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THE RHETORICAL AND CRITICAL THEORIES OF ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to set forth the results of a study from original sources of the rhetorical and critical theories of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. In a study of this sort, without doubt the best sources of information are the statements made by the writer himself, not alone in his letters and interviews but also in the literature which he has produced. In the case of Tennyson, the latter is almost the only source of first-hand information available, for he had a horror of biographers and so very carefully saw to it that most of his letters were destroyed before he died; and as for recorded interviews, it appears that he avoided any great discussion of his theories so that he has left almost nothing aside from his writings which can tell us what he thought of poetry and its composition. The only other source of information is the Memoirs written by his son Hallam, the second Lord Tennyson. These, however, are much more valuable as giving us an insight into the character of the poet than in furnishing us any information regarding his theories of poetry and composition. This is exactly as Tennyson would have it and may perhaps be considered his basic theory of literature. Indeed he is quoted by his son to have said that he thanked God that he knew nothing and the world knew nothing about Shakespeare

except from his writings.

These, therefore, have been the chief sources from which the conclusions expressed in the following pages have been drawn. The edition of the poems which has been a constant source of reference is the edition published by Macmillan and Company and edited by Hallam Tennyson, containing notes and explanations by the author himself. Since no volume of the early poems in their original forms has been available, I have depended upon the notes in this edition of the poems, on the fragments of these poems which have been included in the Memoirs, and upon a small volume of selected poems edited by William James Rolfe for the basis of such discussions as I have included regarding the revisions made in certain of his poems.

Much has been written concerning Tennyson and his poetry, and such of these articles as I have found in any way helpful, I have listed in the bibliography which accompanies this paper. But nearly all of this material has been based upon the sources which I have already named, and as various conflicting conclusions have been drawn, I have preferred to stand by the original sources and draw my own conclusions. If these do not agree with the conclusions to which others have come, all I can say is that they are, nevertheless, the opinions which I have formed after a careful study of the poems which Tennyson has left us.

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

It is a well known fact that every writer is influenced by the surroundings in which he spends his life, and especially the early part of his life when he is, consciously or unconsciously, preparing himself for his life work. Perhaps no writer, unless it be Milton, has been more fortunate in his early environment than Tennyson. Brought up as he was in the quiet life of the rectory at Somersby, he had unlimited opportunities for the intimate association with nature which is so strongly reflected in all of his poetry. Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie gives the following picture of the future Poet Laureate at the age of five:

> "The wind that goes blowing where it listeth, once, in the early beginning of this century, came sweeping through the garden of this old Lincolnshire rectory, and, as the wind blew, a sturdy child of five years old with shining locks stood opening his arms upon the blast and letting himself be blown along, and as he travelled on he made his first line of poetry and said, 'I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind', and he tossed his arms, and the gust whirled on, sweeping into the great abyss of winds."[1]

As he grew older his temperament was such as would scarcely fit him for the practical routine of earning a livelyhood and he was fortunate in being so situated

[1] Quoted from Mrs. Ritchie's Introductory Sketch in the 1885 edition of Tennyson's Complete Poetical Works.

that this was not really necessary. To be sure the lack of an adequate income made marriage impossible for many years but at no time did he suffer the distress of absolute poverty, so that his whole life was on an "even keel" with little buffeting and hardship to turn him from his chosen course. He was always shy and retiring and these characteristics coupled with the quiet life which he led through most of his eighty-three years tended to increase the imaginative faculty which is one of the first qualities of a great poet.

His family

Moreover the intellectual heritage that he received from his parents was of immeasurable influence in shaping the course of his whole life. His father, George Clayton Tennyson, L. L. D., was a scholar and something of a poet, even though he proved only a passable clergyman, having no real calling for the profession which his father had required him to follow. It was from him that his sons, and especially Alfred, inherited their love for literature and particularly their talent for the writing of poetry.

His mother was Elizabeth Fytche, the daughter of a clergyman, Rev. Stephen Fytche of Louth. We are told in the Memoirs that she was "a remarkable and saintly woman" and from the same source we learn that in his poem Isabel, Tennyson "more or less described his mother."

"Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

"The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;
The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife."

From this model of womanhood, Tennyson inherited a spirit of reverence, humour, a love of all living things, and that extreme sensitiveness which, in later years, made him one of the shyest of men, so easily hurt by any adverse criticism.

His Early Surroundings

But it was not alone the heritage from his parents which helped to make Tennyson a poet. Indeed the whole atmosphere of the rectory was full of the two great sources of poetic material - nature and books. He was one of twelve children all of whom were more or less interested in poetry and music - a sociable group among themselves.

Two of his brothers, Charles and Frederick, afterwards gained some reputation for themselves as poets, and in these early years when all were at home together they made what "Leigh Hunt aptly described as a 'nest of nightingales!"[1] Even the games which these children played were of an imaginative nature, often drawn from the stories which they read. And the many tournaments fought by these youthful knights in the fields about the rectory were fitting harbingers of the Idylls of half a century later.

In addition to this, the very country of Lincolnshire itself was of a sort to bring out an inborn poetic talent. Somersby, we gather from hints in such poems as the Ode to Memory and In Memoriam, lies on the edge of a wold, in a country varied by its rolling hills, its great pastures, and its numerous quiet little villages lying so close together that

> "The Christmas bells from hill to hill
> Answer each other in the mist.
>
> Four voices of four hamlets round,
> From far and near, on mead and moor,
> Swell out and fail, as if a door
> Were shut between me and the sound;
>
> Each voice four changes on the wind,
> That now dilate, and now decrease,
> Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
> Peace and goodwill to all mankind."[2]

1 Hallam, Lord Tennyson, The Works of Tennyson with Notes by the author, New York: Macmillan & Co., 1925. Intro. p. xi.

2 In Memoriam, XXVIII.

The wide sea-marshes and low sand-dunes especially loved by Tennyson throughout his life were not far away at Mablethorpe where the family often went for summer outings and where Alfred could feast his ears on the hollow roll of the breakers as they dashed upon the shore.

Such were the surroundings in which Alfred Tennyson spent his childhood, and which are so frequently reflected in the poetry which has made his name famous.

CHAPTER II

RHETORICAL THEORIES

Training for Poetry

The story is told in the Memoirs that Tennyson, hearing that some writer had said of him,"Artist first, then poet," remarked, "I should answer, 'Poeta nascitur non fit'; indeed, 'Poeta nascitur et fit.' I suppose I was nearer thirty than twenty before I was anything of an artist."[1]

Of the manner in which the poet thus develops, we gather from the study of his own writings, that Tennyson had some very definite ideas. It was very evident that one of these ideas was the theory of thorough preparation and training which should aim toward perfection. Upon this subject of his art, he once said to his son, "Perfection in art is perhaps more sudden sometimes than we think; but then the long preparation for it, that unseen germination, that is what we ignore and forget."[2] Though he has left little in the way of direct statements upon this subject, we may assume that, having such a theory and being born with such strong poetical tendencies, he would naturally set about to make himself a poet by the methods which he approved. From the time of his earliest recollections, he tells us, it was his desire

1 Hallam, Lord Tennyson, Alfred Lord Tennyson, a Memoir by his Son. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1897. Vol. I, p. 12

2 Ibid. Vol. I, p. 453, Footnote.

to be a poet, and not only a poet but a famous one. And so he set about to make himself into that which he desired to be.

As is the case with most young writers, his first attempts were little more than imitations. Indeed throughout his childhood, he spent much time in making verses which usually showed the influence of whatever writer he was at that time reading. Undoubtedly, however, Tennyson believed that this period of imitation was a part of his training. Regarding these early attempts at poetry, he wrote the following note for his son in 1890:

> "According to the best of my recollection when I was about eight years old, I covered two sides of a slate with Thomsonian blank verse in praise of flowers for my brother, Charles, who was a year older than I was, Thomson then being the only poet I knew.
> ---
> About ten or eleven Pope's Homer's Iliad became a favorite of mine and I wrote hundreds and hundreds of lines in the regular Popeian metre. ------ At about twelve and onward I wrote an epic of six thousand lines a la Walter Scott, - full of battles, dealing too with sea and mountain scenery, - with Scott's regularity of octo-syllables and his occasional varieties."[1]

This imitation was, without doubt, at the time, rather unconscious, than conscious training in the making of a poet, but the very fact that, in his later years, he calls attention to this period of his life would lead one to believe that he thought such training highly desirable if not indeed necessary.

[1] Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 11 and 12.

Following this period of imitation, Tennyson spent long years in practice and experimentation. Probably there was no period of his life when he was not busy with some task of poetry. He was only eighteen years of age when the little volume, Poems by Two Brothers, was published and when, at Cambridge, he was urged to try for the Chancellor's Medal for a poem on Timbuctoo, he merely revised a production in blank verse which had already been written, and the prize was his.

In 1830, he published the first volume of poems which were exclusively his own. These, Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, were for the most part mere exercises in poetic fancy and melodious phrasing. In these poems, we find him writing of "Airy, fairy Lilian" and "sweet, pale Margaret", and asking:

> "Who would be
> A mermaid fair
> Singing alone?"[1]

Some of these early exercises, however, have so much beauty of melody that they continue to give pleasure. Here is an example from The Sea Fairies:

> "And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;
> Hither, come hither and see:
> And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
> And sweet is the color of cove and cave
> And sweet shall your welcome be."

But it was by such experimentation and practice that a poet was being made who was to attain the goal of becoming famous, which he had set for himself in his childhood.

1
The Mermaid

Methods Followed in His Writing

In all of this practice, as well as in much of his later writings, Tennyson used various methods for the writing of his poems. From his earliest years, as has been said before, he thought in poetic phrases. In referring to the same incident which Mrs. Ritchie records, he has said:

> "Before I could read, I was in the habit on a stormy day of spreading my arms to the wind, and crying out, 'I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind', and the words 'far, far away' had always a strange charm for me."[1]

These phrases were often made the basis about which a poem was built. Indeed, the words, "far, far away" which as he said "had always a strange charm" for him, have been made the refrain of a little lyric of the same name which was published in his volume of Demeter and Other Poems.

The Memoirs also records a letter to his aunt, Marianne Fytche, written at the age of twelve. In this letter, in commenting on Sampson Agonistes, he says, "I think this is beautiful, particularly

> "O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon."[2]

And when, years later, he wrote

> "Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O sea!"

that particular rhythm had become so much a part of himself that we can scarcely accuse him of copying from another.

Sometimes these rhythmic phrases which he turned to such good use had remained in his memory over long periods

[1] Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I p. 11

[2] Ibid. Vol. I, p. 8

of time before they were used, as was apparently the case in Far, Far Away, but in other cases, they were phrases which came to him suddenly and were used on the spur of the moment. It was in such a manner that the Charge of the Light Brigade had its origin, being written, we are told,[1] in a few minutes of time after reading the account of the charge in the TIMES in which occurred the phrase, "some one had blundered."

But Tennyson did not rely upon his memory alone to furnish him with such phrases when the need arose. It was his custom to make constant notes of phrases which pleased his ear and of figures which occurred to him on his travels. The following from his note-book[2] are Verse-Memoranda of tours in Cornwall, Isle of Wight, and Ireland:

"(Babbicombe) Like serpent coils upon the deep.

"(The open sea) Two great ships that draw
together in a calm.

"(Isle of Wight)
As those that lie on happy shores and see
Thro' the near blossom slip the distant sail.

"(Valencia) Claps of thunder on the cliff
Amid the solid roar.

"(The River Shannon, on the rapids)
Ledges of battling water."

During the years of his writing following the publication of the 1842 volume, Tennyson carried this idea of writing from a single phrase still further and developed some

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 381.

2 Ibid. Vol. I, p. 465.

some of his shorter poems or even parts of poems into longer ones. Thus it is that we find The Lady of Shalott appearing in the 1832 edition of his poems, Morte d'Arthur published in 1842 along with Sir Galahad, Sir Lancelot, and Queen Guinevere but the Idylls of the King, as a whole, were not published until 1859 and were not entirely completed until thirteen years later. In like manner the various parts of In Memoriam were written as separate poems over a period of ten years following the death of Arthur Hallam, but were only collected into one and arranged in the order in which they now appear just before their publication in 1850. Maud is another of his long poems which had its beginning in a lyric written in 1837 and now standing fourth in Part II of the longer poem. A.C.Benson tells the story in this way:

> "This magnificent lyric, of irregular meter and informal scheme,
>
> Oh that 'twere possible
> After long grief and pain,
> To find the arms of my true love
> Round me once again!
>
> was sent at the request of Lord Houghton as a contribution to a sort of literary benefit - a little volume of miscellanies sold to assist a distressed literary man.
>
> ---
>
> A friend of Tennyson's suggested that it wanted expansion and elucidation; and the lovely fragemnt was expanded into the beautiful if intemperate rhapsodical monodrama."[1]

[1] A.C.Benson, Alfred Tennyson. E.P.Dutton & Co., New York, 1907.

Constant Revision

Another theory of composition which Tennyson deemed important for all good writing was one which he acquired by severe personal experience. This was that a poet's work should be perfected and revised until it should be a perfect work of art. His volumes published in 1830 and 1832 had not been so revised and so received severe and scathing criticism. In the writing of these early poems, he had been too eager for fame as a poet and the praise and adulation of his Cambridge friends he mistook as universal. But his lesson was soon learned and not again was he guilty of publishing hastily. For with this relative failure of the two earlier volumes, Tennyson settled himself in bitter earnest to conquer the difficulties of his art, and although he was always more or less impatient of adverse criticism, it is doubtful if there was ever an author who turned it to better account when it came. However, in all the writing of his later years, revision came before the poems were published rather than after and thus much adverse criticism was probably avoided.

After the publication of the 1832 volume, he published nothing for ten years with the exception of a few poems which appeared from time to time in current magazines of the period. This interlude has been attributed by his friends and biographers to his deep sorrow for the death of his friend, Arthur Hallam, but it seems obvious that there were other causes. There is

no doubt of the sincerity of his sorrow at this loss but Tennyson was evidently at that time enough of a great poet to realize that much of the criticism, while it might have been given in a gentler manner, was true, and that if he wished to write great poetry, he must prepare himself by hard work for such writing. Indeed some of the less severe critics had said as much when the volume of lyrics was published.

And so Tennyson took this period and devoted it unreservedly to self criticism and the steady labor of revision and composition without publication, the result of which was a much more finished production - two volumes of poems, some, revisions of the earlier poems and others, selections which were published for the first time. In a study of the poet's rhetorical theory, these revised poems are perhaps of most interest.

Let us study for a moment some of these revisions. Perhaps one of the best known and certainly one of the most beautiful poems which appeared in the 1832 edition was The Lady of Shalott, and the revisions which were made in this poem are truly interesting. Some of the critics have asserted that every revision made was for the worse, but a close study of each change seems to show very good reasons for most of them. The first stanza of Part I originally read:

"On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-tower'r Camelot.

The yellowleavèd waterlily,
The greensheathèd daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
Round about Shalott."

It requires only a glance at the last four lines of this stanza to see that the rhyme is weak and, were it not adding insult to injury, we might almost say "silly". Moreover, since the daffodil is not a water plant, it really has no place in this description. How much to be preferred is the present reading with its strong rhyming scheme!

"And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott."

Again, the first five lines of the second stanza which were originally

"Willows whiten, aspens shiver.
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever,
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot."

present much more apt alliteration in the later form which now reads

"Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot."

The last two stanzas of Part I have been more or less interchanged and interwoven in the revision, so that originally reading thus:

"Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel singing clearly
O'er the stream of Camelot.

Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
Listening whispers, "'tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott!'

"The little isle is all inrailed
With a rose-fence, and overtrailed
With roses: by the marge unhailed
The shallop flitteth silkensailed,
Skimming down to Camelot.
A pearlgarland winds her head:
She leaneth on a velvet bed,
Full royally apparelled,
The Lady of Shalott."

they now read

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

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
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
Lady of Shalott."

This revision may be logical in point of description, finishing the picture before going on to the lady's song, but it does not seem to have improved this part of the poem. The "heavy barges" on the river "trailed by slow horses" suggests more a picture of the little English canals than of a river with its wave that runs forever

"By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot."

In the last stanza also, why is it "Only reapers, reaping early"? Are no others abroad in the early hours?

Moreover, we scarcely can think of reapers "in among" the bearded barley. To say the least, these words express very weakly the picture we should have. But, on the other hand, the original had "Underneath the bearded barley" which is not much better; but in the fourth line of the stanza surely the "angel singing clearly" is much to be preferred to the song which merely "echoes cheerly."

Tennyson might well have reversed the order of these last two stanzas but the further alterations seem to be no great improvement for, although the verse may be technically more accurate, the imagery, which is the real test of poetry, is more beautiful in the original edition.

In PartII, obviously the revision of the first stanza, which in 1832 was printed

"No time hath she to sport and play:
A charmèd web she weaves alway.
A curse is on her, if she stay
Her weaving, either night or day,
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be;
Therefore she weaveth steadily,
Therefore no other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott."

was first of all to avoid the two syllabled form of charmèd, and magic proves a very good substitute.

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

Also the run-on line is to be preferred for the fourth rather than the third line, but to do this Tennyson has led

us to believe that the curse was only rumored while in the original edition it was a very definite thing. Of course there is no one who would not prefer the last half of this stanza as it now stands to the two therefores of the first edition.

The second stanza has undoubtedly been improved by the change.

"She lives with little joy or fear.
Over the water, running near,
The sheep-bell tinkles in her ear.
Before her hangs a mirror clear,
Reflecting towered Camelot.
And as the mazy web she whirls,
She sees the surly village-churls,
And the red coats of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott."

What care we if "she lives with little joy or fear"? This adds nothing to the story as Tennyson is telling it, but we are interested greatly in the mirror and the shadows which she sees therin - the river with its eddying whirls, the village churls, and the market girls in their colorful cloaks, all pictures which our lady weaves into her web.

"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;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott."

In Part IV, the first stanza was probably altered for the purpose of emphasizing the action of the lady, which is of most importance to us at this point. Here a stanza of the 1932 edition has been omitted entirely and of the next stanza nothing remains but the simile.

The rest of the poem, by its revision, has been made much more compact and the closing, which brings us back to Lancelot instead of introducing "the well-fed wits of Camelot", is more fitting than the original as an end for the story of a lady who, at the sight of the "two lovers lately wed", had become "half-sick of shadows" and then immediately wholly sick of them upon the appearance of Sir Lancelot in her mirror.

Another poem of the 1832 edition which should be mentioned for its revisions is The Lotos-Eaters. Only minor changes were made in the first one hundred forty-five lines but from line one hundred fifty to the end, the original reading was:

"We have had enough of motion,
Weariness and wild alarm,
Tossing on the tossing ocean,
Where the tuskèd sea-horse walloweth
In a stripe of grassgreen calm,
At noon tide beneath the lee;
And the monstrous narwhale swalloweth
His foamfountains in the sea.
Long enough the wine dark wave our weary bark did carry.
This is lovelier and sweeter,
Men of Ithaca, this is meeter,
In the hollow rosy vale to tarry,
Like a dreamy Lotos-eater, a delirious Lotos-eater!
We will eat the Lotos, sweet
As the yellow honeycomb,
In the valley some, and some
On the ancient heights divine;
And no more roam,
On the loud hoar foam,
To the melancholy home
At the limit of the brine,
The little isle of Ithaca, beneath the day's decline.
We'll lift no more the shattered oar,
No more unfurl the straining sail;
With the blissful Lotos-eaters pale
We will abide in the golden vale
Of the Lotos-land, till the Lotos fail;
We will not wander more.
Hark! how sweet the horned ewes bleat

On the solitary steeps,
And the merry lizard leaps,
And the foamwhite waters pour;
And the dark pine weeps
And the lithe vine creeps
And the heavy melon sleeps
On the level of the shore.
Oh! islanders of Ithaca, we will not wander more.
Surely, surely slumber is more sweet than toil,
the shore
Than labor in the ocean, and rowing with the oar.
Oh! islanders of Ithaca, we will return no more."

Any one who has loved the pure music of words in the later editions of this poem will greatly appreciate the increased dignity and beauty of the rhythm and will realize what this theory of constant revision has meant to us in Tennyson's poetry.

Such a change as this in The Lotos-Eaters is truly the work of a great artist, but all the revisions were not so successful. In some of the poems the actual technique of the art so far overshadows the real poetry that they might be called "faultily faultless". One addition made in the 1842 edition of The Miller's Daughter seems to have been scarcely necessary. This is the addition of the two stanzas second and third from the last which brings a note of sadness - a touch of sorrow - into an otherwise very happy love poem. These stanzas may add a slightly more human touch to the story, but they bring into the poem am element of realism that does not accord with the rest of the poem.

As has been said before, after the publication of the 1830 and the 1832 editions of his poems, Tennyson usually did the greater part of his revising before the poems were published. There have been, however, a few exceptions where some of his later poems were revised after they were

published. One of these exceptions was in the case of The Charge of the Light Brigade. This poem, Tennyson altered after publication really against his own better judgment and only to meet the objections of some of the critics who disaproved of the phrase, "Someone had blundered", as not being a good rhyme for hundred. But it was about this phrase that the poem had been originally built and when it was withdrawn, the whole life and vigor of the poem went with it so that Tennyson's friends, his reading public, and even the soldiers in the Crimea rejoiced when he restored this line and returned the poem, with a few minor changes, to much the same form as the original, which had been dashed off at a moment's notice. Tennyson himself cites a somewhat similar case:

> "For instance", he said, "in Maud a line in the first edition was, 'I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may pipe to his own', which was afterwards altered to, 'I will bury myself in my self' etc.: this was highly commended by the critics as an improvement on the original reading - but it was actually in the first MS draft of the poem."[1]

Such, we judge, are the main theories of composition which Tennyson consciously or unconsciously held and to which he adhered in the writing of his own poetry. Most particularly is this true in the case of his constant revision and no matter what the type of poem upon which he was working it was most carefully and consistently worked out before its final publication. Only on rare occasions

[1] Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 118

did Tennyson deviate from this custom and then only in the case of some of his very short poems, which were, however, often among his best.

CHAPTER III

CRITICAL THEORIES

Poems in Which he States his Theories

In the matter of his critical theories, Tennyson has said more in his writings than he did of his theories of composition. There are, especially in his earlier editions, several poems which state more or less clearly his own attitude toward the poet and what his poetry should be. But before discussing the theories as set forth in these poems, we must go back to an early point in Tennyson's life and recall that he had determined to become a famous poet. To do this, he must train himself into the kind of a poet who would be acceptable to the people of his own time, and he undoubtedly had all these aims in his mind when, as early as his Cambridge days he formulated for himself his own critical theories as set forth in his poems.

One of the earliest of these poems is The Poet, which was first published in 1830. In this poem we have a very definite statement of Tennyson's own idea of the poet and what he is to stand for. In the very first lines he says,

"The poet in a golden clime was born
With golden stars above;"

which, being interpreted, undoubtedly means that the poet lives in a world more beautiful than it appears to other men. With his poetic mind he looks out upon the world as from a golden clime and sees it shining in its beauty and ornamented by stars of gold.

"Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love."

The poet hates hate, scorns scorn, and loves love. Here Tennyson tells us that he considers love to be the basis upon which poetry is built. And in this spirit of love, the poet is able to see the whole of life and death more deeply than any other man can. Good and evil are shown to him through the light of his own soul and he has power to read "the marvel of the everlasting will" which lies before him "like a scroll". So the poet has rare gifts of nature - this power to read the everlasting will; to see life truly, and the hidden meaning which underlie all forms of life; and having these gifts, he becomes a teacher of men, setting forth lessons of truth and liberty.

"Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden showed,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd

"And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

"There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

"And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power - a sacred name.
And when she spake,

"Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

"So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with his word
She shook the world."

Akin to this is another, a sonnet, To Poesy, written while Tennyson was at Cambridge, sometime before 1830, and never published except as it has its place in the Memoirs. In this little sonnet, he emphasizes more strongly, though not so beautifully, his belief that the aim of poetry is to teach great truths.

"O God, make this age great that we may be
As giants in Thy praise! and raise up Mind,
Whose trumpet-tongued, aerial melody
May blow alarum loud to every wind,
And startle the dull ears of human kind!
Methinks I see the world's renewed youth
A long day's dawn, when Poesy shall bind
Falsehood beneath the altar of great Truth:
The clouds are sunder'd toward the morning-rise;
Slumber not now, gird up thy loins for fight,
And get thee forth to conquer. I, even I,
Am large in hope that these expectant eyes
Shall drink the fulness of thy victory,
Tho' thou art all unconscious of thy Might."[1]

In The Poet's Mind, which was published in the same volume with The Poet, we have a clear picture of what the mind of the poet should be like as Tennyson judges it.

"Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river,
Bright as light and clear as wind."

Here again is emphasized the "love of love" when he presents the poet's mind as a garden hedged in and protected by Laurel shrubs and

[1] Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 60.

"In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening
With a low melodious thunder;
All day and all night it is everdrawn
From the brain of the purple mountain
Which stands in the distance yonder.
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from heaven above,
And it sings a song of undying love."

And still again in The Poet's Song we are told that

"-- he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away."

In other words, he views the world as a whole, its past, its present, and its future much in the manner described in the "balloon verses" which originally introduced the Dream of Fair Women and of which Edward Fitzgerald said, "They make a perfect poem of themselves without affecting the 'dream'."[1]

"As when a man that sails in a balloon,
Down-looking sees the solid shining ground
Stream from beneath him in the broad blue noon,
Tilth, hamlet, mead and mound:

"And takes his flags and waves them to the mob,
That shouts below, all faces turn'd to where
Glows ruby-like the far-up crimson globe,
Fill'd with a finer air:

"So, lifted high, the poet at his will
Lets the great world flit from him, seeing all,
Higher thro' secret splendours mounting still,
Self-poised, nor fears to fall."

But there is another which, probably more than any other single poem, sets forth his theories upon the subject of criticism. This poem, The Palace of Art, was published

1
Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 121.

in 1832 but greatly improved by revision and again included in Poems, in Two Volumes which appeared in 1842 after Tennyson had taken the time to study and criticize his own poetry closely. Here we have, without a doubt, for the volume of 1832, his declaration of faith regarding Art just as, in the verses of The Poet, we have his creed of 1830. Indeed, he himself sets forth the purpose of the poem in the verses which accompany it as an introduction.

> "I send you here a sort of allegoy -
> For you will understand it - of a soul,
> A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
> A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
> A glorious devil, large in heart and brain,
> That did love beauty only - beauty seen
> In all varieties of mould and mind -
> And knowledge for its beauty; or if good,
> Good only for its beauty, seeing not
> That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are three sisters
> That dote upon each other, friends to man,
> Living together under the same roof,
> And never can be sunder'd without tears.
> And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
> Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
> Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
> Was common clay ta'en from the common earth
> Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
> Of angels to the perfect shape of man."

In this introduction, he specifically states his critical theory as being not Art for Art's sake only, but rather Art as a necessary medium for conveying the truths of life. His son quotes him as having said at one time:

> "Trench said to me when we were at Trinity together, 'Tennyson, we cannot live in art.' The Palace of Art is the embodiment of my belief that the Godlike life is with man and for man."[1]

The poem itself is an allegory of a soul which has become

[1] Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 118-119.

so enwrapped in the love of intellectual beauty and in the intense enjoyment of beauty for its own sake that it has lost sight of its relations to man and to God. But this soul tires of its isolation after four years of residence with Beauty alone, and beg to be allowed to live in the valley amid the interests and sufferings of mankind.

"So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

"'Yet pull not down my palace towers
So lightly, beautifully built;
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt.'"

In the Memoirs, we have this theory of "Art for Art's sake and more" again emphasized in the following passage:

> "When certain adverse critics discovered that throughout the new Idylls of the King there was a great moral significance, he was attacked with the cry of "Art for Art's sake." After reading one of these attacks he reeled off this epigram:
>
> Art for Art's sake
> (instead of Art for Art - and - Man's sake).
>
> "Art for Art's sake! Hail, truest Lord of Hell!
> Hail Genius, Master of the Moral Will!
> 'The filthiest of all paintings painted well
> Is mightier than the purest painted ill!'
> Yes, Mightier than the purest painted well,
> So prone are we to toward the broad way to Hell."
>
> These lines in a measure expressed his strong and sorrowful conviction, that the English were beginning to forget what was, in Voltaire's words, the glory of English literature - "No nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation." 1

And in connection with this epigram we are told that he

1
Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 91-92.

quoted George Sand:

> "L'art pour art est un vain mot: l'art pour le vrai, l'art pour le beau et le bon, voilà la religion que je cherche."[1]

Theories Otherwise Expressed

Such are the theories which Tennyson has set forth by actual statements in his poems, but in the reading of his poetry and in the few facts which we can glean from the letters and notes of his friends, we find also that he had at least one other theory of poetry which it might be well to mention in passing. This is his accuracy of detail in everything that he wrote. In a note accompanying Anacaona, one of the poems not otherwise published than in the Memoirs, Hallam Tennyson says,

> "My father liked this poem but did not publish it, because the natural history and the rhymes did not satisfy him. He evidently chose words which sounded well, and gave a tropical air to the whole, and he did not then care, as in his later poems, for absolute accuracy."[2]

In this connection, also, he was wont to say that

> "an artist should get his workmanship as good as he can, and make his work as perfect as possible. A small vessel, built on fine lines, is likely to float further down the stream of time than a big raft."[3]

In his love for the beauties of Nature, we find him observing flowers and trees with something of the accuracy

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 92, Footnote 1.
2 Ibid., Vol. I, p 56.
3 Hugh L'Anson Fausset, Tennyson, a Modern Portrait, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1923, p. 97.

of a scientist. He knew their colors, habitats, times of blossoming, and all the various changes through which they passed. This keen and accurate observance of natural objects made it possible for him to point out pleasing and instructive comparisons between them and his human characters. Of Cyril in The Princess, who had acted thoughtlessly, but who had in him the elements of manhood, Tennyson says:

> "He has a solid base of temperament;
> But as the waterlily starts and slides
> Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
> Though anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."[1]

Tennyson's Own Practice

In following out these theories of criticism during the more than sixty years of his literary activity, Tennyson drew from many sources for the subject matter of his poems. But with the exception of the subjects drawn from Classical literature, most of these sources lie within the realm of English life. He did this, he said, because he felt that he was not sufficiently familiar with the atmosphere of foreign lands to portray it accurately. In connection with this idea he once said,

> "that he thought Romola a mistake; because
> George Eliot had not been able to enter
> into the complex Italian life and character,
> however much she might have studied them
> in books." [2]

Even in his Classical poems he has chosen subjects whose story had been so briefly told that he could make it

[1] The Princess, Canto IV.

[2] Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 5.

Over onto a story of his own. Thus in Ulysses, he takes a phase of the story not found in Homer but in the less well known work of Dante. Similarly , in the Idylls of the King, while taking the characters and the stories mainly as they are found Malory's stories of Arthur, nevertheless, he has put into these his Nineteenth Century ideals of beauty, love, and morality, and enobled the old tales of chivalry into revelations of spiritual truth.

Purposes of His Poetry

Throughout the broad scope of these subjects, Tennyson never forgot his theory that the poet's work was to convince the world of love and beauty, and, in almost everything that he wrote, we find this element of love to a greater or a less degree. To be sure, the love which he glorifies is not always the love of a man for a maid, or a maid for a man. He also teaches love for country, love of freedom, filial love, and paternal love. But most of his narrative poems are first of all love stories no matter what other lessons they may convey - Enoch Arden, The Gardener's Daughter, The Miller's Daughter, Locksley Hall, Maud - all stories of love in quiet English country life, and in the last named of these poems, Tennyson has given us what has been characterized as "one of the greatest songs of the English tongue."

"Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

"For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die."

In The Northern Farmer, we find the lover of the Earth, and Rizpah gives us a tragedy of mother-love. Again, in Akbar's Dream, the poet records how all religious differences are joined into one religion of goodness and of love. And so on to the last poem in the book where the love of God offers us hope at the end.

"For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar."

As to the purely didactic purpose of his writings, we find this reaching its height in the allegory of the Idylls of the King, though here we may carry the allegorical idea too far and read more into the story than Tennyson really intended to say. He has himself distinctly stated the meaning of the Idylls in the Dedication to the Queen where he says:

"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: or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
Touched by the adulterous finger of a time
That hovered between war and wantonness,
And crownings and dethronements."

But many of the critics have read into these Idylls a much more complicated allegory than Tennyson intended to make them. When questioned upon this subject, the poet himself

said:

> "Poetry is like shot silk with many glowing colors, and every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the poet."1

It is probably with this idea of individual interpretation Of the poems in mind, that the poet never protested very strongly against the more deeply allegorical interpretations which some of the critics presented. He was, however, wont to say of these critics:

> "They have taken my hobby and have ridden it too hard, and have explained some things too allegorically, although there is an allegorical, or perhaps rather parabolic drift in the poems."2

His own explanation of the whole scheme of the Idylls was that it was

> "the dream of man coming into practical life, and ruined by one sin. Birth is a mystery and death is a mystery, and in the midst lies the tableland of life, and its struggles and performances. It is not the history of one man or of one generation, but of a whole cycle of generations."3

In his capacity as Poet Laureate, Tennyson wrote many poems which, while perhaps not among his best productions, still succeeded in carrying out his aims as a poet, as well as accomplishing their duty as national poems. While naturally of a retiring disposition, nevertheless he was

1 Hallam Tennyson, The Complete Poetical Works of Tennyson with Notes by the Author. Author's Note p. 879.

2 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 126.

3 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 127.

interested in public life, and his patriotism was of a romantic character easily interpreted by the poetic imagination. He also proved himself a master in the art of seizing upon the imaginative aspects of a public occasion. Thus for the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark, he associated the early invasion of Britain by the sea kings of the North with this later friendship between the two nations.

"Sea-kings' daughter from over the sea,
Alexandra!
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street!
Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,
Scatter the blossom under her feet!
****
Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea -
O joy to the people and joy to the throne,
Come to us, love us and make us your own;
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!"[1]

And for the International Exposition of 1862, he again expressed in poetry the world-wide significance of a new idea:

"O ye, the wise who think, the wise who reign,
From growing Commerce loose her latest chain,
And let the fair white-wing'd peace maker fly
To happy havens under all the sky,
And mix the seasons and the golden hours;
Till each man find his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brother-hood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,
And gathering all the fruits of earth and
crown'd with all her flowers."[2]

1
A Welcome to Alexandra.
2
Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exposition.

Qualities of His Poetry

Types of Poetry Which he Used.- In the mechanical medium which he used for carrying out his critical theories, there is scarcely a type of poetry or a kind of meter which Tennyson did not try. As the title indicates, his first published poems were "chiefly lyrical". In this type of verse he proved himself one of the supreme artists and we find some of the most beautiful lyrics of the language scattered from first to last through the long period of his life. In this realm of lyrical poetry, some poets write in a purely personal strain, voicing their own thoughts and emotions, while others sing primarily of the world outside themselves. With the lyrics of Tennyson we have a combination of these two methods. Some of his lyrics are purely subjective as in In Memoriam, while others, such as those we find in Maud, are completely objective, but by far the greater number are a skilful blend of universal and individual experience which is one of the marks of a real work of art. To this group of Tennyson's lyrics would undoubtedly belong most of the poems which he published up to and including the volume of 1842, among the best of which would be The Lotos-Eaters and The Ode to Memory. In his poems following this date should be especially mentioned such lyrics as those in The Princess, particularly Sweet and Low and The Bugle Song, and those of his later years, Far - Far - Away, The Throstle, and Crossing the Bar.

Among the ballads, Oriana and The May Queen are perhaps

two of the best known, but The Revenge, The Defence of Lucknow, and The Voyage of Maeldune are most stirring.

In the writing of sonnets, Tennyson worked with indifferent success. This may have been due to the rigid rules which bind the form of this type of poetry. Of the few sonnets which he did write, he himself always considered Montenegro the best.1

In dramatic poetry, he has left us two types - the dramatic monologye, and the pure drama most of which is historical in its subject matter. But in the latter type again he attained no great amount of success though his plays were all produced on the stage. With the dramatic monologues, however, his achievements were much greater. This type adapts itself especially to the expression of the reflective emotions of the inner life, a subject in which all poets are especially interested. Many of Tennyson's narrative poems are really in monologue and the subject matter of these ranges all the way from the humor of The Northern Farmer to the tragic tone of Rizpah and the classic vigor of Ulysses; but it is to be noted that, in his later years, he applied this type of poetry more and more to realistic studies of modern English personalities such as we find in Northern Farmer, Northern Cobbler, and The Church Warden and the Curate.

But while Tennyson is a good if not a great story teller, the idyl is the form which he manages most success-

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 217.

fully. In this type of poetry he was able to use ornament freely and to exercise his remarkable power of detailed description, while he was at the same time telling a story. His English Idyls and Idyls of the Hearth, as the Enoch Arden volume was originally called, are made up almost entirely of stories of quiet English life; but in the realm of idyls, the ones for which he is best known are the Idylls of the King which is rather an epic made up of a series of idyls. We are told that Tennyson had a previous plan for writing the Arthuriad in an epic form but for some reason this was not done. There is a footnote in the Memoirs which says:

> "Edmund Lushington called the Idylls of the King "Epylls of the King". According to him they were little Epics (not Idylls) woven into an Epical unity, but my father disliked the sound of the word "Epylls."[1]

In the introduction to Morte d'Arthur, a poem which he calls The Epic, the poet gives us a reason for this in the following words:

> "'You know,' said Frank,
> 'he burnt
> His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'-
> And then to me demanding why: 'O sir,
> He thought that nothing new was said, or else
> Something so said 'twas nothing - that a truth
> Looks freshest in the fashion of the day;
> God knows; he has a mint of reasons; ask.
> It pleased me well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,
> 'Why take the style of those heroic times?
> For Nature brings not back the mastodon,
> Nor we those times; and why should any man
> Remodel models?'"[2]

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 130.

Tennyson as a Master of Prosody.- In the writing of his verse, Tennyson tried all the meters and rhythms known to English poetry. The theory which he held throughout the whole of his life that nothing short of perfection should be allowed to stand, accounts for his deep study of verse construction in connection with everything that he wrote. There can be little doubt but that the great reason for this close study of meter on his part arose from his sincere belief that all poetry should be beautiful in its expression, and that to be truly beautiful the meter and the rhythm should be in close harmony with the subject. It was only in this way that he could carry out the theory of "Art for Art's sake - and Man's" which he had built up for himself in the earlier years of his writing. Regardless of the didactic or philosophic purpose, or whatever the purpose might have been, which his work was meant to carry, he thoroughly believed that it must be clothed in beauty. Every picture must have its background, every scene its harmonious setting and only an artist in prosody could have succeeded as Tennyson has in carrying out these affects. In speaking upon this subject, his son has said:

> "I need not dwell on my father's love of the perfection of classical literary art, on his sympathy with the temper of the old world, on his love of the old meters, and on his views as to how the classical subject ought to be treated in English poetry.
>
> He purposely chose those classical subjects from mythology and legend, which had been before but imperfectly treated, or of which the stories were slight, so that he might have free scope for his

> imagination, The Lotos-Eaters, Ulysses, Tithonus, OEnone, The Death of OEnone, Tiresias, Demeter and Persephone, Lucretius. A modern feeling was to some extent introduced into the themes, but they were dealt with according to the canons of antique art. The blank verse was often intentionally restrained."[1]

And it is in the realm of blank verse particularly that Tennyson has shown his greatest skill as an artist. The shifting accents, the variation in the pauses, the skilful arrangement of vowel sound all help to give a sonorous roll and melody scarcely equalled in English poetry. The following is from Ulysses:

> "It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
> It may be we shall touch the happy Isles,
> And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
> Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,-
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

In connection with this subject, also, the following is quoted in the Memoirs:

> "As a metrist, he is the creator of a new blank verse, different both from the Elizabethan and from the Miltonic. He has known how to modulate it to every theme, and to elicit a music appropriate to each; attuning it in turn to a tender and homely grace, as in The Gardener's Daughter; to the severe and ideal majesty of the antique, as in Tithonus; to meditative thought, as in The Ancient Sage, or Akbar's Dream; to pathetic or tragic tales of contemporary life, as in Aylmer's Fields, or Enoch Arden; or to sustained romantic narrative, as in the Idylls. No English poet has used blank verse with such flexible variety, or

[1] Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 13.

> drawn from it so large a compass of tones; nor has any maintained it so equably on a high level of excellence. The English Poets, edited by T.H.Ward, Preface by Professor Jebb."1

Tennyson himself, in discussing the subject of his blank verse once said something of this kind to his son:

> "The English public think that blank verse is the easiest thing in the world to write, mere prose cut up into five-foot lines; whereas it is one of the most difficult. In a blank verse you can have from three up to eight beats; but, if you vary the beats unusually, your ordinary newspaper critic sets up a howl. The varying of the beats, of the construction of the feet, of the emphasis, of the extra-metrical syllables and of the pauses, helps to make the greatness of blank verse."2

As an example of rapid blank verse he often called attention to the following passage in Balin and Balan:3

> "He rose, descended, met
> The scorner in the castle court, and fain,
> For hate and loathing, would have past him by;
> But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking wise,
> 'What, wear ye still that same crown-scandalous?'
> His countenance blackened, and his forehead veins
> Bloated and branch'd; and tearing out ofsheath
> The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery, 'Ha!
> So thou be shadow, here I make thee ghost,'
> Hard upon helm smote him, and the blade flew
> Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the stones.
> Then Garlon, Reeling slowly backward, fell,
> And Balin by the banneret of his helm
> Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the castle a cry
> Sounded across the court, and - men-at-arms,
> A score with pointed lances, making at him -

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, page 14, Footnote 1.
2 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 14.
3 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 14, Footnote 2.

He dash'd the pummel at the foremost face,
Beneath a low door dipt, and made his feet
Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he mark'd
The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide
And inward to the wall; he stept behind;
Thence in a moment heard them pass like wolves
Howling; but while he stared about the shrine,
In which he scarce could spy the Christ for Saints,
Beheld before a golden altar lie
The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,
Point-painted red; and seizing thereupon
Push'd thro' an open casement down, lean'd on it,
Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;
Then hand at ear, and hearkening from what side
The blindfold rummage buried in the walls
Might echo, ran the counter path, and found
His charger, mounted on him and away.
An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to the left,
One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry,
'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly things
With earthly uses!' made him quickly dive
Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many a mile
Of dense and open, till his goodly horse,
Arising wearily at a fallen oak,
Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to ground."

But it is not alone in blank verse that Tennyson found means of clothing his thoughts in beauty. In lyric meters he has invented a great deal. Of these meters, he himself considered The Daisy among the best along with some of the lyrics in Maud. Another meter of which he was very proud, and with good cause, was the long-rolling meter of his Ode to Virgil which is perhaps his finest technical achievement.

"I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee
since my day began,
Wielder of the statliest measure ever moulded
by the lips of man."

Aside from the meters which he invented, there are others which have been so treated by him as to make them virtually new. Of these, In Memoriam is particularly to be noted. We are told that Tennyson believed when he wrote

this that he had invented the meter and knew nothing of earlier poems in the same meter until after it was published. But his own peculiar trick of varying the position of the pause, together with the harmony of sound, movement, and meaning has rendered the rhythm really Tennysonian.

However, there was one type of verse which he never used as a meter for serious purposes. This was the hexameter, which he considered unfit for accentual English meter. Indeed he thought that even quantitative English hexameters were as a rule only fit for comic subjects. His lines On the Translation of Homer are well known.

"These lame hexameters the strong wing'd music of Homer!
No - but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?
When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?
Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

In a spirit of fun, he often wrote home in English hexameters when on one of his frequent tours in search of subject matter and inspiration for his poetry. These, however, he did not consider poetry but rather in the nature of burlesques directed toward those of his contemporaries who persisted in translating Homer into English Hexameters. Here is such a note from Wales, dated August 1871 and quoted from Mrs. Tennyson's journal:

"A letter, English hexameters, from the travellers. They had arrived at Llanberis: a jovial party apparently in the room above theirs in the Hotel Victoria.

Dancing above was heard, heavy feet to the sound of a light air,
Light were the feet no doubt but floors

were misrepresenting.

Next morning they started early.

> Walked to the Vale Gwynant, LLyn Gwynant
> shone very distant
> Touched by the morning sun, great mountains
> glorying o'er it,
> Moel Hebog loom'd out, and Siabod tower'd
> up in aether:
> Liked Beddgelert much, flat green with
> murmur of waters
> Bathed in deep still pool not far from
> Pont Aberglaslyn -
> (Ravens croak'd, and took white, human
> skin for a lambkin).
> Then we returned. - What a day! Many more
> if fate will allow it."[1]

Certainly such hexameters as these have nothing in common with the classic Greek of Homer.

Vivid Brevity and Compactness.- But it was not to the meter alone that Tennyson looked for the beauty of his verse. In compactness of expression and in vivid brevity, few poets of any age have surpassed him. The following lines from OEnone are particularly noticeable for this quality:

> "but Pallas where she stood
> Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
> O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
> Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
> The while, above, her full and earnest eye
> Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
> Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:
>
> 'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
> Yet not for power (power of herself
> Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
> Acting the law we live by without fear;
> And, because right is right, to follow right
> Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'"[2]

There is also the lyric which we all know so well, that can scarcely be excelled in the compactness of thought and its

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 108-109.

2 OEnone, lines 135-148

wealth of suggestion. Here in sixteen lines of music unexcelled, Tennyson has included a complete elegy:

"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!

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

"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."

In his narrative poems likewise, he shows equal skill in this compact style of expression. The story of King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid is told in two stanzas, nor is one left, after reading it, with the feeling that the story is unfinished.

"Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say;
Barefooted came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
'She is more beautiful than day.'

"As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen;
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been.
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
'This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

Simplicity in Subject and its Expression.- Closely akin to this quality of Tennyson's poetry is that of

simplicity of subject and its expression. No better example of this could be cited than Dora, the story of a nobly simple country girl and her love for the cousin with whom she has been reared. But it had to be told in the very simplest possible poetical language because of the very simplicity of the tale. However, within the space of one hundred sixty-seven lines, Tennyson has furnished sufficient material for a whole novel of English country life, from the introduction

> "With farmer Allan at the farm abode
> William and Dora. William was his son,
> And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
> And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife.'
> Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
> And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because
> He had been always with her in the house,
> Thought not of Dora."

to the simple conclusion

> "So those four abode
> Within one house together, and as years
> Went forward, Mary took another mate;
> But Dora liv'd unmarried till her death."

His Descriptions.- Still another quality of Tennyson's poetry which helped to clothe his lessons in garments of beauty was his unusual power of description. So vivid were these descriptions, even when the images were drawn entirely from his own fancy, as to make it possible for a painter to paint an exact picture from them. The Idylls of the King and The Princess are full of superb descriptive passages, and no poet has been more successful in providing a suitable setting and creating a proper atmosphere for his narrative. In sheer artistry, Tennyson is among the first of English

poets.

Perhaps no more vivid word pictures can be found within the scope of English literature than those used by Tennyson in describing the Palace of Art. Here is only one scene:

"One seem'd all dark and red - a tract of sand,
And someone pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon."

And who, in reading these lines from A Vision of Fair Women, could fail to visualize the sculpture-like figure of Priamb daughter?

"I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chisell'd marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

"Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech: she, turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place."

Or who, in the first stanza of OEnone, would not find a definite picture of this forlorn nymph with her landscape background in the Vale of Ida?

"There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.
Hither came at noon
Mournful OEnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.

She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff."

But perhaps even more vivid than any of these is the picture of the solitary man sitting day after day in the tropic sands watching for the sail which would mean deliverance to him.

"The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plooms,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Even to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,-
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the Zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipituous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail.
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in heaven,
The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise - but no sail."

Figures of Speech.- The figures which Tennyson uses frequently throughout these descriptions and other parts of his writings are for the most part taken from nature and the poet himself is our authority for the statement that such nature figures have their source from his own observation.1

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 465, Footnote.

Often times he jotted these observations down for future use when the need arose. This undoubtedly accounts for the skill with which he has made his figures harmonize with the character of the poems in which he has placed them. In the English idyls this is especially to be noted for here the poems are of simple everyday country life and the figures are of the same type. Thus, in The Gardener's Daughter we have this passage:

> "Love,unperceived,
> A more ideal artist he than all,
> Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
> Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
> More black than ash-buds in the month of March."

and in Walking to the Mail, a poem so close within the confines of realism that we are surprised to find even a touch of beauty in it, are the following lines:

> "A body slight and round, and like a pear
> In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
> Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
> As clean and white as privet when it flowers."

The Music of Words.- But it is not so much on figures of speech that Tennyson depends for the beauty and harmony of his verse as upon the choice of single words. His earliest poems are all characterized by the profuse use of compound words which, in the first edition, he wrote without the hyphen; but in later editions this was changed and now all such words are written in the usual way. Most of these compounds are adjectives many of which, in their double form,are original with him. Among these are such phrases as "shadow-checker'd lawn", the "star-strown calm"

of the river, the "argent-lidded eyes" of the Persian girl, and many others, all of which add greatly to the oriental beauty of Recollections of the Arabian Nights. All the poems about women are filled with these - sudden-curved, golden-netted, forward-flowing, silver-chiming, fountain-fragrant, and many others.

Of Tennyson's skill in the choice of words, the Right Honorable W.E.H.Lecky has furnished the following note:

> "He had a strong sense of the force and rhythm of words, and his knowledge of old English and of vivid provincial expressions was very great. 'How infinitely superior,' he said, 'is the provincial word flitter-mouse to the orthodox bat!' With his love for old English he combined some taste for old forms of pronunciation. He once rebuked me for pronouncing "knowledge" in the way which is now usual, maintaining that the full sound of "know" should be given. I defended myself by quoting Swift's lines on the Irish Parliament:
>
> 'Not a bow-shot from the college,
> Half the world from sense and knowledge,'
>
> but he only said he hoped I would never pronounce the word in this way in reading his poetry."[1]

In this same connection, his son has said,

> "If he differentiated his style from that of any other poet, he would remark on his use of English - in preference to words derived from French and Latin. He revived many fine old words which had fallen into disuse: and I heard him regret that he had never employed the word 'yarely'." [2]

Closely akin to his choice of words in the writing of his poems is the arrangement of his words to accomplish

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 203

2 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 133, Footnote.

a harmony of movement and meaning. Mingled always with his sense of duty to teach the lessons of life to the world was his love for the pure music of words. No one can read the poems of Tennyson - particularly the lyrics - without afterward having a refrain run in the mind. One of the characteristics of his careful art in words is his skilful arrangement of vowel sounds. How vividly we both see and hear the wintry world in these two lines from Oriana with their full-mouthed vowel music!

"When the long dun wolds are ribbed with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow."

The liquid l-sound is also frequently used by Tennyson for the sake of expressing a quiet, smooth, meditative tone. Note the effect produced in this way in the line

"Low, low, breathe and blow"

in the song which ends Part II of The Princess, or that other line from the Palace of Art,

"Lit with a low, large moon."

By the combination of these two divices, the liquid l-sound and the vowel sequence, do we get the bell-like music in this stanza from Far - Far - Away:

"What sounds are dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
Far - far - away."

But it is not alone the quiet, gentle beauty which he portrays in this way. Tennyson always loved stormy days and the wildness of nature in bad weather, especially along the sea shore, where it could be combined with the roar and dash of the waves. In stanza cvii of In Memoriam he pictures

such a storm by the use of rough vowels, and words that hiss and clang.

"The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast."

In all of these variations in word-music, it was Tennyson's aim to establish complete harmony between the movement and the meaning, and perhaps there is no place where he has accomplished this any more successfully than in that lovely little lyric, The Throstle, which was printed just the year before his death.

"'Summer is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again!'
Yes, my wild little Poet.

"Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
'New, new, new, new!' Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly?

"'Love again, song again, nest again, young again,'
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"'Here again, here, here, here, happy year!'
O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden."

But perhaps the very greatest skill which Tennyson displays is the art of metrical variation which he uses for the purpose of developing this same harmony of movement and

meaning. Usually he gained these effects within the regular metrical form but on rare occasions he used this unusual device. Here is an example in the second stanza of the Vision of Sin:

"Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Woven in circles. They that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves and in low tones replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.
Then the music touch'd the gates and died,
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and
palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round.
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair and eyes and limbs and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew;
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky."

Again, the power of rhythmic formto represent movement is shown in The Charge of the Heavy Brigade.

"The charge of the gallant three hundred,
the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands
of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley -
and stay'd;
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred
were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances
arose in the sky;

And he call'd 'Left wheel into line!'
and they wheel'd and obey'd
Then he look'd at the host that had
halted he knew not why,
And he turn'd half round, and he bade
his trumpeter sound
To the charge, and he road on ahead,
as he waved his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose
glory will never die -
'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill,
up the hill,
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade."

Tennyson's Humor.- One other quality of Tennyson's poetry which must not be omitted is one not common throughout all of his poetry, yet we find it cropping out frequently enough to be worth consideration. This is his quality of humor. Regardless of the fact that there seems to be a note of melancholy throughout most of his writings, nevertheless, there is quite a group of poems which show that he really had a sense of humor, though his letters show this even more than his poems. Here is one to Robert Browning. Evidently he was in a more playful mood than we are ever allowed to see him in his poems:

Aldworth, Haslemere.

After-dinner talk between husband
and wife.

W. Why don't you write and thank Mr. Browning for his letter?
H. Why should I? I sent him my book and he acknowledged it.
W. But such a great and generous acknowledgement.
H. That's true.
W. Then you should write: he has given you your crown of violets.
H. He is the greatest-brained poet in England. Violets fade, he has given me a crown of gold.
W. Well, I meant the Troubadour crown of golden violets; pray write: you know

I would if I could; but I am lying here helpless and horizontal and can neither write nor read.
H. Then I'll go up and smoke my pipe and write to him.
W. You'll go up and concoct an imaginary letter over your pipe, which you'll never send.
H. Yes, I will. I'll report our talk.
He goes up and smokes, and spite of pipe writes and signs himself
A. Tennyson."[1]

Of his own opinion of humor, we have a record in a letter written to Emily Sellwood in 1838. This is what he says in that letter:

"I dare not tell how high I rate humour, which is generally most fruitful in the highest and most solemn human spirits. Dante is full of it, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and almost all the greatest have been pregnant with this glorious power. You will find it even in the Gospel of Christ."[2]

Also, in a few of his poems, Tennyson has proved that he is certainly not without this sense of humor. If we pass over the two songs - The Owl - which appear in Juvenilia, we will find among the earliest of these Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue, with its legend of the Cock and the Head Waiter, but in most of his humorous poems, he depicts the dialect and the character of the Lincolnshire people whom he had known so well during his early life. The first of these dialect poems is Northern Farmer, old style which portrays the old Lincoln-

1 Hallam Tennyson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 189.
2 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 167.

shire farmer who declares

"I've 'ed my point o' aale ivry noight
sin' I bean 'ere,
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market noight
for foorty year,"

and who displays an attachment for the soil and for the old squire not to be found in the companion piece, The Northern Farmer, new style whose morality is summed up in

"Proputty, Proputty sticks, an' proputty,
proputty graws."

Another of these is The Spinster's Sweet-arts with a pleasantry of an entirely different kind for the Spinster's "Sweet-arts" are discovered to be a number of cats named "arter the fellers es once was sweet upo' me" -

"Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the second, an'
Steevie an' Rob."

and as she talks to these cats we learn the pathos of her past history.

"Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knaw'd
it wur pleasant to 'ear,
Thaw it warn't not me es wus pretty, but
my two 'oonderd a-year."

And so in this, as in all the others we see Tennyson's didactic tendency cropping out, this time against the social custom of marrying for money.

CHAPTER IV

TENNYSON'S PLACE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

In drawing any conclusions as to his place in literature it is necessary in Tennyson's case perhaps more than that of any other poet to consider something of the nature of the century in which he lived for he wrote primarily for the people of his own time.

The Victorian Age, coming as it did at the close of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, was very different in its methods of thinking and in the subject matter of its poetry than our own age. In literature, the Romanticists had had their day. Byron, Shelley and Keats were dead, and no other poet until Tennyson had taken their places. In the realm of science and philosophy, it was an era of research and reaching out after material truths. Thus it came to be an age of teaching and preaching.

So it was that Tennyson, in the writing of his poetry, aimed always to better the race; his ideal was social purity, universal federation, and complete happiness, wrongs redressed and right triumphant. He was interested in all the political, religious, and humanitarian questions and enterprises of his time; and his theory was to keep in touch with popular movements so that his writings form, in large measure, a commentary on the social and intellectual life of the mid-nineteenth century. In this capacity, there was one aspect of society which deeply impressed him throughout his whole life. This was the corroding power of gold, which he voices strongly in such poems as Locksley Hall, Maud, and Northern

Farmer, New Style. To be sure, he had no very definite or sagacious opinions to offer as a remedy for such evils. He advanced no new theories nor did he teach any new lessons. He was, rather, the chronicler of the mental and social life of his time and his only hope of any reform seemed to be the indefinite hope of a bettered human nature. When we view his poems from this angle, he becomes primarily the poet of his own century, and it is not surprising that the admiration of his readers was excited by the simple and graceful treatment of themes generally themselves simple and frequently English. In the stirring days of the Crimean war and other times of grave national anxiety, the voice of the people was never more distinctly heard than in the poetry of Tennyson.

In all this he was but carrying out his theory of poetry which he had set for himself at the beginning of his career - "to see life truly and the hidden meaning which underlie all forms of life; and having these gifts, to become a teacher of men, setting forth lessons of truth and liberty."[1]

But in carrying out this theory, Tennyson never forgot the second aim in his poetry - his definite conviction that whatever the lesson taught, it should be clothed in beauty. Indeed, there is just cause to suspect that, deep in his own heart, he held this as the first and foremost aim of all poetry, for at no time does he waver in his effort to make

[1] This theory was stated in Chapter three, page 23 of this paper.

each poem beautiful in the form of expression, while at times he does seem to fall away from his didactic purpose. For example, if one were to know Tennyson only as the writer of Lotos-Eaters, he would certainly judge him an apostle of the theory of "Art for Art's Sake Only". Even in the didactic poems he is at his best where he can clothe them in beauty and imagination. Judged from this standpoint, also, the best parts of The Princess are the lyrics.

So it would seem, as we get farther away from the Victorian age, the more will our attention be drawn away from the lessons of the century which Tennyson voiced continually, and the more will we be attracted by the lyric element of his poetry; and it seems evident that it will be for this only that his name will be immortal.

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A TENNYSON CHRONOLOGY

Note:- Many of Tennyson's , indeed most of his later works, were put into type soon after composition and a few copies printed off for the author's use. In some instances these poems were not published until years afterward. Where possible the date of these earlier issues are given in parentheses.

1809 Born August 6.

1815 Goes to Clark's School.

1816 Enters Louth Grammar School.

1820 Leaves Louth School.

1827 Poems by Two Brothers published at Louth.

1828 Enters Trinity College, Cambridge, October 28.
Meets Hallam.
Writes The Lover's Tale.

1829 Wins Chancellor's Gold Medal for poem on Timbuctoo.

1830 Poems, Chiefly Lyrical published.

1831 Leaves Cambridge University.
Father dies, March 16.

1832-3 Poems published.

1833 Arthur Hallam dies at Vienna, September 15.
The Lover's Tale printed and suppressed.

1837 St. Agnes published in The Keepsake.

1842 Poems published in two volumes.

1843 Poems, second edition (revised)

1845 Poems, third edition.
Granted a pention of 200 pounds.

1846 Poems, fourth edition (The Golden Year included for first time)

1847 The Princess published.

1848 Poems issued in one volume, fifth edition.
The Princess, second edition.

1850 In Memoriam published June 1. (three editions).
Marries Miss Emily Sellwood, June 13.
Appointed Poet Laureate, November 19.
Poems, sixth edition.
The Princess, third edition, greatly revised and added to.

1851 Presented to the Queen, March 6.
Poems, seventh edition.
The Princess, fourth edition.(revised)
In Memoriam, fourth edition. (revised)

1852 Several War Poems published.

1853 Moves to Freshwater.
Poems, eighth edition.
The Princess, fifth edition.

1854 The Charge of the Light Brigade published.

1855 Honorary D.C.L. degree conferred by Oxford University.
Maud published July 25.

1856 Maud republished with additions.

1859 Idylls of the King published July 11. (four in number).

1859-1863 Single poems published at intervals in various English Magazines.

1862 Ode for the Opening of the International Exhibition.

1863 A Welcome (to H.R.H. The Princess of Wales)

1864 Enoch Arden published August 1.

1865 Selections from Works, published January 24.

1867 Purchases Sussex estate.

1867-1869 A number of short poems published in various magazines.

1870 The Holy Grail published.

1871 The Last Tournament
The Window or The Songs of the Wrens (1867)

1872 Gareth and Lynette
"Lybrary Edition" of Works issued. (Six volumes)

1874 "Cabinet Edition" of Works issued.

1875 Queen Mary published.
"Author's Edition" of Works issued.

1876 Queen Mary produced.

1877 Harold published.

1878 Becket published.

1879 The Lover's Tale republished.(1830)
The Falcon produced at St. James Theater.

1877-1879 A number of poems published in various magazines.

1880 Ballada and Poems published.

1881 The Cup produced at the Lyceum Theater.

1882 The Promise of May produced at the Globe Theater.

1884 Became Baron Tennyson of Aldworth, January 18.
Takes seat in the House of Lords, March 11
The Cup (1881) and The Falcon(1879) published.
Complete Works, revised, issued.
Becket (1879) published.

1885 Tiresias published.

1886 Locksley Hall Sixty Years After published December 14.

1888 New Edition of Poems in Eight Volumes.

1889 Demeter published.

1892 The Foresters published. (1881)
Died October 6.
The Death of OEnone and Other Poems published, October 28.