksley Hall*, *Dora*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, *St. Agnes' Eve*, "Break, break, break," and the three poems "You ask me why," "Of old sat Freedom," "Love thou thy land." Such pieces as these represent the mature art of their author, and some of them he never surpassed. It was about the time of the publication of these volumes that the fortunes of their author reached their lowest point. The failure of a manufacturing scheme in which he had invested all his means left him penniless. "Then followed," says his son and biographer, "a season of real hardship, and many trials for my father and mother, since marriage seemed to be further off than ever. So severe a hypochondria set in upon him that his friends despaired of his life. 'I have,' he writes, 'drunk one of those most bitter draughts out of the cup of life, which go near to make men hate the world they live in.'" But, at length, the fates became propitious. In the first place the excellence of the collected poems of 1842 rapidly won general recognition; during his ten years of silence Tennyson's reputation had been steadily growing, the two volumes of 1842 set it upon a firm basis. From that day onward, he held the first place in general estimation among contemporary poets. In 1845 Wordsworth pronounced him "decidedly the first of our living poets"; in the same year the fourth edition of the *Poems* of 1842 was called for, and the publisher, Moxon, said that Tennyson was the only poet by the publication of whose works he had not been a loser. Further, in 1845, the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, through the intervention of Tennyson's old college friend Milnes (Lord Houghton), conferred upon him a pension of £200

a year. This was a timely relief to pecuniary difficulties which were at this date very embarrassing. *The Princess*, his first long work, was published in 1847. Through a fanciful story of a Princess who founds a university for women, it gave a poetical presentation and solution of the 'woman question'; but rather disappointed, at the time, the high expectations excited by the earlier writings. On the other hand, *In Memoriam*, which appeared in 1850, has from the beginning been considered one of the finest products of his genius. It consists of a series of lyrics giving utterance to various moods and thoughts to which the great sorrow of his youth had given birth. These had been carefully elaborated during a long period, are extraordinarily finished in their expression and are fuller of substance than any other of the more ambitious works of their author. No other poem so adequately represents the current thought and average attitude of Tennyson's generation in regard to many of the great problems of the time. In the year of the publication of *In Memoriam*, the laureateship, rendered vacant by the death of Wordsworth, was bestowed upon its author. In the same year his marriage with Emily Sellwood took place. They had been separated from one another for ten years; Tennyson's age was forty-one, the bride's thirty-seven. But their fidelity was rewarded. "The peace of God," Tennyson said, "came into my life before the altar when I married her"; and indeed the remainder of the poet's long life, apart from the death in the first years of manhood of his second son, is a record of happiness and success such as does not fall to the lot of many men.

After a tour in Italy the Tennysons in 1853 took up their residence at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, which was henceforth their home, and the poet entered upon a period of sure and increasing popularity and growing worldly prosperity. He never relaxed, however, even in advanced old age, his strenuous poetic industry; hence a long series of works of a high order of merit, of which we will mention only the more important. In 1855, *Maud*, a lyrical monodrama, was published, about which critical opinion was then and still remains greatly divided, though the poet himself regarded it with special favour. In 1857, Bayard Taylor visited Tennyson at his home and records his impressions: "He is tall and broad-shouldered as a son of Anak, with hair, beard, and eyes of Southern darkness. Something in the lofty brow and aquiline nose suggests Dante, but such a deep, mellow chest-voice never could have come from Italian lungs. He proposed a walk, as the day was wonderfully clear and beautiful. We climbed the steep comb

of the chalk cliff, and slowly wandered westward until we reached the Needles, at the extremity of the Island, and some three or four miles distant from his residence. During the conversation with which we beguiled the way, I was struck with the variety of his knowledge. Not a little flower on the downs, which the sheep had spared, escaped his notice, and the geology of the coast, both terrestrial and submarine, were perfectly familiar to him. I thought of a remark that I had once heard from the lips of a distinguished English author [Thackeray] that Tennyson was the wisest man he knew."

Tennyson, as such poems as *The Lady of Shalott* and *Morte d'Arthur* show, had been early attracted by the legendary tales of King Arthur, which to several poets had seemed a rich storehouse of poetical material. About the year 1857 he began to occupy himself specially with these legends; and from this time on until the middle seventies his chief energy was given to the composition of a series of poems from these sources, which were ultimately arranged to form a composite whole, entitled *Idylls of the King*. These poems proved very acceptable to the general taste, and the poet began to reap a fortune from the sale of his works. Of the volume published in 1862, entitled *Enoch Arden*, which mainly consisted of English Idylls, sixty thousand copies were rapidly sold. This, perhaps, marks the height of his popularity.

In 1875 he entered on a new field with the publication of an historical drama, *Queen Mary*, followed in 1876 by a similar work, *Harold*, and by other dramatic pieces in later years. In the drama Tennyson was less successful than in any other department which he attempted, and this lack of success gave rise to a widespread feeling that his powers were now in decline. Such a conclusion was most decisively negatived by the appearance of *Ballads and Other Poems* in 1880, where he returned to less ambitious and lengthy but more congenial forms—a collection which Mr. Theodore Watts terms "the most richly various volume of English verse that has appeared in [Tennyson's] century." At intervals until the very close of his long life, he produced similar miscellaneous collections of poems: *Tiresias and Other Poems*, 1885, *Demeter and Other Poems*, 1889, *The Death of Oenone and Other Poems*, 1892. Some of the pieces contained in these miscellanies were doubtless the gleanings of earlier years; but in others there were qualities which clearly showed them to be the

products of a new epoch in a genius that went on changing and developing even in advanced old age. In the most characteristic pieces, *The Revenge*, *The Relief of Lucknow*, *Rizpah*, *Vastness*, etc., there is a vigour and dramatic force absent in his earlier work, with less of that minute finish and elaborate perfection of phrase which is so often his chief merit. On the other hand, in *Freedom*, *To Virgil*, and *Crossing the Bar*, we have poems in the more familiar Tennysonian style, not a whit inferior to similar compositions in the volumes of his prime. In 1884 Tennyson was raised to the peerage as Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. The first part of his title was derived from a second residence which he had built for himself in Surrey, choosing a very retired situation in order that he might escape the idle curiosity of tourists. In 1886, the second great sorrow of his life befell Tennyson; his younger son, Lionel, died on the return voyage from India, where he had contracted a fever.

To Tennyson's continued mental vigour in advanced old age, his works bear testimony; his bodily strength was also little abated. "At eighty-two," his son reports, "my father preserved the high spirits of youth. He would defy his friends to get up twenty times quickly from a low chair without touching it with their hands while he was performing this feat himself, and one afternoon he had a long waltz with M—— in the ball room." This vigour was maintained almost to the very close of his long life. It was the sixth of October, 1892, when the great poet breathed his last. "Nothing could have been more striking than the scene during the last few hours," writes his medical attendant. "On the bed a figure of breathing marble, flooded and bathed in the light of the full moon streaming through the oriel window; his hand clasping the Shakespeare which he had asked for but recently, and which he had kept by him to the end; the moonlight, the majestic figure as he lay there, 'drawing thicker breath,' irresistibly brought to our minds his own 'Passing of Arthur.'" "Some friends and servants came to see him. He looked very grand and peaceful with the deep furrows of thought almost smoothed away, and the old clergyman of Lurgashall stood by the bed with his hands raised, and said, 'Lord Tennyson, God has taken you, who made you a prince of men. Farewell!'"

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

First published in 1832, but, as indicated above, the poem has been greatly improved by later revision. It is the first work which Tennyson based upon Arthurian legends; in this case contained, according to Palgrave, in an Italian novel. One of the Idylls, *Lancelot and Elaine*, is a very different treatment of the same story where the interest is more human and the motives and characters perfectly comprehensible. Here we have a beautiful series of pictures presenting part of the history of a mysterious being, involved in a strange fate. This mystery of the poem suggests symbolism, to which the poet was inclined, as, for example, in *The Palace of Art* and the *Idylls of the King*; so Mr. Hutton seems to think that the history of the poet's own genius is shadowed forth, which "was sick of the magic of fancy and its picture-shadows, and was turning away from them to the poetry of human life." While Mr. Alfred Ainger (as quoted by Mr. Sykes) says: "The key to this wonderful tale of magic, and yet of deep human significance, is to be found, perhaps, in the lines:

Or when the moon was overhead
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows' said
The Lady of Shalott.

The new-born love of something, for some one, in the wide world from which she has been so long excluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities. The curse is the anguish of unrequited love. The shock of her disappointment kills her." Mr. Ainger's interpretation was derived from the poet himself; but it was doubtless the picturesque aspects of the subject, rather than any deep human significance that attracted and occupied the poet.

3. *wold*. 'Open country.' The landscape the poet was most familiar with at this time was the landscape of Lincolnshire. According to the *Century Dictionary* "The wolds of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire are high rolling districts, bare of trees and exactly similar to the downs of the southern part of England."

meet the sky. Note how suggestive is the phrase of the wide uninterrupted prospect.

5. *many-tower'd Camelot*. Camelot is the capital of Arthur's domain, identified with Winchester by Malory (Bk. II, chap. xix); but in Tennyson's treatment of the Arthurian legends, the scenes and geography are wholly imaginary, and the poet seems purposely to

shun any touch which might serve to connect his scenes with actual localities. In *Gareth and Lynette* we have a description of Camelot:

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who hid their days in stones;
Which Merlin's hand, the mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every where
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak.
And pinnacles, and had made it aspire to heaven.

9. *Shalott.* In the *Idylls of the King*, 'Astolat,' the form used by Malory, is employed.

10. *Willows whiten* through the breeze exposing the lower and lighter side of the willow leaves.

11. *dusk and shiver.* The darkening is due to the breaking up of the smooth surface of the water so that it no longer reflects the light.

56. *pad.* 'An easy paced horse' (etymologically connected with *path*).

64. *still.* 'Always,' 'ever.'

76. *greaves.* 'Armor to protect the shins.'

82. *free.* The hridle was held with a slack hand.

84. *Galaxy.* The Milky Way (from Gk. *γάλα γάλακτος*, milk).

87. *blazon'd.* 'Ornamented with heraldic devices.'

baldric. 'A belt worn over one shoulder and crossing the breast.'

91. *All.* Cf. Coleridge, *Ancient Mariner*:

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand, etc.

98. *bearded meteor.* The beard is, of course, what could be more prosaically described as the 'tail.'

101. *hooves.* Archaic plural.

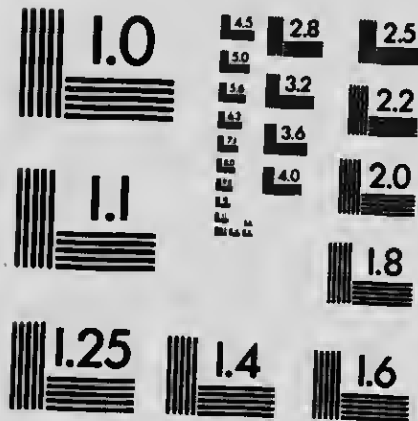
105. The mirror reflects both Lancelot on the bank, and his image in the water.

119. Note how throughout the poem, the season of the year and the weather are made to harmonize with the events of the story; the same device is adopted in the *Idylls of the King*.



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ST. AGNES' EVE.

Published originally in *The Keepsake* for 1837, under the title of *St. Agnes*; included in the *Poems* of 1842; the title changed to *St. Agnes' Eve* in the edition of 1855.

January 21st is sacred to St. Agnes, who, it is narrated, refused to marry the heathen son of the pretor, and after terrible persecution suffered martyrdom in the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284-305, A.D.). With St. Agnes' Eve various superstitions were connected, more especially that upon observing the proper rites, a maiden might see her future husband (cf. Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*). It is possible that Tennyson felt that the character and circumstances delineated in the poem did not exactly suit St. Agnes, and, accordingly changed the title of the poem, leaving the heroine a nameless embodiment of that ascetic enthusiasm which finds its masculine representative in Sir Galahad; she is "the pure and beautiful enthusiast who has died away from all her human emotions, and become the bride for whom a Heavenly Bridegroom is waiting.... Wordsworth at his best, as in 'Lucy,' might scarcely match the music of these stanzas; their pictorial perfection he could hardly attain unto; every image is in such delicate harmony with the pure young worshipper that it seems to have been transfigured by her purity, and in the last four lines the very sentences faint with the breathless culmination of her rapture" (Luce).

19. mine earthly house. Cf. *II Corinthians* v., 1: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

21. Break up. 'Break open,' as in *I Henry VI.*, 1, 3, and *Matthew* xxiv., 43: "If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he.... would not have suffered his house to be broken up."

25-36. She too has her marvellous vision, like other maidens on St. Agnes' Eve, but a vision of an import and character very different from theirs.

35. the shining sea. Cf. *Revelation* xv., 2: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast.... stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

"COME NOT WHEN I AM DEAD."

First published in *The Keepsake*, 1851.

5. plover. The name applied to several species of birds common in England, e.g., the lapwing.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK."

This poem appeared for the first time in the collection of 1842, and is one of the most beautiful of Tennyson's lyrics.

It will be noted that while there are only three syllables in the first line the normal line of the poem contains three feet, and the predominant foot is trisyllabic; so that each of these syllables correspond to a foot, and this line might have consisted of nine syllables. Hence the effective slow music of the opening; the time which would have been occupied by the lacking syllables of the verse being filled up by the slow enunciation of the long vowel sound in 'break,' and by the pauses between the words.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

First published in the *Enoch Arden* volume of 1864. Cauteretz is a beautiful valley of the French Pyrenees. In the summer of 1830, Tennyson and his friend Hallam went to Spain carrying money from English sympathizers to the Spanish insurgents who were under the leadership of Torrijos. Among other places, they visited this valley, and the scenery inspired Tennyson to write the opening passage of *Enone*. Tennyson did not see the place again for thirty-one years. "On August 6th [1861], my father's birthday, we arrived at Cauteretz, his favourite valley in the Pyrenees. Before our windows we had the torrent rushing over its rocky bed from far away among the mountains and falling in cataracts. Patches of snow lay upon the peaks above, and nearer were great wooded heights glorious with autumn colours, bare rocks here and there, and greenest mountain meadows below. He wrote his lyric 'All along the Valley' after hearing the voice of the torrent seemingly sound deeper as the 'night grew' (in memory of his visit here with Arthur Hallam)." "My father was vexed that he had written 'two and thirty years ago' in his 'All along the Valley' instead of 'one and thirty years ago,' and as late as 1892 wished to alter it since he hated inaccuracy. I persuaded him to let his first reading stand, for the public had learned to love his poem in its present form, and besides 'two and thirty' was more melodious." (*Life* I, p. 475).

ELAINE.

Tennyson, early in his literary career, formed the design of writing "a whole great poem" on the subject of Arthur and his knights. In 1842, *Morte d'Arthur*, which in its Prologue is represented as the fragment of such a poem, was published. In 1857, a volume entitled *Enid and Nimus; or, the True and the False* was printed, but was immediately withdrawn; it contained the earliest form of the two idylls subsequently published as *Enid*, and *Vivien*. In 1859 appeared a volume entitled *Idylls of the King*, containing four poems: *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, *Guinevere*. In 1862 a Dedication was prefixed to these. In 1869 four new Idylls were published including *The Passing of Arthur*, an extended form of *Morte d'Arthur*; and for the first time all the idylls were brought into connection so as to form parts of the story of Arthur's reign. Other idylls were inserted subsequently, and the whole series arranged in proper order.

In this irregular fashion the poet constructed something which he wished to be regarded as a whole—a single work. The much debated question of how far the poet is justified in his view, we can, with only one idyll before us, scarcely discuss with profit; but perhaps it is easy to say that whatever unity there is, is not of a very high order; it doubtless adds interest to the individual poems, but does not constitute them an effective artistic whole. Apart from the external unity of story or plot which he strove to give, the poet added another unifying principle—an underlying purpose and meaning. He says in the closing address to the Queen:

accept this old imperfect tale
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul
Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain-peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still.

The poem before us is the *Elaine* of 1859; the alterations, which have since been made, are unimportant. It was written, therefore, before the poet had given any indications that these idylls were intended to form parts of a greater whole. We can easily, then, presume that this poem is capable of being sufficiently appreciated by itself, out of relation to the other idylls; we are only in the position in which Tennyson put the readers of the edition of 1859—a volume which, on the face of it, simply contained four studies of female character from Arthurian legend—not parts of a greater poem. Further, there was not in the volume of 1859 (as in the setting of *Morte d'Arthur*, or in the address *To the Queen*) any hint given to the readers of a symbolic meaning. It

is very questionable if such meaning were present in his mind when he wrote the four idylls of 1859, although some of the later idylls such as *Gareth and Lynette*, and *The Holy Grail* must be interpreted symbolically to be fully appreciated. In the completed *Idylls*, Arthur represents the Soul, or the spiritual element in man or in the universe, or the ideal; Guinevere, the body, or the flesh, or the purely material; Merlin, the Intellect; the knights the various powers of man, etc. But such interpretation can scarcely be applied to *Elaine*, nor is the poem made a whit more beautiful or effective by the attempt, although such a statement need not be true of some of the other idylls.

Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* are based upon the old legends about Arthur and his knights as they are found narrated in prose by Sir Thomas Malory in his *Morte d'Arthur*, written about the year 1570. The character of this book and the extent of Tennyson's indebtedness to it may be judged from the passages quoted in the following notes.

2. Malory calls her "Elaine le Blank" (i.e. the *blanche* or white).

Astolat. The name which appears as "Shalott" in Tennyson's earlier treatment of this theme. Malory identifies this place with Guildford in Surrey, but the geography of Tennyson's *Idylls* is purely imaginary.

9. *blazon'd.* The word 'blazon' meant properly a shield; hence armorial bearings. The derived verb employed in this passage means to depict in colours as heraldic devices are depicted.

10. *tinct.* The common modern form of the word is 'tint.'

wit. Not in the narrower sense common in modern English, but in the broader original sense of 'intellect in general.' *Of her wit*, 'out of her own invention.'

15. *read.* 'Perused,' 'studied.'

22. **Caerlisle.** Carlisle in Cumberland. *Ca* of Celtic origin and means castle.

23. **Caerleon** upon Usk is South Wales; cf. *Geraint and Enid*:

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before
Held court at old Caerleon-upon-Usk.

One of Arthur's twelve great battles was fought here.

Camelot. See on *Lady of Shalott*, l. 5.

31. *jousts.* 'A tournament.' The story of the origin of the jousts and the prize of diamonds is not in Malory.

36. **Lyonnesse.** A fabulous region extending from Cornwall to the Scilly isles, supposed to have been submerged in the sea.

37. *tarn*. 'A mountain lake.'

54. *shingly*. 'Covered with loose pebbles; cf. *Enoch Arden*, 733; "Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot."

54. *scaur*. 'A bare and broken place on a hill side.'

63. There were nine diamonds, four on each side, and one in front (see l. 46 above).

66. *The Heathen*. The Saxons and Norsemen against whom the British were fighting.

76. *the place*, etc. 'London.'

77. *let proclaim*. 'Caused to be proclaimed.' This use of 'let' was sufficiently common in earlier English. So in the passage of Malory on which this is based (xviii., 3): "The knight let cry a great joust and tournament: that should be that day at Camelot, that is Winchester."

78, fol. Compare Malory, xviii., 8:

"So King Arthur made him ready to depart to these jousts and would have had the queen with him: but that time she would not, she said, for she was sick and might not ride at that time. That me repenteth, said the King, for this seven year ye saw not such a fellowship together, except at Whitsuntide, when Galahad departed from the court. Truly, said the queen to the King, you must hold me excused, I may not be there, and that me repenteth."

90. *Love-loyal*. For similar examples of Tennyson's use of alliterative compound words, see "tiny-trumpeting" (l. 138), "barren-heaten" (l. 161), "green-glimmering" (l. 482), "strange-statued" (l. 796).

92. *tale*. 'Number,' cf. *Ecodus*, v., 8: "And the tale of the bricke, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them," and Macanlay's *Horatius*: "And now hath every city sent up her tale of men."

95. *lets*. 'Hinders.' Cf. *Hamlet*, i., 4, 95: "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me"; so in the collect for the fourth Sunday in Advent: "through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us."

98, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 8:

"Sir Launcelot ye are greatly to blame, thus to hold you behind my lord; what trow ye, what will your enemies and mine say and deem? Nought else but see how Sir Launcelot holdeth him ever behind the King and so doth the Queen, for that they would be together: and thus will they say, said the queen to Launcelot, have ye no doubt thereof."

104, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 9:

"Madam, said Sir Launcelot, I allow your wit, 'tis of late come sin [i.e., since] ye were so wise, and therefore Madam, as at this time I will be ruled by your counsel, and this night I will take my rest, and to-morrow by time will take my way toward Winchester."

107. the myriad cricket. Cf. *Enoch Arden*, 579: "The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl."

109. is nothing. 'Is of no account, not worthy of regard.'

111. worship. Cf. *Merlin and Vivien*, 11-13:

Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl
But tho great Queen herself, fought in her name,
Swore hy her.

and *Guinevere*:

To love one maiden only, cleave to her.
And worship her by years of noble deeds.

is allow'd. According to *The New English Dictionary*, there are confounded in the word 'allow' two words of different origins, one ultimately from Lat. *allaudare*, 'to praise' another from *allocare*, 'to assign, bestow.' "Between the two primary significations there naturally arose a variety of use blending them in the general idea of *assign with approval*, grant, concede a thing claimed or urged, admit a thing offered, permit, etc., etc. As an illustration of this variation in the meaning, compare the use of *allow* in the line before us with its use in lines 153 and 202 below, and also Malory's use of the same word in the passage quoted in the note to l. 104. In the present passage the meaning 'is allowed of' is closer to *allaudare* than in the most ordinary modern use; cf. *Luke*, xi., 48: "Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers."

119. devoir. 'Duty'; especially 'knightly duty.'

122-3. Cf. l. 133 below and *Maud*, Pt. I., ii.:

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more.

131. In *Gareth and Lynette*, these are described as vows—

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King.

and in another place Merlin calls them—

Such vows as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep.

In *Guinevere*, Arthur says of his knights—

I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
 To honour his own word as if his God's,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,
 Until they woo her.

135. **The low sun.** 'The sun low in the horizon' which colours the clouds, unlike "the Sun in heaven" (l. 124) which gives a white light.

136. **the bond of marriage.**

176, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 9:

"This old baron had a daughter that time that was called the fair maid of Astolat. And ever she beheld Sir Launcelot wonderfully. And, as the book saith, she cast such love unto Sir Launcelot that she, could never withdraw her love, wherefore she died; and her name was Elaine la Blank. So thus as she came to and fro, she was so hot in her love that she besought Sir Launcelot to wear upon him at the jousts a token of hers. Fair damsel, said Sir Launcelot, and if I grant you that, ye may say I do more for your love than ever I did for lady or damsel. Then he remembered him that he would go to the jousts disguised, and for because he had never afore that time borne no manner of token of no damsel, then he bethought him that he would bear one of her, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then he said, Fair maiden, I will grant you to wear a token of yours upon my helmet, and therefore what it is shew it me. Sir, she said, it is a red sleeve of mine, of scarlet well embroidered with great pearls. So she brought it him. So Sir Launcelot received it and said, Never did I erst so much for no damsel. And then Sir Launcelot betook the fair maiden his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keep that until that he came again. And so that night he had merry rest and great cheer. For ever the damsel Elaine was about Sir Launcelot, all the while she might be suffered."

182. **Livest between the lips.** Cf. *Aeneid*, xii., 235: *vivusque per ora feretur*.

188, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 9:

"Fair Sir, said Sir Launcelot to his host, I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly known, for mine is well known. Sir, said his host, ye shall have your desire, for me seemeth ye be one of the likeliest knights in the world, and therefore I shall shew you friendship. Sir, wit you well I have two sons which were but late made knights, and the eldest hight Sir Tirre, and he was hurt that same day that he was made knight, that he may not ride, and his shield ye shall have, for that is not known, I dare say, but here and in no place else. And my youngest son hight Sir Lavaine, and if it please you he shall ride with you unto that joust, and he is of his age strong and wight."

197. **his shield is blank enough.** See *Gareth and Lynette*, 405-409, where it is said of the shields carved about the walls of Arthur's hall—

When some good knight had done one noble deed,
 His arms were carven only; but if twain
 His arms were blazon'd also; but if none
 The shield was blank and bare without a sign
 Saving the name beneath.

202. **Allow him.** See note on l. 111.

219. **an if.** A phrase in common use in Middle English for 'if,' originally 'and if,' sometimes merely 'an.' Cf. *I. Henry VI.*, v., 4, 125: "It dies and if it had a thousand lives."

234. **alightly**—**alight.** Such repetitions of forms of the same word, or of the same word in different applications are frequent in Tennyson; so *kindly*—*kind* (l. 265), *hard-won*—*hardly won* (l. 1159), *worship*—*worshipfully* (l. 1317-9), also l. 164, 262.

244. **read.** See note on l. 16 above.

271, fol. The "wordless man" and his story seem to be the invention of the poet himself. In Malory we find a single hint in the description of the arrival of the barge with the dead body (chap. xx.): "They found the fairest corpse lying in a rich bed, and a poor man sitting in the barget's end, and no word would he speak."

280. "The battle of *Mons Badonicus* is the only one of Arthur's battles mentioned by Gildas in his Latin *History of Britain*, and it is the only one which is recognized as definitely historical by modern historians."

287. In this list of battles Tennyson follows the Latin *Historia Brittonum*, by Nennius, who wrote in the 8th or 9th century. The places mentioned are variously identified with modern sites.

294. **cuirass.** 'The armour that protected breast and back.'

296. **lighten'd as he breathed.** The light played upon it through the movements of his chest.

298. The emblem of the Saxons was a White Horse, Cf. *Guinevere*, 15: "the Lords of the White Horse, Heathen, the brood by Hengist left."

305. 'Christ and Arthur' was their battle-cry; cf. *Henry V.*, iii., 1, 34; "Cry God for Harry, England, and Saint George."

339. **rathe.** 'Early.' Hence comes the comparative rather. Cf. Milton, *Lycidas*, 142: "Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies." In *Memoriam*, ex: "The men of ripe and rather years."

348. **flattering.** 'Caressing.' According to the etymologists 'stroke' 'pat' is the original signification of the word.

357. It was usual that the knight at tournaments should wear some gift of his lady-love as a token of her favour,—a glove, scarf, etc.

359, fol. Cf. the passage from Malory quoted in note on l. 176.

383. **squire.** It was the business of the squire to carry his master's shield; the word means etymologically shield-bearer (from Lat. *scutum*, a shield).

397. *lived in fantasy*. These words repeated from l. 27 carry us back to the point at which the story broke off to tell how Elaine came to have the shield.

399. *the long backs, etc.* Very suggestive of the long undulations of the downs.

404. *white rock*. The chalky formation of which the downs consist.

423. The Dragon was the symbol of royalty among the Britons (see ll. 434 fol., below), said to have been adopted by Uther, the father of Arthur, in consequence of having seen a fiery dragon in the heavens. Pendragon (literally, dragon's head) was a title given to Uther and his son.

424. There was a mystery connected with the birth of Arthur (see *Coming of Arthur*, 177, fol.), and also with his "passing"; there was a current idea that he should "come again." The mystery which exists in the old stories, Tennyson adapts to the symbolic meaning which he gives to the subject, Arthur representing the soul, the spiritual, the ideal.

432. *samite*. Is a silk stuff interwoven with threads of gold and silver.

439-440. In the pattern, the forms of dragons gradually changed into other ornamental designs; such transitions may be observed in any piece of arabesque.

447. *crescent*. 'Growing,' i.e., in knightly skill and fame; of l. 1400 below: "May not your crescent fear for name and fame."

465. Malory (xviii., II) gives the following account:

"So these nine knights of Sir Launcelot's kin thrust in mightily, for they were all noble knights. And they, of great hate and despite that they had unto him, thought to rebuke that noble knight Sir Launcelot, and Sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smote down many knights of Northgalls and of Northumberland. And when Sir Launcelot saw them fare so, he gat a spear in his hand, and there encountered with him all at once Sir Bors, Sir Ector, and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote him at once with their spears. And with force of themselves they smote Sir Launcelot's horse to the earth. And by misfortune Sir Bors smote Sir Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the spear brake, and the head left still in his side. When Sir Lavaine saw his master lie on the ground, he ran to the king of Scots, and smote him to the earth, and by great force he took his horse and brought him to Sir Launcelot, and maugre them all he made him to mount upon that horse. And then Sir Launcelot gat a spear in his hand, and there he smote Sir Bors horse and man to the earth. And then he smote Sir Bleoberis, etc. . . . And by this Sir Bors was horsed, and then he came with Sir Ector and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote with swords upon Sir Launcelot's helmet. And when he felt their buffets, and his wound, the which was so grievous, then he thought to do what he might while he

might endure; and then he gave Sir Bors such a buffet that he made him bow his head passing low, and therewithal he rased off his helm, and might have slain him and so pulled him down. And in the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lion. For, as the book saith, he might have slain them, but when he saw their visage his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there."

481. In the *Iliad*, xv., 381, and also 624 there are similar comparisons of the onset of battle with that of a wave. The "green-glimmering" is a characteristic touch of Tennyson's own close observation. "There was a period of my life," says the poet in his letter to Mr. Dawson, quoted in *A Study of the Princess*, "when, as an artist, Turner, for example, takes rough sketches of landscapes, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in Nature. I never put these down, and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, e.g., in the 'Idylls of the King':

With all

Its stormy crests that smote against the skies,

Suggestion: A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea."

503.4. **Diamond me No diamonds.** A common form of expression in literature, cf. *Richard II.*, ii., 3, 87: "Grace me no graco nor uncle me no uncle."

503, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 12:

"Fair lords, I pray you that ye will suffer me to depart where me liketh, for I am sore hurt. I take none force of none honour, for I had lever to repose me than to be lord of all the world. And therewithal he groaned piteously, and made a great gallop awayward from them, until he came under a wood's side; and when he saw that he was from the field nigh a mile, and he was sure that he might not be seen, then he said with a high voice, O gentle knight Sir Lavalne, help me that this truncheon were out of my side, for it etloketh so sore that it nigh slayeth me. O mine own lord, said Sir Lavalne, I would fain do that might please you, but I dread me sore, and I draw out the truncheon, that ye shall be in peril of death. I charge you, said Sir Lancelot, as ye love me draw it out. And therewithal he descended from his horse, and right so did Sir Lavalne, and forthwith Sir Lavalne drew the truncheon out of his side. And he gave a great shriek, and a marvellous grisly groan, and his blood brast out nigh a pint at once, that at last he sank down, and so swooned pale and deadly."

535.6. **Gawain, rise, my nephew.** The poet changed this afterwards, when the allegory began to be of more importance in the *Idylls*, to "Wherefore, rise, O Gawain."

548.9. The diamond seems to have been fixed in one of the flowers which formed the design of the canopy (see ll. 443-4) where it formed a *flashing or glistening*, hence "restless" centre.

561. *concourse*. Note the unusual but earlier accentuation; cf. 'discoûrse,' 'recoûrse.' Milton accentuates 'concoûrse.'

593. *fine*. 'Fine-apun,' 'over-subtle.'

654. *hern*. A form of *heron*; this shorter form is the one always employed by Tennyson, so in *The Brook*: "I come from haunts of coot and hern."

661. *an*. See note on l. 219.

660, fol. Cf. Malory, xvlii., 14:

"Ah, mercy, said Sir Gawaine, now is my heart more heavier than ever it was tofore. Why? said Elaine. For I have great cause, said Sir Gawaine; is that knight that owneth this shield your love? Yea, truly, said she, my love he is, God would I were his love. Truly, said Sir Gawaine, fair damsel, ye have right, for, and he be your love, ye love the most honourable knight of the world, and the man of most worship. So me thought ever, said the damsel, for never, or that time, for no knight that ever I saw loved I never none erst. God grant, said Sir Gawaine, that either of you may rejoice other, but that is in a great adventure. But truly, said Sir Gawaine unto the damsel, ye may say ye have a fair grace, for why, I have known that noble knight this four and twenty year, and never or that day I nor none other knight, I dare make it good, saw nor heard say that ever he bare token or sign of no lady, gentlewoman, nor maiden, at no jousts nor tournament. And therefore, fair maiden, said Sir Gawaine, ye are much beholden to him to give him thanks. But I dread me, said Sir Gawaine, that ye shall never see him in this world, and that is great pity that ever was of earthly knight. Alas, said she, how may this be? Is he elain? I say not so, said Sir Gawaine, but wit ye well, he is grievously wounded, by all manner of signs, and by men's sight, more likely to be dead than to be on live; and wit ye well he is the noble knight Sir Launcelot, for by this shield I know him. Alas, said the fair maiden of Astolat, how may this be, and what was his hurt? Truly, said Sir Gawaine, the man in the world that loved him best hurt him so, and I dare say, said Sir Gawaine, and that knight that hurt him knew the very certainty that he had hurt Sir Launcelot, it would be the most sorrow that ever came to his heart. Now, fair father, said then Elaine, I require you give me leave to ride and to seek him, or else I wot well I shall go out of my mind, for I shall never stint till that I find him and my brother Sir Lavaine. Do as it liketh you, said her father, for me right sore repenteth of the hurt of that noble knight. Right so the maid made her ready, and before Sir Gawaine making great dole. Then on the morn Sir Gawaine came to king Arthur, and told him how he had found Sir Launcelot's shield in the keeping of the fair maiden of Astolat. All that knew I afore-hand, said king Arthur, and that caused me I would not suffer you to have ado at the great jousts: for I espied, said king Arthur, when he came in till his lodging, full late in the evening in Astolat. But marvel have I, said Arthur, that ever he would bear any sign of any damsel: for, or [before] now, I never heard say nor knew that ever he bare any token of none earthly woman. By my head, said Sir Gawaine, the fair maiden of Astolat loveth him marvellously well; what it meaneth I cannot say; and she is ridden after to seek him. So the king and all came to London, and there Sir Gawaine openly disclosed to all the court that it was Sir Launcelot that justed best."

661. *Ramp in the field*. *Ramp* is the technical term in heraldry to describe an animal on its hind feet in the posture of attack; *field* is

the heraldic term for the general surface of the shield, the background of the emblazonry.

787. fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 15 :

"By fortune Sir Lavaine was ridden to pley him, to enchaſe his horse. And anon as Elaine saw him she knew him, and then she cried on loud until him. And when he heard her, anon he came to her; and then she asked her brother; how did my lord Sir Launcelot? Who told you elater that my lord's name was Launcelot? Then she told him how Sir Gawaine by his shield knew him. So they rode together till they came to the hermitage, and anon she alight. So Sir Lavaine brought her to Sir Launcelot. And when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she might not speak, but suddenly she fell to the earth down suddenly in a swoon, and there she lay a great while. And when she was relieved she sighed, and said, My lord Sir Launcelot, alas, why be ye in this plight? and then she swooned again. And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to take her up,—And bring her to me. And when she came to herself, Sir Launcelot kissed her, and said, Fair maiden, why fare ye thus? Ye put me to pain; wherefore make ye no more such cheer, for, and ye be come to comfort me, ye be right welcome, and of this little hurt that I have, I shall be right hastily whole, by the grace of God. But I marvel, said Sir Launcelot, who told you my name."

795. in his moods. 'In one of the moody fits to which he was subject.' Cf. *Maud II.*, xiv.: "What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?"

797. mystically. 'In such a way as to symbolize a deeper meaning.'

808. battle-writhen. 'This characteristically Tennysonian phrase seems to mean 'with the knotted sinews developed through their constant use in battle.'

840. wildly-sculptured. This seems to be a misprint; in later editions we read "weirdly-sculptured."

852. forebore him. 'Was patient with him'; cf. *Ephesians*, iv., 2; "with long suffering, forbearing one another in love."

858. simples. 'Medicinal plants'; a common meaning of the word, see *Romeo and Juliet*, v. 1, 40.

871-3. He was pledged by his honour to his dishonourable love for Guinevere.

881. that ghostly grace. The visionary beauty referred to in l. 78.

899. burthen. 'The refrain of a song'; So in the stage direction to the song in *As You Like It*, iv., 2: "The rest shall bear this burden," and in *Enoch Arden*, 792:

Beating it in upon his weary brain
As tho' it were the burthen of a song.

906. This refers to the practice of putting garlands of flowers upon victims to be sacrificed at the altar.

915. There was a popular notion that a ghost could not speak unless first spoken to; cf. *Hamlet*, I., 1, 45.

939. *blare*. 'Blow abroad,' properly of trumpets, cf. *Welcome to Alexandria*: "Warhle, O hagle, and trumpet blare."

954. Lancelot's ancestral domain was in France—"Benwick, some men call it Bayonne, and some men call it Beaume" (see Malory, xx., 18).

994, fol. Mr. Churton Collins says (p. 147): "This passage is an admirable illustration of Tennyson's power of transfusing the very essence of Virgil into English," and cites *Aeneid*, iv., 460-3:

Hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis
Visa viri, nox cum terras obscura teneret;
Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Saeps queri et longas in fletum ducere voces.

1000. *make* in earlier English is the technical phrase for the composition of poetry; and poets were called *makers*; this, indeed, is the meaning of the Greek word ποιητής from which the word 'poet' is derived.

1001. Songs of similar form are found repeatedly in the "Idylls of the King" (see *Marriage of Geraint*, 347, *Coming of Arthur*, 481, *Merlin and Vivien* 385, *Guinevere*, 166, *Gareth and Lynette*, 974, 1034, etc.). The three line stanzas may have been suggested by the Welsh Triads. The most ancient of the Cimbrian Bards wrote in stanzas of three rhyming lines. . . . each line containing seven syllables. A more exact imitation of these Triads is to be found at line 402 of *The Coming of Arthur*, where Merlin speaks "In riddling triplets of old time," each stanza consisting of three lines rhyming together.

1016. Phantoms that give notice of death in particular families are common in tradition.

1020. *shrilling*. Tennyson is fond of using *shrill* as a verb, cf. *Passing of Arthur*, 34, 42, *Talking Oak*, 68, *Enoch Arden*, 178.

1049. *muse at me*. Cf. *Macbeth*, iii., 4, 85: "Do not muse at me, my most worthy friend," *King John*, iii., 1, 317, "I muse your majesty doth seem so cold."

1062. *an*. See note on l. 219.

1085. *pass*. 'Die'; cf. the expression 'the passing bell,' and *In Memoriam*, lvii.:

The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

1099, fol. Cf. Malory, xviii., 19:

"Now speak we of the fair maiden of Astolat, that made such sorrow day and night, that she never slept, eat, nor drank; and ever she made her complaint unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten days, that she feebled so that she must needs pass out of this world, then she shrived her clean, and received her Creator. And ever she complained still upon Sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly father bade her leave such thoughts. Then she said, Why should I leave such thoughts? am I not an earthly woman? and all the while the breath is in my body I may complain me, for my belief is I do none offence though I love an earthly man, and I take God to my record I never loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a pure maiden I am for him and for all other. And since it is the sufferance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the High Father of heaven to have mercy upon my soul, and upon mine innumerable pains that I suffered may be allegiance of part of my sins. For sweet Lord Jesu, said the fair maiden I take thee to record, on thee I was never great offender against thy laws, but that I loved this noble knight Sir Launcelot out of measure, and of myself, good Lord, I might not withstand the fervent love wherefore I have my death. And then she called her father Sir Bernard, and her brother Sir Tirre, and heartily she prayed her father that her brother might write a letter like as she did indite it; and so her father granted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead,—And while my body is hot, let this letter be put in my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter until that I be cold, and let me be put in a fair bed, with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed, and all my richest clothes, be laid with me in a chariot unto the next place where Thames is, and there let me be put within a barge, and hut one man with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barge be covered with black sailte, over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you, let it be done. So her father granted it her faithfully, all things should be done like as she had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for, when this was done, anon she died. And so when she was dead, the corpse, and the bed, all was led the next way unto Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and all, were put into Thames, and so the man steered the barge unto Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro or any esped it."

1095. ghostly man. 'A spiritual man,' 'a priest'; cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, iii., 3, 49: "Being a divine, a ghostly confessor," and the communion service in the *Book of Common Prayer*; "He may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice."

1132. with bent brows. 'The brows contracted in grief,' cf. *Aylmer's Field*, 625: "Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averil." Mr. Rowe interprets this "with bowed heads," and Mr. Webb similarly interprets the passage in *Aylmer's Field*.

1135. Note the season; the various Idylls are assigned to appropriate seasons of the year.

1171. oriel. 'A projecting window.'

1179. Is tawnier than ber cygnet's. A cygnet is a young swan which is of a dark, bluish-gray colour.

1251.2. The idea of a second coming is connected with several popular heroes, Charlemagne, Barbarossa, etc.; and Malory says, *xxi.*, 7: "Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but lived by the will of our Lord Jesu in another place. And men say that he will come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse:

'Hic jacet Arthurus Rex quondam rexque futurus,'"

1257.8. For Sir Percivale and Sir Galahad see *The Holy Grail*. Both were distinguished among the Knights of the Round Table for their purity.

1272, fol. Cf. Malory, *xviii.*, 20:

"And this was the intent of the letter:—Most noble knight, Sir Launcelot, now hath death made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fair maiden of Astolat; therefore unto all ladies I make my moan; yet pray for my soul, and bury me at the least, and offer ye my mass-penny. This is my last request. And a clean maiden I died, I take God to witness. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art peerless.—This was all the substance in the letter. And when it was read the king, the queen, and all the knights wept for pity of the doleful complaints. Then was Sir Launcelot sent for. And when he was come, king Arthur made the letter to be read to him; and when Sir Launcelot heard it word by word, he said, My lord Arthur, wit ye well I am right heavy of the death of this fair damsel. God knoweth I was never causer of her death by my willing, and that will I report me to her own brother; here he is, Sir Lavaine. I will not say nay, said "Sir Launcelot, but that she was both fair and good, and much I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of measure. Ye might have shewed her, said the queen, some bounty and gentleness, that might have preserved her life. Madam, said Sir Launcelot, she would none other way be answered, but that she would be my wife, or else my love, and of these two I would not grant her; but I proffered her, for her good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yearly to her and to her heirs, and to wed any manner knight that she could find best to love in her heart. For madam, said Sir Launcelot, I love not to be constrained to love; for love must arise of the heart, and not by no constraint. That is truth, said the king, and many knights: love is free in himself, and never will be bounden; for where he is bounden he loseth himself. Then said the king unto Sir Launcelot, It will be your worship that ye oversee that she be interred worshipfully. Sir, said Sir Launcelot, that shall be done as I can best devise. And so many knights went thither to behold that fair maiden. And so upon the morn she was interred richly, and Sir Launcelot offered her mass-penny, and all the knights of the Table Round that were there at that time offered with Sir Launcelot. And then the poor man went again with the barget. Then the Queen sent for Sir Launcelot, and prayed him for mercy, for why she had been wroth with him causeless. This is not the first time, said Sir Launcelot, that ye have been displeased with me causeless; but, madam, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow I endure I take no force."

1317. worship. 'Honour'—the word is Malory's.

1320. *that shrine.* According to Malory (see passage quoted in the note on l. 1099), this was Westminster Abbey, or rather the church that stood on the site, built by Sebert, King of the West Saxons in the seventh century.

1334. *blazon'd.* See note on l. 9.

1348. *affiance.* 'Trust,' 'confidence,' so in Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, ii., 2, 127, and in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the petition for the Queen, "that she may evermore have affianced in thee."

1391. *crescent.* See note on l. 448; the 'crescent moon' is also in the speaker's mind.

1410. *a man Not after Arthur's heart.* Cf. *I. Samuel*, viii., 14: "the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart."

1411. *without.* The use of "without" as a conjunction is usually regarded as a vulgarism. Such use is, however, occasionally found in good writers, especially of an earlier date: see, for example, *Much Ado About Nothing*, iii., 3, 86.

NOTES ON BROWNING.

THE Browning family seems to have been a sound, vigorous and genuinely English stock, which, at length, after various remote strains had been grafted upon it, produced the flower of genius in the person of Robert Browning, the poet. His grandfather, who migrated from Dorsetshire to London, was a successful official in the Bank of England, and married a certain Margaret Tittle, a native of St. Kitts in the West Indies. Their son, the poet's father, disappointed in his desire of becoming an artist, also entered the service of the bank in which he continued until advancing years brought superannuation. As a bank clerk he earned a steady income which, if not large, sufficed his needs. In 1811, he married Sarah Ann Weidemann, of Scottish German origin, her father, a native of Hamburg, having settled and married in Dundee; he was a ship-owner in a small way. Browning's parents spent their joint lives in the southern suburbs of London; and there, in Camberwell, their eldest son Robert was born, May 7th, 1812. Only one other child, a daughter, survived infancy; she never married and long after, in her brother's latest years, presided over his household. Browning was specially fortunate in his family relations; in the absence of a public school and university education this quiet, simple, nonconformist family circle counted for more in his case than is perhaps usual with English men of letters. It was not, however, an ordinary middle-class home; the father was a man of exceptional culture with pronounced artistic and literary tastes, something of a scholar and an enthusiastic collector of books and prints. We hear of the charm he exercised over those he met, through his simple, cheerful, unworldly spirit, and his kindly heart. "The father and uncle," writes Dante Rossetti to William Ailingham, "—father especially—show just that submissive yet highly cheerful and capable simplicity of character which often, I think, appears in the family of a great man who uses at last what others have kept for him. The father is a complete oddity—with real genius for drawing and as innocent as a child." To his son he transmitted a vigorous constitution and an energetic and optimistic temperament. The mother was characterized by Carlyle as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman;" she was a pious woman with a delicate and nervous organization and was a loving and judicious mother to her distinguished

son. The boy "was a handsome, vigorous, fearless child, and soon developed an unresting activity and a fiery temper. He clamoured for occupation from the moment he could speak." His education was of a somewhat unusual and desultory character; school counted for little, and he did not take a university course. But the house overflowed with books from which he did not fail to profit. "By the indulgence of my father and mother," he wrote in a letter of 1887, "I was allowed to live my own life and choose my own course in it; which, having been the same from the beginning to the end, necessitated a permission to read nearly all sorts of books in a well-stocked and very miscellaneous library. I had no other direction than my parents' taste for whatever was highest and best in literature; but I found out for myself many forgotten fields which proved the richest of pastures." As he grew older he had tutors in various branches, and thus was instructed not only in academic subjects but also in music, singing, dancing, riding and fencing. He had a passion for music and early showed artistic aptitudes. By the time he was twelve years old he had written a volume of poems which seemed to his father to possess real excellence, but which the writer himself, in later life, described as mere echoes of Byron. In 1825 he accidentally became acquainted with the poems of Shelley and Keats, and was profoundly affected by the work of the former. Shelley's influence is the most important single literary factor in his life, and traces of it are clearly perceptible in his first published poem *Pauline*; but Browning's genius was markedly individual and independent, and less in his case than is usual, can one perceive indebtedness either to predecessors or contemporaries.

Browning early determined to be a poet; when the time came to make choice of a profession, "he appealed to his father whether it would not be better for him to see life in the best sense and cultivate the powers of his mind than shackle himself in the very outset of his career by a laborious training foreign to his aim." The father acquiesced and cheerfully furnished from his modest income the means which freed his son from the necessity of pursuing any lucrative calling. "He secured for me," says the latter, "all the ease and comfort that a literary man needs to do good work." By the kindness of an aunt, his mother's sister, a poem of his, *Pauline*, was printed in 1833. This youthful production, apart from impressing favourably two or three discerning critics, wholly failed to attract public attention. In 1833-4 he spent some three months in St. Petersburg.

In 1835 he published *Paracelsus*, a work which holds its own, even when brought into comparison with his maturer productions; although it wholly failed in winning popular favour, *Paracelsus* revealed to the few the advent of a poet of extraordinary promise, and opened for him the doors of literary society in London. He made the acquaintance of many distinguished men, and came into close and friendly relations, especially, with the critic, John Foster, and with the great actor, Macready. Partly through the influence of the latter, he began the writing of plays, and to this species of literature he devoted a considerable part of his poetical activity during the next ten years. Two of these, *Strafford* and *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon*, were produced on the stage with partial success; but the treatment the latter play received at the hands of the manager made the author resolve to write no more for the theatre. In 1838 he made his first visit to Italy, a country with which much of his work and much of his life were to be closely connected. He was already engaged upon a poem based on mediæval Italian history, *Sordello*. It is the most difficult of all his works, and made Browning's name a by-word for obscurity; the impression thus created was doubtless one of the factors in his failure, during the next twenty years, to make any progress in popular regard. As his writings brought no money return, he had recourse to a cheap method of publication; he issued them from time to time, as they accumulated on his hands, in paper-covered pamphlets, each consisting of sixteen double-columned pages. From 1841 to 1846, eight of these pamphlets appeared; in them was to be found some of his best and most characteristic work, notably *Pippa Passes* (1844) and the two collections of shorter poems entitled *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845). The series had the common title, *Bells and Pomegranates*, "to indicate," as the poet explained, "an endeavour towards something like an alternation or mixture of music with discourse, sound with sense, poetry with thought."

A second voyage to Italy was made in 1844. On his return opened the one romantic incident of his uneventful history. Miss Elizabeth Barrett, who already enjoyed a wide reputation as a poet, had recently published a volume which contained a complimentary allusion to Browning's poetry. Browning read the volume with enthusiastic admiration, and, at the instigation of a common friend, John Kenyon, expressed this admiration in a letter to Miss Barrett. The result was an animated correspondence and a growing feeling of warm friendship. Miss Barrett was a chronic invalid, confined to her room, scarcely

seeing anyone but the members of her own family; hence for some months the poets did not actually meet. At length, on May 20th, 1845, Browning saw his correspondent for the first time, "a little figure which did not rise from the sofa, pale ringletted face, great eager, wistfully pathetic eyes." The friendship rapidly ripened into passionate admiration. But to the natural issue of their attachment were great obstacles. Her father was a man of strange and selfish temper, who thought that the lives of his children should be wholly dedicated to himself, and who treated his daughter—now thirty-nine years of age—as if she were a child. To him she could not dare even to hint the possibility of marriage. More insuperable obstacle still was her own ill-health; though under the stimulus of the new interest in life, this had greatly improved, she was supposed to be labouring under an incurable disease of the spine. To incur her father's anger, to burden her lover with an invalid wife seemed to her impossible. A twelvemonth passed; in the summer of 1846, her life was represented as depending upon her spending the following winter in a warmer climate. Her father negatived any such plan. There was now a new and forcible argument in Browning's favour, and Misa Barrett at length yielded. They were married in September, 1846, and embarked for the continent. The father never forgave his daughter and henceforward persistently refused all communications with her or her husband.

This marriage, which was at once one of the most extraordinary and one of the happiest in the annals of genius, completely changed the tenor of Browning's life. During the next fifteen years his home was in Italy, and for the greater part of that time, in Florence; although, in summer especially, other parts of Italy afforded a temporary residence. Mrs. Browning's health greatly improved, and, while still frail, she could travel, enjoy the open air, and mingle, to some limited degree, with the world. In the earlier years of their married life, they saw but little of society; but subsequently they became acquainted with many English and Americans resident or travelling in Italy, and formed not a few intimate friendships, for example, with Landor, Lytton, Leighton (the painter), Fanny Kemble, among the English; and with Powers (the sculptor), Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Hawthorne, and the Storys, among Americans. In 1849 a son was born to them. In the spring of 1851, Mrs. Browning's health permitted a journey northward, and the following year and a-half was spent in London and Paris. They now came into close personal relations with many of their distinguished contemporaries, Carlyle, Tennyson, D. G. Rossetti, and

others. The visit was repeated in 1855, when *Men and Women* was published; this volume contains probably a larger quantity of Browning's best work than any other single publication of his. In 1851 Browning had been appreciatively reviewed by a French critic, M. Milsand, in the pages of a leading French magazine. But the indifference of the English reading public continued, now and for years to come. To this Mrs. Browning refers, some ten years later, in a letter to her husband's sister: "His treatment in England affects him, naturally, and for my part I set it down as an infamy of that public—no other word." After referring to the recognition he was finding in the United States, she continues "I don't complain for myself of an unappreciating public. *I have no reason.* But just for *that* reason, I complain more about Robert—only he does not hear me complain—to *you* I may say that the blindness, deafness, and stupidity of the English public to Robert are amazing. Of course, Milsand has heard his name—well, the contrary would have been strange. Robert is. All England can't prevent his existence, I suppose. But nobody there, except a small knot of pre-Raffaellite men, pretend to do him justice. Mr. Forster has done the best—in the press. As a sort of lion, Robert has his range in society—and—for the rest you should see Chapman's [his publisher] returns! While in America he is a power, a writer, a poet—he is read—he lives in the hearts of the people!"

One consequence of this state of things had been that the Brownings had been under the necessity of living with the strictest economy. In 1855 their finances were placed in a better condition by legacies amounting to £11,000 which came to them through the death of their old friend John Kenyon. The plan of dividing the time between London, Paris and Italy was continued until 1861. By that time Mrs. Browning's health had begun to decline; a winter spent in Rome proved unfavourable to her, and on June 29th, she suddenly expired in her husband's arms at their own home in Florence.

The blow to Browning was overwhelming. "Life must now begin anew," he wrote, "all the old cast off and the new one put on. I shall go away, break up everything, go to England, and live and work and write." As soon as possible he left Florence, never to revisit it, and, mainly from considerations in regard to his son, took up his residence in London. His manner of life again underwent a revolution. He at first lived a very isolated existence, cutting himself off wholly from general society. But, in the spring of 1863, as he told Mr. Gosse, he suddenly realized that "this mode of life was morbid and unworthy,

and, then and there, he determined to accept for the future every suitable invitation that came to him." Thus, in course of time, he came to be one of the most familiar figures in London society, and at notable public entertainments, especially of a musical character. His summers he was accustomed to spend on the coast of France. In 1864 he published *Dramatis Personæ*, a collection of poems similar in character and excellence to *Men and Women*. The tide of opinion had now begun to set decisively in his favour. In 1864 he writes to an intimate friend: "There were always a few people who had a certain opinion of my poems, but nobody cared to speak what he thought, or the things printed twenty-five years ago would not have waited so long for a good word; but at last a new set of men arrive who don't mind the conventionalities of ignoring one and seeing everything in another—Chapman [his publisher] says 'the new orders come from Oxford and Cambridge,' and all my new cultivators are young men. . . . As I begun, so I shall end,—taking my own course, pleasing myself or aiming at doing so, and thereby, I hope, pleasing God. As I never did otherwise, I never had any fear as to what I did going ultimately to the bad,—hence in collected editions, I always reprinted everything, smallest and greatest." His fame was fully established on the publication of the longest and one of the greatest of his poems *The Ring and the Book* in 1868-9. From this time, even the general public, although they did not read him, became aware of the fact that Tennyson was not the only great English poet living and writing. When *The Ring and the Book* was approaching completion, Browning wrote: "Booksellers are making me pretty offers for it. One sent to propose, last week, to publish it at his risk, giving me *all* the profits, and pay me the whole in advance—'for the incidental advantages of my name'—the R. B. who for six months once did not sell one copy of the poems."

In 1881 a novel honour was done him in the foundation in London of a society for the study and elucidation of his works. This example was followed far and wide both in Great Britain and in America; and the Browning cult became a temporary fashion. However feeble or foolish some of this work may have been, these Browning societies, on the whole, did much for the spreading of a genuine interest in the works of a somewhat recondite poet. Browning himself continued to be a diligent writer to the last, but none of the numerous volumes issued subsequent to 1868 reached the level which had been attained by the best of his earlier work. In his work, activity of the intellect had always tended to trespass unduly upon the sphere of the imagination,

and with the decay of imaginative power natural to old age, the purely poetic excellence of his writings began to decline, although they might still continue to possess interest as the utterances of a powerful and active mind. In 1878 Italy was revisited for the first time since his wife's death, and began to exercise its former fascination over him. He returned repeatedly and finally purchased the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice as a residence for his son, who had become an artist. Gradually old age began to tell on the vigorous frame of the poet, but, as far as health permitted, he maintained his old interests and activities to the last, and his final volume of poems appeared on the very day of his death. This occurred in Venice on Dec. 12th, 1889.

Mr. Edmond Gosse, who knew Browning in his later years, thus sums up his personal characteristics: "In physique Robert Browning was short and thick-set, of very muscular build; his temper was ardent and optimistic; he was appreciative, sympathetic and full of curiosity; prudent in affairs and rather 'close' about money; robust, active, loud of speech, cordial in manner, gracious and conciliatory in address; but subject to sudden fits of indignation which were like thunderstorms." Hawthorne speaking of an evening spent with the Brownings in Florence, 1858, says: "Mr. Browning was very efficient in keeping up conversation with everybody, and seemed to be in all parts of the room and in every group at the same moment; a most vivid and quick-thoughted person, logical and common-sensible, as, I presume, poets generally are in their daily talk." On another occasion he says: "Browning was very genial and full of life as usual, but his conversation has the effervescent aroma which you cannot catch, even if you get the very words that seem imbued with it. . . . Browning's nonsense is of very genuine and excellent quality, the true babble and effervescence of a bright and powerful mind, and he lets it play among his friends with the faith and simplicity of a child. He must be an amiable man."

In his later years, when Browning mingled freely in society, he did not, to the casual observer, seem the poet, either in his general appearance or in his talk. He gave the impression of being a shrewd and energetic man of the world. Mr. F. G. Palgrave, whom he used frequently to visit subsequent to 1861, describes his visits as very pleasant, "but neither then nor afterwards was his conversation in any apparent near relation to his work or thought as a poet." In regard to this trait Sir Leslie Stephen writes in an essay, *The Browning Letters*, "People who met Browning occasionally accepted the common-place

doctrine that the poet and the man may be wholly different persons. Browning, that is, could talk like a brilliant man of the world, and the common-place person could infer that he did not possess the feelings which he did not care to exhibit at a dinner party. It was not difficult to discover that such a remark showed the superficiality of the observer, not the absence of the underlying qualities. These letters, at any rate, demonstrate to the dullest that the intensity of passion which makes the poet, was equally present in the man." To this passage he subjoins a note: "I happened to meet Browning at a moment of great interest to me, I knew little of him then, and had rather taken him at the valuation indicated above. He spoke a few words, showing such tenderness, insight, and sympathy, that I have never forgotten his kindness; and from that time knew him for what he was. I cannot say more; but I say so much by way of expressing my gratitude." Very weighty testimony to the charm and greatness of Browning's character is found in a private letter of Jowett, the late Master of Balliol, dated 1868. "I thought I was getting too old to make new friends. But I believe I have made one—Mr. Browning the poet, who has been staying with me during the last few days. It is impossible to speak without enthusiasm of his open, generous nature and his great ability and knowledge. I had no idea that there was a perfectly sensible poet in the world, entirely free from vanity, jealousy, or any other littleness, and thinking no more of himself than if he were an ordinary man. His great energy is very remarkable, and his determination to make the most of the remainder of his life."

"ALL SERVICE RANKS THE SAME WITH GOD."

This song is put in the mouth of Pippa, the little silk-weaver, heroine of the dramatic poem, *Pippa Passes* (1841). She comforts herself, in her insignificance, with the thought to which this little poem gives expression.

First published in No. III. of *Bells and Pomegranates*, the volume entitled *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842). The writing of his drama *Straford*, produced in 1837, had kindled the poet's mind with the scenes of the Civil War which affords the historic setting of these poems.

The appropriateness of the term *dramatic lyric* is, in the present case, specially manifest. (1) The verses with the exception of the first stanza of *Marching Along* are the utterances of an imaginary personage, and express his, not the poet's, sentiments. (2) Each poem is supposed to represent an actual speech, and is not, like *In the Valley of Caunteretz*, or *Break, break, break*, the immediate poetic expression of a feeling. Thus far, then, these pieces are akin to Antony's speech over the dead body in *Julius Caesar*, or the speeches at the Banquet in *Macbeth*; hence (3) their style has not the smooth steady flow of the ordinary lyric, but the more broken changeful movement of such poetry as is intended to represent actual speech. (4) It is not mere y to embody sentiments and thoughts that these poems were written; quite as vivid and as aesthetically valuable as these, is the impression they give us of the bluff cavalier who speaks them—a typical exemplar of an historic development—and of the various situations in which the poems are supposed to be uttered.

Their *lyrical* character is stamped on the face of these poems by their metrical form, and in the fact that each gives expression to one dominating feeling. Attention need not be drawn to the vigour and dash, both in conception and in style and versification, which are specially congenial to Browning's temperament and art.

I. MARCHING ALONG.

2. **crop-headed.** Unlike the cavaliers, the Puritans wore their hair short; hence also the term "Roundheads."

swing. Hang. Cf. the ordinary imprecation "Go and be hanged."

3. **pressing.** The meaning must not be pressed; the word does not imply here (as it ordinarily does) that any *force* was used in gathering these soldiers.

5. **Marched.** In the first text "marching," as in the choruses of the next two stanzas; the change amended the grammatical structure of the sentence.

7. **Pym.** The parliamentary leader who is familiar to all students of English history, for the prominent part he took in the Petition

of Right, the Impeachments of Strafford and Laud, the Grand Remonstrance, etc. He died in 1643, not long after the outbreak of the Civil War.

8. *parles*. Conferences; the more ordinary form is "parley," though "parlo" is frequent in poetry, e.g., *Hamlet*, I., 1.

In an angry parlo
He smote the clad Polacks on the Ice.

13-14. *Hampden*, the famous resister of ship-money, whose noble and simple character gives him perhaps the chief place in general estimation among the statesmen of the Long Parliament. He died of a wound received in battle in June, 1643. *Hazelrig* and *Fiennes* were also prominent personages on the Parliamentary side. The former was one of the "Five Members" whom Charles attempted to arrest in Jan., 1642—an event which precipitated the resort to arms. Nathaniel Fiennes was a member of the Long Parliament, a commander of a troop of horse in Essex' army, and later attained an unpleasant notoriety by his surrender of Bristol, of which he was governor.

young Harry. Sir Henry Vane, known as "the younger" (to distinguish him from his father; so styled in the sonnet addressed to him by Milton), once Governor of Massachusetts, member of the Long Parliament, a leader among the Independents, and hence during the earlier period of Cromwell's career a close ally.

15. *Rupert*. Prince Rupert, nephew of Charles I., famous for his dashing exploits as a cavalry leader in the Civil War.

21. *Nottingham*. It was at Nottingham that Charles set up his standard (Aug. 22nd, 1642) at the beginning of hostilities against Parliament. Doubtless the reference is to this event, and hence the allusion serves to give a date to the imaginary incident of the poem.

II. GIVE A ROUSE.

Here the speaker is addressing his comrades who are drinking about him; stanza iii. shows that this speech is conceived as belonging to a much later date in the history of the Civil War than that of the previous poem.

rouse. A deep draught, as frequently in Shakespeare; e.g., *Hamlet*, I., 4:

The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up spring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, etc.

16. **Noll's.** Noll is a nickname for Oliver, contemptuously applied to Oliver Cromwell by his opponents.

III. BOOT AND SADDLE.

When first published this poem had the title "My Wife Gertrude."

Here, we seem to be in a still later era in the war, in a time subsequent to the battle of Naseby (1645) when, after great disasters on the field, the cavaliers were maintaining an obstinate resistance in their scattered strongholds.

5. **asleep as you'd say.** It is early in the morning and the inhabitants seem to be all asleep; but many of the king's partizans, though fearing apparently to show themselves, are listening for the departure of the cavaliers.

10. "Castle Brancepeth" is the subject and "array" the object of the verb "flouts."

Castle Brancepeth. It is not likely that the poet had any particular locality in mind; but there was and is a Castle Brancepeth a few miles from Durham, once the seat of the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland. It is mentioned in Wordsworth's *White Doe of Rylstone*:

Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear.

11. **laughs.** Says with a laugh "Good fellows," etc.

14-15. **Nay! I've better,** etc. The punctuation shows that this is conceived as being said by "My wife Gertrude."

MY LAST DUCHESS.

My Last Duchess first appeared in the volume of 1842 entitled *Dramatic Lyrics*, which was the third number of the series *Bells and Pomegranates*. Originally under the general title *Italy and France*, it was associated with the poem now called *Count Gismond*: the present poem being, I, *Italy*; the other II, *France*. In *Poems by Robert Browning*, 1849, it appears (as now) independently under its present name. Perhaps the poet felt that the former title implied that the subject was not merely Italian but typically Italian, which may have been more than he intended; wishing, however, to draw attention to the local characteristics, he subjoined "Ferrara" as indicating the

scene of his imaginary situation. Ferrara is a city of Italy on the Po, the seat of the famous Este family, dukes of Ferrara. Under their influence it became a centre of art and culture, and may have been chosen here by the poet as suggesting an environment of aristocratic predominance and artistic refinement fitted to be the setting for his incidents. Byron's apostrophe in *Childe Harold*, iv., stanza 35, suggests something of this nature :

Ferrara ! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seats
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
Of Este, which for many an age made good
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

In exemplification, Byron, in the following stanzas, refers to the story of the poet Tasso, who, having fallen in love with the sister of the Duke, was imprisoned for many years as a madman.

The impropriety of classing this poem among the lyrics was doubtless the cause of its being placed in the final edition of Browning's works, not among the *Dramatic Lyrics* but among the *Dramatic Romances*.

My Last Duchess is an unusually condensed but typical and striking example of Browning's most characteristic mode of representing human life, already discussed,—the dramatic monologue. The fact that, in the dramatic monologue, the external details, the story, place, situation, are not directly stated but left to inference, makes it needful that the student should read the poem with the utmost care so as to catch every hint for interpretation, and fit every detail to form the background which may serve to bring into clearness the significance of the monologue itself. This is specially true in the case of this particular poem. "There is some telling touch," says Mr. Symonds, "in every line, an infinitude of cunningly careless details, instinct with suggestion, and an appearance through it all of simple artless ease, such as only the very finest art can give." Such prolonged and careful study will put the reader into a position where he may be able to appreciate the economy and the power through which what might have been a complete five-act tragedy, is flashed upon us in the compass of some fifty lines.

The poem presents the chance utterances, as it were, of the Duke, the chief actor in a story which is indicated (not narrated), as he unveils to a visitor the picture of his late Duchess. The speaker falls

musingly into a rapid survey of his relations with his wife, thereby involuntarily reveals his own character and briefly but sufficiently indicates hers. A man of commanding personality and aristocratic bearing, he possesses the external graces and refinement proper to his high position and long descent; he is, further, a virtuoso, with fine artistic sense and enjoyment of the beautiful; but these have been cultivated as a source of narrow, selfish gratification, apart from all development of the moral and spiritual nature. Accustomed to the utmost deference from all about him, proud, self-centred, and egoistic, his heart is dry as summer dust. When his personal claims, his pride, his sense of conventional propriety collide with the rights of others, he can be, perhaps half-unconsciously, more cruel and more coldly relentless than the primitive savage.

Over against him we catch a vivid glimpse of the fresh, emotional, passionate nature of the unspoiled and inexperienced girl whom, in the bloom of her youthful beauty, he marries. To his arid, cold nature, her finest qualities are an offence. A species of jealousy develops because he cannot reserve her, like the picture, all to himself,—not ordinary jealousy, but jealousy that she should have a life apart from himself, and joys which his worldly and *blasé* nature cannot feel. In the effort to shape this tender spirit into the conventional mould which his worldly artificial notions prescribe, he crushes first the happiness and next the life of his young wife. Then, after a proper interval doubtless, he seeks to fill her place and improve his financial position by another match. It is in connection with this that he shows to the envoy of a Count, for whose daughter's hand he is a suitor, the picture of his late wife—a masterly presentation, not merely of her exquisite beauty, but of that intensity of soul which looks out from her features and is her chief characteristic. This picture is the occasion of the monologue before us.

The versification should be noted. As compared with the usual structure of the pentameter couplet; the metrical peculiarities of this poem have the characteristics of Shakespeare's later as compared with his earlier use of blank verse, i.e., the treatment of the verse is dramatic. The thought is not fitted to the flow of the couplet, with pauses at the ends of the odd lines and stronger pauses at the close of the couplets. The chief pauses, in this poem, are predominantly within the lines; the sense, not the verse, dictates the grouping of the phrases, while the metrical movement, and the recurrence of the rhymes are felt as giving merely a secondary melody to the passage.

My Last Duchess. Every word in the title is significant of the Duke's point of view.

1. He draws back the veil which hides the picture of his late wife, in order that the visitor, whom he is addressing, may see it.

2-4. Note how the feelings of the connoisseur dominate; it is the lover of art who speaks, not the lover of the woman pictured.

3. **Frà Pandolf.** An imaginary artist.

5-12. The passionate soul of his beautiful wife unconsciously reveals itself through the face; in this revelation of the inner spirit, which was natural to her (as the following lines show) there is something repellant to the Duke's sense of propriety,—to that dislike for earnestness and intensity, that love for reserve and conventionality which are characteristic of worldly and fashionable life in all times and places.

6. **by design.** As interpreted by the lines which follow, this indicates that Frà Pandolf is a well-known personage, whose character would preclude any suspicion of special relations between painter and sitter. She is as *soulful* as the Duke is soulless, and all her heart came into her face on very slight occasions, as he goes on to exemplify.

9-10. Note how the words in parentheses indicate his value for the picture as a picture, and further that curious desire to keep one's sources of pleasure to oneself, even when the imparting of them would not cost anything—a trait which, in miniature, is familiar to us in selfish and spoiled children.

12-13. **not the first, etc.** Here as in ll. 1, 5, 9 and 10, we have hints, carelessly dropped, as it were, for filling in the background and action,—details of gesture and expression such as we should see with our eyes in the actual drama of the theatre.

13-15. **Sir, . . . cheek.** The first indication of that peculiar dog-in-the-manger jealousy which is a salient peculiarity of the speaker.

21. **She had, etc.** He falls into a half reverie, somewhat forgetting his auditor, and making, for his own behoof, an apology for his conduct to his wife—not that he thinks it in his heart blameworthy, but even in the most callous there is a vague uneasiness caused by a remorse, even when not importunate enough to be consciously recognized as remorse.

25-31. How admirably suggestive of the Duchess, are these touches for the imagination! This combination of reserve and suggestiveness is one great source of the spell which Browning casts over his readers.

25. *My favour.* Some gift of his—a jewel perhaps.

31, fol. The broken structure indicates the difficulty which even he feels in justifying himself. To justify one's conduct in words often reveals unsuspected possibilities of criticism.

33. The Este family was one of the oldest in Europe.

34-35. *Who'd . . . trifling?* The question seems to indicate that there is something in the expression of the person addressed which shows to the Duke, that he is not carrying his listener with him.

45. *I gave commands.* What the commands were the reader may, if he pleases, determine for himself; the idea that he ordered her to be put to death seems to the present editor wholly out of keeping with the rest of the poem. According to Professor Corson, an enquiry addressed to the poet as to what the commands were, served to show that Browning had not himself thought of the matter.

46-47. *There she . . . alive.* This brings the main body of the poem to a close: what remains throws additional light on the character of the speaker, by indicating the circumstances in which the preceding lines have been spoken.

47-48. The two leave the picture to rejoin the company down stairs.

I repeat, etc. Evidently, then, a conversation was broken off, to exhibit the picture,—a conversation in which arrangements in regard to dowry, etc., were being made with a person (to whom the whole poem is addressed) who has come to negotiate the marriage of the Duke with the daughter of a Count. All this is significant of the Duke's character.

53. *Nay, we'll go, etc.* They evidently reach the top of the staircase on their way to the "company below," and the Duke politely refuses to take the precedence which his guest, belonging of course to a lower social grade, naturally offers.

54. *Notice Neptune, etc.* As they pass the Duke draws attention to a sculptured group wrought by the famous artist, Claus of Innsbruck, with the conscious pride of the possessor of a great work of art.

Claus of Innsbruck. This is a purely imaginary personage invented by the poet. *Innsbruck* is the capital of Tyrol.

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

First printed in *Hood's Magazine*, August 1844; reprinted with minor changes and some additions (55 and 56, 57 and 58, 63 and 64, 67 and 68, 71 and 72), in *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1845; in 1863 ll. 37 and 38 were added.

The lines contain 4 stresses each; the number of syllables, in other words the character of the foot, varies. The poem is a parable,—an imaginary legend told to exemplify a truth.

51. dight. Antiquated and poetical for 'decked.'

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

First published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, No. III. of *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1845. In this volume there were included along with this poem and under its present title, two other poems, viz.: *Here's to Nelson's Memory*, and the poem now called *Home-Thoughts, From the Sea*. The poem is evidently an outcome of Browning's Italian journey of 1838.

The poem expresses marvellously the charm and freshness of an English spring,—a charm unparalleled, as English-speaking people at least feel, in other lands. The poet feels it the more keenly in virtue of the contrast afforded by the very different character of Italian nature—a character which is suggested, for the reader, in the single touch of the last line.

7. chaffinch. Mr. Burroughs says in his *Impressions of Some English Birds*: "Throughout the month of May, and probably during all the spring months, the chaffinch make two-thirds of the music that ordinarily greets the ear as one walks or drives about the country."

10. whitethroat. A summer visitant in England, builds in low bushes or among weeds.

14. thrush. The song thrush or throistle, one of the finest of British song-birds. Wordsworth speaks of "how blithe the throistle sings"; Tennyson associates it with early spring when

The blackbirds have their wills,
The throistles too.

The English naturalist, J. G. Wood, describes its song as peculiarly rich, mellow and sustained, and as remarkable for the variety of its notes. On the other hand an American, Burroughs, says: "Next to

the chaffinch in volume of song, and perhaps in some localities surpassing it, is the song thrush. . . . Its song is much after the manner of our brown thrasher, made up of vocal altitudes and poses. It is easy to translate its strain into various words or short ejaculatory sentences. . . . "Kiss her, kiss her; do it, do it; be quick, be quick; stick her to it, stick her to it; that was neat, that was neat; that will do." [N.B.—Burroughs' rendering indicates how the bird sings each song "twice over."] . . . Its performance is always animated, loud, and clear, but never, to my ear, melodious, as the poets so often have it. . . . It is a song of great strength and unbounded good cheer; it proceeds from a sound heart and merry throat. (*Some Impressions of English Birds in Fresh Fields.*)

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY.

First appeared in *Men and Women*, 1855. Like *My Last Duchess*, it is a study of the Italian aristocracy. The loss of political freedom, as well as of commercial prosperity from the 16th century onward deprived the higher classes in Italy, more particularly the aristocracy, of the natural outlet for their activities in public affairs. The consequent narrowness and triviality of their lives had its effect upon character. An intellectual and spiritual dry-rot set in. Instead of the great statesmen, preachers, scholars, artists of an earlier date, we have the *virtuosi*; the highest ideal attained was a dilettante curiosity and superficial taste. Seriousness and depth vanished. In the familiar characterization of Italy in his *Traveller*, Goldsmith gives a sketch of this condition of things:

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade,
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguill'd
The sports of children satisfy the child.
Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind.

Browning likes to bring out character and principles by collision with some trivial event or fact, to show the soul revealing itself in its attitude towards the little, no less than towards the great. So, in this present poem, we have a delightful bit of humorous self-revelation on the part of an Italian person of quality, in his feeling with regard to country and city life respectively,—“a masterpiece of irony and of description.” We note the pervading humour, the genial ease, the dramatic vivacity of the style, the appropriate and changeful movement of the verses, the very brief yet efficient sketches of scenes in Italian city and country.

1. Even the enforced economies of the Italian person of quality are characteristic of the class he represents.

4. *by Bacchus.* *Per Bacco* is a common Italian exclamation.

10. *my own.* Supply “skull” from line 8.

11, fol. The limitations of his aesthetic nature are shown in what he admires.

18-25. In these exquisite suggestions of scenery there is more of Browning than of the ‘Italian person of quality.’

23. *scarce risen three fingers well.* The wheat is scarcely well up to three fingers in height.

26. The fountains are frequent and very attractive features of Italian towns; every traveller is impressed by the fountains of Rome.

29. *conch.* A marine shell.

39. *diligence.* Stage-coach.

42. *Pulcinello.* A grotesque character in Italian comedy, a buffoon. *Puach*, the hump-backed fellow in the puppet-show, is a derivative.

44. *liberal thieves.* The prejudices of his class lead him to identify thieves with persons of liberal political opinions.

46. *crown and lion.* The Duke’s coat-of-arms; it is needless to seek for an Italian duke with such insignia; the poet evidently does not desire that the locality of his poem should be identified with any particular place.

47, fol. suggest the literary coteries that cultivated both prose and poetry in the days of Italian decadence. Those familiar with Milton’s life will recall his intercourse with Florentine academies of this nature.

48. *Dante* (1265-1321). *Boccaccio* (1313-1375), *Petrarch* (1304-1374), are the three greatest names in Italian literature; *St. Jerome* belongs to the 4th century A.D., was the most learned and eloquent of the

Fathers. This incongruous union of writers so different as the authors of the *Divine Comedy*, the *Decameron*, and the *Sonnets to Laura*, with the great Christian theologian and the Roman orator stamps sufficiently the literary pretensions of the writer of the sonnet.

50. he. The Rev. Don So-and-So; 'than he had ever before preached.'

51. The last four lines of the stanza give the crowning instance of the utter frivolity of mind that belongs to the speaker. Even a religious procession means nothing more to him than a bit of noise and hustle to fill the emptiness of his meaningless life and vacant mind. These lines cap the climax also of the poet's skill in treating his theme.

52. The seven swords are emblematic of the seven sorrows of our Lady of Sorrow. Cf. the words of Simeon to Mary: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also" (Luko ii., 35).

56. It has long been a favourite expedient for raising a municipal revenue in various cities on the Continent, to tax all provisions entering the city bounds.

59, fol. The speaker inspired with enthusiasm for the pleasures he is talking of, sees in imagination [it seems to be imagination, the touches in the beginning, e.g. "yon oypress" of line 32, seem to show that he is in the country, as the state of his purse also makes probable] one of those religious processions which he so much admires, and ends his talk with a delightful outburst of regretful enthusiasm.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

First published in the volume entitled *Men and Women*, 1855. It was of course written during the poet's residence in Italy, and the description is redolent of the characteristics of certain Italian scenes where the shattered remnants of past ages (associated with the historic movement and the animation of other times) have been incorporated into her own works by the softening hand of Nature.

The poem is admirable for the way in which it expresses the quiet charm of the present scene, and the eager animation of the past; but, above all, in the way in which everything is made to contribute to the expression of the intense passion of the love story, which gathers force as the speaker proceeds and culminates in the dramatic summing up of the final lines.

"*Love Among the Ruins* is constructed in a triple contrast; the endless pastures prolonged to the edge of sunset, with their infinity of calm, are

contrasted with the vast and magnificent animation of the city which once occupied the plain and the mountain slopes. The lover keeps at arm's length from his heart and brain, what yet fills them all the while, here in this placid pasture-land, is one vivid point of intensest life; here where once were the grandeur and tumult of the enormous city is that which in a moment can abolish for the lover all its storied and its shames. His eager anticipation of meeting his beloved, face to face and heart to heart, is not sung, after the manner of Burns, as a jet of unmingled joy; he delays his rapture to make its arrival more entirely rapturous; he uses his imagination to check and enhance his passion; and the poem, though not a simple cry of the heart, is entirely true as a rendering of emotion which has taken imagination into its service." (Dowden).

The versification is peculiar and gives a touch of that oddity and seeming caprice which belong to Browning; but when the reader has surmounted the initial unfamiliarity, the movement seems effective and appropriate, "beautifully adapted," as Mr. Symonds remarks, "to the tone and rhythm—the quietness and fervent meditation—of the subject."

2. Miles and miles. Adverbial modifier of "smiles."

9. its prince, etc. The relative is omitted; the clause is adjectival to "capital."

15. certain hills. Again supply the relative, "slopes which certain," etc.

17. they. The slopes of verdure.

21. These may be a reminiscence of Homer's description of Thebes in Egypt (*Iliad*, ix., 381), which had a hundred gates.

29. guessed alone. The vestiges of the city are so far obliterated that the existence of the city can only be conjectured.

39. caper. A trailing shrub which is found in Mediterranean countries, especially growing in dry places over rocks and walls.

49. The first four stanzas are introductory, we now draw towards the real theme.

63. The ruins of the various objects enumerated here form a conspicuous feature in Italian landscapes, especially the causeys, the old Roman paved roads, and aqueducts.

causeys. The older spelling (see e.g., *Paradise Lost*, x., 415); the modern form "causeway" is due to popular etymology; the word really comes from the Low Latin *calciare*, to make a road with lime or mortar.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

Published in *Men and Women* (1855), it was written in 1848, see letter quoted below. This poem is of a somewhat exceptional character among Browning's pieces; it is, on the face of it, an expression of personal feeling; the feeling—a desire for soothing and calming influence with its pathetic tone—is not common in Browning; nor is the slow and steady movement of the verse.

Fano is a town on the Adriatic, some 30 miles north of Ancona. In the church of St. Augustine there is a picture known as *L'Angelo Custode* (the Guardian Angel), by Guercino (1590-1666) which "represents an angel standing with outstretched wings beside a little child. The child is half kneeling on a kind of pedestal, while the angel joins its hands in prayer; its gaze is directed to the sky, from which cherubs look down." The painting is not ranked high by the connoisseurs, but Browning and his wife were attracted by its simple pathos. Mrs. Browning writes in one of her letters (see Mrs. Orr's *Life of Browning*, p. 159): "Murray, the traitor, sent us to Fano as 'a delightful summer residence for an English family,' and we found it uninhabitable from the heat, vegetation scorched into paleness, the very air swooning in the sun, and the gloomy looks of the inhabitants sufficiently corroborative of their words that no drop of rain or dew ever falls there during the summer. . . . Yet the churches are very beautiful, and a divine picture of Guercino's is worth going all that way to see. . . . We fled from Fano after three days, and finding ourselves cheated of our dream of summer coolness, resolved on substituting for it what the Italians call *un bel giro*. So we went to Ancona—a striking sea-city, holding up against the brown rocks and elbowing out the purple tides, beautiful to look upon."

7. retrieve. Rather unusual use of the word; to bring back to a proper state; so we talk of 'retrieving one's fortunes.'

37. Alfred. Alfred Domett (1811-1887) an early friend of Browning's, himself a poet. At the time this poem was written Domett was in New Zealand, whither he migrated in 1842, and where he became a prominent public man. His departure from London to New Zealand is commemorated in Browning's poem *Waring*.

51. endured some wrong, at the hands of the critics, presumably.

55. Wairoa. A river and arm of the sea on the west-coast of the North Island of New Zealand.

PROSPICE.

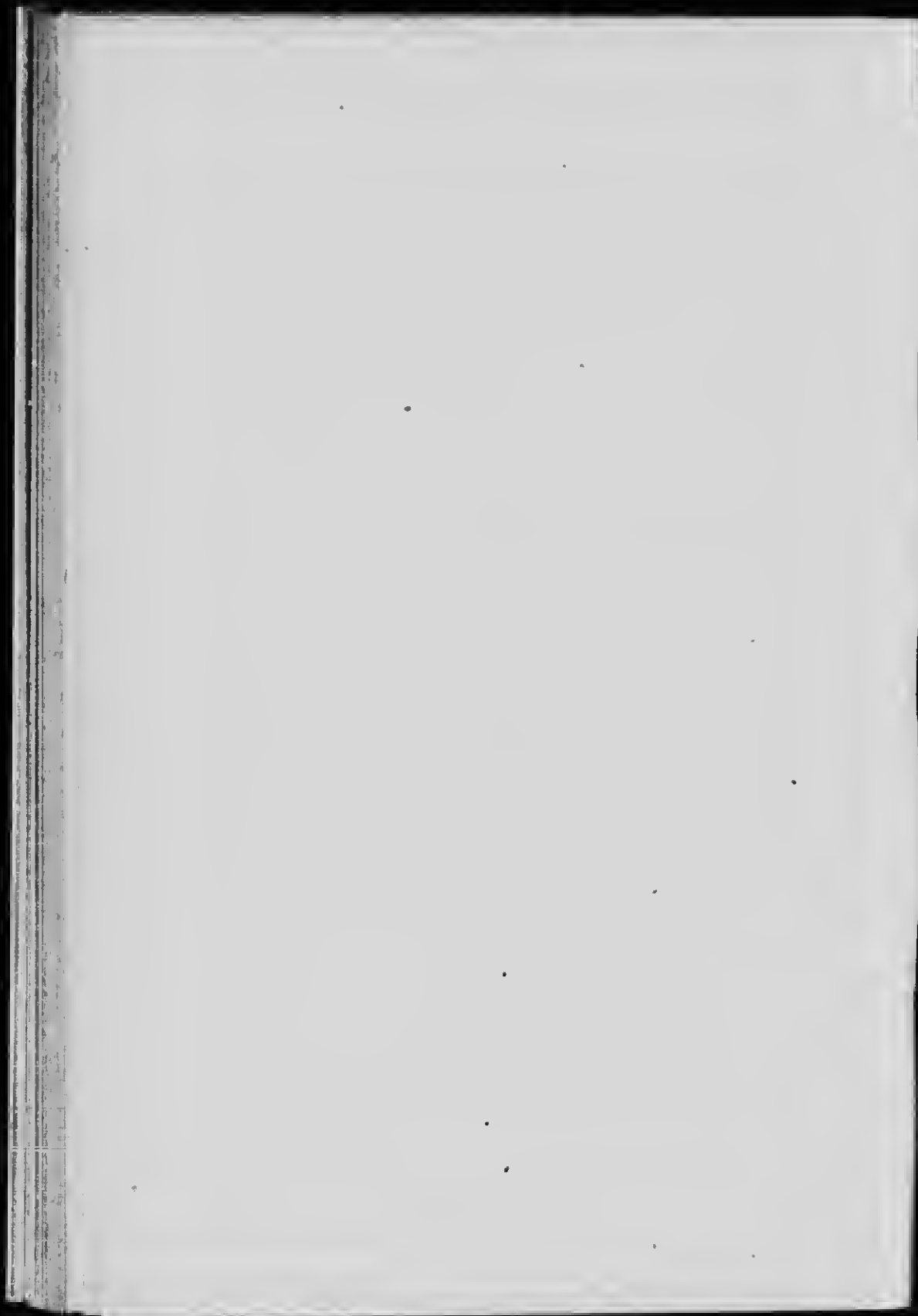
First published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1864; appeared in the same year in *Dramatis Personæ*. We cannot be wrong in connecting this poem with the death of Mrs. Browning in 1861. "*Prospice* has all the impetuous blood and fierce lyric fire of militant manhood. It is a cry of passionate exultation and exultation in the very face of death; a war-cry of triumph over the last of foes." (*Symonds*). It may be compared with *Crossing the Bar*: the passionate fire, the energy and love of struggle are as characteristic of Browning as are the dignity, grace and perfection in the other poems are of Tennyson. It is noteworthy that the point of view in *Crossing the Bar* is easily comprehended and commends itself to the ordinary feelings of humanity; that of *Prospice* is more individual and remoter from average sympathies.

Prospice is the Latin imperative meaning 'Look forward.'

1. to feel, etc. This is in apposition to "death"; a detail of the sort of thing one fears.

9. the summit attained. The ultimate point of our earthly career.

19. life's arrears. Whatever is yet unpaid of pain, etc.



ADDITIONAL POEMS.

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high, 5
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they run in clanging lists
And when the tide of combat stands, 10
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.
How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end, 15
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine. 20
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill :
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.
When down the stormy crescent goes, 25
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns :

- Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
 I hear a voice but none are there ; 30
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings, 35
 And solemn chaunts resound between.
- Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark ;
 I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
 I float till all is dark. 40
 A gentle sound, an awful light !
 Three angels bear the holy Grail :
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God ! 45
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars.
- When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go, 50
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow.
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads, 55
 And gilds the driving hail.
 I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
 But blessed forms in whistling storms
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields. 60

A maiden knight—to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear ;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joys that will not cease, 65
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odours haunt my dreams ;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear, 70
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony 75
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 .Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
 "O just and faithful knight of God !
 Ride on ! the prize is near." 80
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the holy Grail.

—Tennyson.

 THE LOST LEADER.

I.

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
 Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
 Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
 Lost all the others she lets us devote ;

They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver, 5
 So much was theirs who so little allowed :
 How all our copper had gone for his service !
 Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud !
 We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
 Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10
 Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
 Made him our pattern to live and to die !
 Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
 Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their
 graves !
 He alone breaks from the van and tho freemen, 15
 —He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves !

II.

We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence ;
 Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre ;
 Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
 Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire : 20
 Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
 One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
 One more devils' triumph and sorrow for angels,
 One wrong more to man, one more insult to God !
 Life's night begins : let him never come back to us ! 25
 There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
 Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
 Never glad confident morning again !
 Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
 Menace our heart ere we master his own ; 30
 Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
 Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne !

—Browning.

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND.

That second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds thro' the country-side,
Breathed hot and instant on my trace,— 5
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping thro' the moss they love: 10
—How long it seems since Charles was lost !
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight ;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay 15
With signal fires ; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end, 20
And much beside, two days ; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize ; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring 25
Provisions packed on mules, a string,
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine ;
These I let pass in jingling line, 30
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too ;

For at the very rear would troop
 Their wives and sisters in a group
 To help, I knew. When these had passed, 35
 I threw my glove to strike the last,
 Taking the chance : she did not start,
 Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
 One instant rapidly glanced round,
 And saw me beckon from the ground. 40
 A wild bush grows and hides my crypt ;
 She picked my glove up while she stripped
 A branch off, then rejoined the rest
 With that ; my glove lay in her breast.
 Then I drew breath ; they disappeared : 45
 It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
 Exactly where my glove was thrown.
 Meanwhile came many thoughts ; on me
 Rested the hopes of Italy. 50
 I had devised a certain tale
 Which, when 't was told her, could not fail
 Persuade a peasant of its truth ;
 I meant to call a freak of youth
 This hiding, and give hopes of pay, 55
 And no temptation to betray.
 But when I saw that woman's face,
 Its calm simplicity of grace,
 Our Italy's own attitude
 In which she walked thus far, and stood, 60
 Planting each naked foot so firm,
 To crush the snake and spare the worm—
 At first sight of her eyes, I said,
 " I am that man upon whose head
 They fix the price, because I hate 65

The Austrians over us : the State
 Will give you gold—oh, gold so much !—
 If you betray me to their clutch,
 And be your death, for aught I know,
 If once they find you saved their foe. 70
 Now, you must bring me food and drink,
 And also paper, pen and ink,
 And carry safe what I shall write
 To Padua, which you 'll reach at night
 Before the duomo shuts ; go in, 75
 And wait till Tenebræ begin ;
 Walk to the third confessional,
 Between the pillar and the wall,
 And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace ?*
 Say it a second time, then cease ; 80
 And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and Freedom ; what concerns
The cause of Peace ?—for answer, slip
 My letter where you placed your lip ;
 Then come back happy we have done 85
 Our mother service—I, the son,
 As you the daughter of our land !”

Three mornings more, she took her stand
 In the same place, with the same eyes :
 I was no surer of sun-rise 90
 Than of her coming. We conferred
 Of her own prospects, and I heard
 She had a lover—stout and tall,
 She said—then let her eyelids fall,
 “He could do much”—as if some doubt 95
 Entered her heart,—then, passing out,
 “She could not speak for others, who
 Had other thoughts ; herself she knew ;”

And so she brought me drink and food.
 After four days, the scouts pursued 100
 Another path ; at last arrived
 The help my Paduan friends contrived
 To furnish me : she brought the news.
 For the first time I could not choose
 But kiss her hand, and lay my own 105
 Upon her head — "This faith was shown
 To Italy, our mother ; she
 Uses my hand and blesses thee."
 She followed down to the sea-shore ;
 I left and never saw her more. 110

How very long since I have thought
 Concerning—much less wished for—aught
 Beside the good of Italy,
 For which I live and mean to die !
 I never was in love ; and since 115
 Charles proved false, what shall now convince
 My inmost heart I have a friend ?
 However, if I pleased to spend
 Real wishes on myself—say, three—
 I know at least what one should be. 120
 I would grasp Metternich until
 I felt his red wet throat distil
 In blood thro' these two hands. And next,
 —Nor much for that am I perplexed—
 Charles, perjured traitor, for his part, 125
 Should die slow of a broken heart
 Under his new employers. Last
 —Ah, there, what should I wish ? For fast
 Do I grow old and out of strength.
 If I resolved to seek at length 130
 My father's house again, how scared

They all would look, and unprepared
 My brothers live in Austria's pay
 —Disowned me long ago, men say;
 And all my early mates who used
 To praise me so—perhaps induced
 More than one early step of mine—
 Are turning wise: while some opine
 "Freedom grows license," some suspect
 "Haste breeds delay," and recollect
 They always said, such premature
 Beginnings never could endure!
 So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
 The land seems settling to its rest.
 I think then, I should wish to stand
 This evening in that dear, lost land,
 Over the sea the thousand miles,
 And know if yet that woman smiles
 With the calm smile; some little farm
 She lives in there, no doubt: what harm
 If I sat on the door-side bench,
 And while her spindle made a trench
 Fantastically in the dust,
 Inquired of all her fortunes—just
 Her children's ages and their names,
 And what may be the husband's aims
 For each of them. I'd talk this out,
 And sit there, for an hour about,
 Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
 Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how
 It steals the time? To business now.

—Browning.

EVELYN HOPE.

I.

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead !
 Sit and watch by her side an hour.
 That is her book-shelf, this her bed ;
 She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
 Beginning to die too, in the glass ; 5
 Little has yet been changed, I think :
 The shutters are shut, no light may pass
 Save two long rays thro' the hinge's chink.

II.

Sixteen years old when she died !
 Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name ; 10
 It was not her time to love ; beside,
 Her life had many a hope and aim,
 Duties enough and little cares,
 And now was quiet, now astir,
 Till God's hand beckoned unawares,— 15
 And the sweet white brow is all of her.

III.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope ?
 What, your soul was pure and true,
 The good stars met in your horoscope,
 Made you of spirit, fire and dew— 20
 And, just because I was thrice as old
 And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
 Each was nought to each, must I be told ?
 We were fellow mortals, nought beside ?

IV.

No, indeed ! for God above 25
 Is great to grant, as mighty to make,

And creates the love, to reward the love :
 I claim you still, for my own love's sake !
 Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
 Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few : 30
 Much is to learn, much to forget
 Ere the time be come for taking you.

V.

But the time will come,—at last it will,
 When Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
 In the lower earth, in the years long still, 35
 That body and soul so pure and gay ?
 Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
 And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
 And what you would do with me, in fine,
 In the new life come in the old one's stead. 40

VI.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
 Given up myself so many times,
 Gained me the gains of various men,
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes ;
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope, 45
 Either I missed or itself missed me :
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope !
 What is the issue ? let us see !

VII.

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while
 My heart seemed full as it could hold ! 50
 There was place and to spare for the frank young
 smile,
 And the red young mouth, and the hair's young
 gold.

So hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep :
 Seo, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand !
 There, that is our secret : go to sleep ! 55
 You will wake, and remember, and understand.

—*Browning.*

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE.

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
 Singing together.
 Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes,
 Each in its tether
 Sleeping safe in the bosom of the plain, 5
 Cared-for till cock-crow :
 Look out if yonder be not day again
 Rimming the rock-row !
 That's the appropriate country ; there, man's thought,
 Rarer, intenser, 10
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
 Chafes in the censer.
 Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop ;
 Seek we sepulture
 On a tall mountain, citied to the top, 15
 Crowded with culture !
 All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels ;
 Clouds overcome it ;
 No, yonder sparkle is the citadel's
 Circling its summit. 20
 Thither our path lies ; wind we up the heights !
 Wait ye the warning ?
 Our low life was the level's and the night's :
 He 's for the morning.

Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head, 25
 'Ware the beholders !
 This is our master, famous, calm and dead,
 Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd ! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft
 Safe from the weather ! 30

He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
 Singing together,

He was a man born with thy face and throat,
 Lyric Apollo !

Long he lived nameless: how should spring take note 35
 Winter would follow ?

Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone !
 Cramped and diminished,

Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon !
 My dance is finished ?" 40

No, that 's the world's way ; (keep the mountain-side,
 Make for the city !)

He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
 Over men's pity ;
 Left play for work, and grappled with the world 45
 Bent on escaping :

"What 's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled ?
 Show me their shaping,

Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
 Give !"—So, he gowned him, 50

Straight got by heart that book to its last page :
 Learned, we found him.

Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
 Accents uncertain :

"Time to taste life," another would have said, 55
 "Up with the curtain !"

This man said rather, "Actual life comes next ?
 Patience a moment !

Grant I have mastered learning's crabled text,
 Still there 's the comment. 60
 Let me know all ! Prate not of most or least,
 Painful or easy !
 Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
 Ay, nor feel queasy."
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live, 65
 When he had learned it,
 When he had gathered all books had to give !
 Sooner, he spurned it.
 Imago the whole, then execute the parts—
 Fancy the fabric 70
 Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
 Ere mortar dab brick !

 (Here's the town-gate reached ; there's the market-place
 Gaping before us.)
 (Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace 75
 Hearten our chorists !)
 That before living he'd learn how to live—
 No end to learning :
 Earn the means first —God surely will contrive
 Use for our earning. 80
 Others mistrust and say, " But time escapes !
 Live now or never !"
 He said, " What's time ? Leave now for dogs and apes !
 Man has Forever."
 Back to his book then : deeper drooped his head : 85
 Calculus racked him :
 Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead :
 Tussis attacked him.
 " Now, master, take a little rest !"—not he !
 (Caution redoubled ! 90

Step two a-breast, the way winds narrowly !)
 Not a whit troubled,
 Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
 Fierce as a dragon
 He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst) 95
 Sucked at the flagon.
 Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
 Heedless of far gain,
 Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
 Bad is our bargain ! 100
 Was is not great ? did not he throw on God
 (He loves the burthen) —
 God's task to make the heavenly period
 Perfect the earthen ?
 Did not he magnify the mind, show clear 105
 Just what it all meant ?
 He would not discount life, as fools do here,
 Paid by instalment.
 He ventured neck or nothing — heaven's success
 Found, or earth's failure : 110
 " Wilt thou trust death or not ? " He answered " Yes !
 Hence with life's pale lure ! "
 That low man seeks a little thing to do,
 Sees it and does it :
 This high man, with a great thing to pursue, 115
 Dies ere he knows it.
 That low man goes on adding one to one,
 His hundred's soon hit :
 This high man, aiming at a million,
 Misses an unit. 120
 That, has the world here — should he need the next,
 Let the world mind him !
 This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
 Seeking shall find him.

So, with the throttling hands of death at strife, 125
 Ground he at grammar ;
 Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife :
 While he could stammer
 He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be !—
 Properly based *Oun*— 130
 Gave us the doctrine of the enclitio *De*,
 Dead from the waist down.
 Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place :
 Hail to your purlieus,
 All ye highfliers of the feathered race, 135
 Swallows and curlews !
 Here's the top-peak ; the multitude below
 Live, for they can, there :
 This man decided not to Live but Know—
 Bury this man there ? 140
 Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
 Lightnings are loosened,
 Stars come and go ! Let joy break with the storm,
 Peace let the dew send !
 Lofty designs must close in like effects : 145
 Loftily lying,
 Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
 Living and dying. —*Browning.*

 HERVÉ RIEL.

I.

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
 Did the English fight the French,—woe to France !
 And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter thro' the blue,
 Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks
 pursue,
 Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the Rance, 5
 With the English fleet in view.

II.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full
chase;

First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship,
Damfreville;

Close on him fled, great and small,

Twenty-two good ships in all; 10

And they signalled to the place

"Help the winners of a race!

Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or,
quicker still,

Here's the English can and will!"

III.

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on
board; 15

"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to
pass?" laughed they:

"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage
scarred and scored,—

Shall the 'Formidable' here with her twelve and eighty
guns

Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow
way,

Trust to enter—where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty
tons, 20

And with flow at full beside?

Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.

Reach the mooring? Rather say,

While rock stands or water runs,

Not a ship will leave the bay!" 25

IV.

Then was called a council straight.

Brief and bitter the debate:

"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them
 take in tow
 All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and
 bow,
 For a prize to Plymouth Sound? 30
 Better run the ships aground!"
 (Ended Damfreville his speech).
 "Not a minute more to wait!
 Let the Captains all and each
 Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the
 beach! 35
 France must undergo her fate.

v.

Give the word!" But no such word
 Was ever spoke or heard;
 For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all
 these
 —A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second,
 third? 40
 No such man of mark, and meet
 With his betters to compete!
 But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for
 the fleet,
 A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

vi.

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries
 Hervé Riel: 45
 "Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards,
 fools, or rogues?
 Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings,
 tell
 On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell

Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river
disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's
for? 50

Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than
fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me
there's a way! 55

Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this 'Formidable' clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passago I know
well, 60

Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
—Keel so much as grate the ground,

Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries
Hervé Riel. 65

VII.

Not a minute more to wait,
"Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried
its chief.

Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief. 70

Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,

Clears the entry like a hound,
 Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's
 profound ! 75
 See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
 How they follow in a flock,
 Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the
 ground,
 Not a spar that comes to grief !
 The peril, see, is past, 80
 All are harboured to the last,
 And just as Hervé Riel hollss "Anchor!"—sure as fate,
 Up the English come too late !

VIII.

So, the storm subsides to calm :
 They see the green trees wave 85
 On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
 Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.
 "Just our rapture to enhance,
 Let the English rake the bay,
 Gnash their teeth and glare askance 90
 As they cannonade away !
 'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance !"
 How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance !
 Out burst all with one accord,
 "This is Paradise for Hell ! 95
 Let France, let France's King
 Thank the man that did the thing !"
 What a shout, and all one word,
 "Hervé Riel !"
 As he stepped in front once more, 100
 Not a symptom of surprise
 In the frank blue Breton eyes,
 Just the same man as before.

IX.

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
 I must speak out at the end, 105
 Though I find the speaking hard.
 Praise is deeper than the lips :
 You have saved the King his ships,
 You must name your own reward.
 'Faith, our sun was near eclipse ! 110
 Demand what'er you will,
 France remains you debtor still.
 Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not
 Damfreville."

X.

Then a beam of fun outbroke
 On the bearded mouth that spoke, 115
 As the honest heart laughed through
 Those frank eyes of Breton blue :
 "Since I needs must say my say,
 Since on board the duty's done,
 A. from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it
 but a run ?— 120
 Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
 Since the others go ashore—
 Come! A good whole holiday!
 Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle
 Aurore !"
 That he asked and that he got,—nothing more. 125

XI.

Name and deed alike are lost :
 Not a pillar nor a post
 In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell ;
 Not a head in white and black

On a single fishing smack, 130
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to
wrack

All that France saved from the fight whence England
bore the bell.

Go to Paris: rank on rank

Search the heroes flung pell-mell

On the Louvre, face and flank!

135

You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé
Riel.

So, for better and for worse,

Hervé Riel, accept my verse!

In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more

Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife, the

Belle Aurore!

140

—Browning.

(By arrangement with the Publishers, Smith, Elder & Co., London, England).

NOTES ON TENNYSON.

SIR GALAHAD.

First published in 1842.

In Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Sir Galahad is the knight who lived 'a clean maiden' and in consequence saw the Holy Grail. Tennyson seizes upon this personage to embody a type of the combination of ascetic and knightly virtue—of that devotion to an ideal which led the devotee to disregard earthly ties and bodily needs, and to live in a spiritual ecstasy. This poem represents the masculine side of the same spiritual condition which is unfolded in *St. Agnes' Eve*. Sir Galahad reappears in the *Idylls of the King*, being one of the prominent personages in *The Holy Grail*.

5. **shattering.** The epithet is used to denote the broken and stunning sounds of a trumpet peal.

9. **lists.** Originally the barriers that enclosed the ground for a tournament, then the ground itself.

11-12. The lady spectators scattered flowers upon the successful combatants, from the galleries which overlooked the lists.

18. **crypt.** Underground cell.

21-22. He refers to the vision of the Holy Grail which appeared only to the pure, and to the special favour of heaven which such vision indicates.

25. **crescent.** The crescent moon.

31. **stalls.** The seats belonging to the clergy in the choir of a cathedral.

42. **the Holy Grail.** The word 'grail' or 'grail,' means originally a bowl. According to the legend found in Malory, the *Sangreal*, or holy grail was the vessel in which Jesus sacrificed the paschal lamb (or according to some versions, the cup which he used at the Last Supper). With this vessel Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood that flowed from the wound upon the Cross. Joseph brought it to Britain (see *Faery Queen*, ii., 10, 53). It could not be seen by any one who was not

perfectly pure, and so was lost. The Grail had mystical and miraculous powers, and to find it became one of the quests of the Knights of the Round Table. Tennyson has treated the subject more fully in his '*Holy Grail*,' one of the *Idylls of the King*.

51.

Ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long.

—*Hamlet*, i. 1.

53. the leads. *Lead* was the common covering for roofs of substantial buildings in earlier times. It has been suggested that this noise of hail upon the roof is inconsistent with l. 52.

61. According to Malory's account of Sir Galahad's death, Joseph of Arimathea appears to him and says: "thou hast resembled me in two things, in that thou hast seen the marvels of the Sangreal and in that thou hast been a clean maiden."

NOTES ON BROWNING.

THE LOST LEADER.

First published in *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1845. The poet in 1875, in answer to an inquiry as to the original of the imaginary Lost Leader, wrote as follows:—"I did in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account: had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about 'handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon.' These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet; whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension and even to my mature consideration, an event to deplore."

2. ribbon. The ordinary badge of such honours as knighthood.

4. There is an ellipsis of "which" before "she."

8. purple. The colour associated with royalty, and hence with rank.

29-32. It is best that the Lost Leader should throw himself with all vigour into the new cause which he has embraced; but, at length, in another world he will learn that we were in the right, and repentant and pardoned will take the position due to his resplendent powers.

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND.

Originally published in *Bells and Pomegranates*, VII., 1845, where it was entitled "England in Italy."

The poem deals with an imaginary incident such as might have happened in the long struggle of Italian patriots to free themselves from Austrian domination, sometime before the middle of the 19th century.

The great Italian revolutionist Mazzini read this poem to some of his fellow exiles in England, to show how an Englishman could sympathize with them.

19. **Metternich.** A distinguished Austrian statesman, took a prominent part in European affairs from the closing years of the Napoleonic war, subsequently the dominating personality in Austrian affairs, with a strong tendency to severe and despotic measures.

25. **Lombardy.** The central district of Italy from the Po to the Alps.

74. **Padua.** Italian city west of Venice.

75. **duomo.** Cathedral.

76. **Tenebræ.** A service held on Good Friday, when the church is darkened (hence the name; Latin *tenebræ* means darkness).

EVELYN HOPE.

First published in *Men and Women*, 1855.

19. **horoscope.** The position of the planets at the time of birth, which, according to astrology, determined the fate of the child.

29-30. Immortality is, as usual in Browning's poems, conceived as a series of stages of existence—the earthly being one.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

First published in *Men and Women*, 1855. The Grammarian is supposed to be one of those scholars who, "shortly after the revival of learning," devoted themselves to the study of Greek and Latin literature with extraordinary ardour and faith in the importance of their work. The poem exemplifies Browning's doctrine of the importance of whole-hearted devotion to an end beyond ourselves, and the faith that such genuine effort and aspiration will have their reward—if not in this life, then in some later stage of the soul's development (compare, in the matter of love, *Evelyn Hope*). Browning has a penchant for exemplifying his ideas in extreme cases (cf. his *The Statue and the Bust*); he is quite aware that there is an element of absurdity in the Grammarian's devotion to what may seem, to us at least, trivial; and this element of the grotesque is reflected in the occasional extraordinary rhymes (e.g., 6-8, 70-72). "The union of humour with intense seriousness, of the grotesque with the stately, is one that only Browning could have compassed, and the effect is singularly appropriate." (*Symons*).

As the leader of the band of disciples who are following the body of their master, addresses to them the eulogy which forms the poem, the funeral procession is marching to the grave. It starts from the plain, climbs the mountain-side, arrives at a city which crowns it, and finally reaches the highest summit, where he is to be buried. Its course, as may be noted, is symbolic of the gradual elevation of the aims and life of the hero of the chant.

3. *thorpes*. Small villages; a word found in place names, especially on the East Coast of Northern England.

25-6. Carry yourselves as becomes his disciples; remember you are under the eye of onlookers.

34. *lyric Apollo*. The Greek conception of Apollo embodied the union of all physical and mental perfections; he was the patron of song, music, learning, prophecy, etc.

39-40. He did not lose heart, as the Epicurean might, because youth, the time of pleasure and joy, was past.

50. The gown is the symbol of the scholar's life.

77-84. These lines and lines 97-124 express the principles of the Grammarian's life that rouse the Poet's admiration. He repeatedly voices them:

Ah but a man's reach should exceed his grasp
Or what's a heaven for?

Andrea del Sarto.

On earth the broken arc: in the heaven, a perfect round.

Abt Vogler.

See also *Saul* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

86-7. *Calculus, Tussis*. Technical Latin names for stone in the bladder, and cough.

95. *soul-hydroptic*. Certain forms of dropsy (otherwise 'hydropsy') are said to cause insatiable thirst; he had an insatiable soul-thirst.

129-30. *Hoti, Oun* are Greek conjunctions.

131. *De*. A Greek particle meaning 'towards,' which attaches itself to the preceding word,—hence an "enclitic."

HERVÉ RIEL.

First published in *Cornhill Magazine*, March, 1871. Browning having been asked for a contribution towards sending food to the Parisians after the German siege, wrote this poem based upon historic facts, and sent the proceeds, £100, to the fund. He was at the time living at Croisic, a fishing-village of Brittany at the mouth of the Loire, the native place of the hero.

1. the Hogue. On the coast of France opposite the Isle of Wight, where the English and Dutch fleets defeated the French in 1692.

5. St. Malo. Islet and town on the opposite side of the peninsula to the Hogue, at the mouth of the Rance.

18. twelve and eighty. Liberal translation of the French 'quatre-vingt-douze.'

43. Tourville. The French Admiral.

44. Croisickese. Native of Le Croisic.

46. Malouins. Natives of St. Malo.

49. Grève. The great stretch of sand eastward of St. Malo.

53. Solidor. A fort.

121-5. This is the poet's only departure from historic facts; Riel asked and got a furlough for life.

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