Rice University Studies, successor to the Rice Institute Pamphlet, is a quarterly journal of writings in all scholarly disciplines by staff members and other persons associated with Rice University.

ACTING EDITOR: Katherine Fischer Drew
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Raemond Craig

RICE UNIVERSITY STUDIES COMMITTEE
K. F. Drew, Acting Chairman, Thomas W. Donnelly,
S. W. Higginbotham, Richard O’Neil, George G. Williams

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS
Manuscripts submitted for publication should be addressed to the Editor, Rice University Studies, Rice University, Houston 1, Texas. When preparing manuscripts contributors in the humanities and social sciences are requested to follow the MLA Style Sheet; contributors in science and mathematics are requested to follow the established procedures of major journals in their special fields. Notes and references will appear at the end of the manuscript.

Second class postage paid at Houston, Texas.
MONOGRAPH IN ENGLISH

THE ARTIST AND TENNYSON

GEORGE WESLEY WHITING

PUBLISHED BY
WILLIAM MARSH RICE UNIVERSITY
HOUSTON 1, TEXAS

VOL. 50, NO. 3
SUMMER 1964
RICE UNIVERSITY STUDIES

Volume 50, No. 3       Summer 1964

THE ARTIST AND TENNYSON

EDITOR'S NOTE ................................................................. v

PROLOGUE ................................................................. 1

I. FOREMOST IN THE VARIOUS GALLERY ......................... 4

II. WITH YOUTHFUL FANCY REINSPIRED ......................... 15

III. BEAUTY AND ANGUISH WALKING HAND IN HAND ......... 23

IV. MIRRORS OF THE REAL AND THE IDEAL .................. 35

V. A QUEEN, A ROSE, AND A GARDEN BOWER'D CLOSE ... 40

VI. THE LADY OF SHALOTT OR ELAINE THE FAIR ............ 54

VII. THE STYLE OF THOSE HEROIC TIMES ...................... 63

VIII. ARTHUR AND HIS PASSING ........................................ 70

IX. THE FINAL SCENE ...................................................... 76
EDITOR'S NOTE

Professor George Wesley Whiting became a member of the English Department of the Rice Institute in 1926, and served continuously as a member of that department until 1957, when he retired as Professor Emeritus of English. While at Rice he published articles and books on various aspects of English literature, and became widely known as an authority on the poet Milton. He died in 1963.

The present monograph is a product of Professor Whiting's last years. Though he completed his work on the project, he did not live long enough to arrange for its publication. After his death his wife, Mrs. Florence Whiting, graciously made the manuscript available to the Rice University Studies, and Professor George Williams, for years a colleague of Professor Whiting's, prepared it for publication here and helped see it through the press. The Rice University Studies is greatly indebted to Mrs. Whiting and to Professor Williams.

K. F. DREW
PROLOGUE

The reader in these enlightened days is not inclined to be impressed by the fact that Tennyson was, as a critic at his death remarked, "the greatest English poet of his age"; that his spiritual influence has "chastened the passions and ennobled the ideals" of the Victorian era; and that although he did not soar to the empyrean or plumb the depths of the soul, he gave "faultless expression to a wide range of noble thoughts."^1

But there can be no doubt that Tennyson was the most beloved Englishman of his time. The mature judgment of Christopher North, at first no friendly critic, was that Tennyson had stood for years "like a tower unassailable, one of the bulwarks of the English name, one of the citadels of English honour, . . . above all cavil, as above all emulation." His fame had ripened; his true grandeur was assured; it would not be reversed or modified by posterity. "With Tennyson," North declared, "we stand or fall in the record of the ages."^2

An interesting and important aspect of the popularity of Tennyson's poetry and one that throws some light on his close relationship to his time is the subject of this enquiry: Tennyson and the artist, or specifically Tennyson's poetry as reflected in the painting and sculpture of the nineteenth century.^3

Fundamental in this enquiry is the truth that poetry and painting are intimately related. The words of Leonardo should be emphasized: "Painting is a form of poetry." And André Malraux says: "Far from excluding poetry from painting, we should do better to realize that all great works of art are steeped in poetry."^4 In fact poetry and painting have always collaborated; but "from the Renaissance to Delacroix there was more than collaboration; poetry was wedded to painting as it had been to faith." This union was in the sense that painters served poetry rather than poets; they aimed at a poetic expression of the world they saw around them. Pertinent also are the words of Henri Delacroix: "Le poète est inspirateur du peintre et s'inspire de lui. . . . Une image n'existe pas nécessairement pour le lecteur parce qu'elle est sur le papier de l'auteur."^5

Without formulating the principle, nineteenth-century critics recognized this relationship in Tennyson's poetry. In the words of George Gilfillan, Tennyson's poems "tell tales of deep tragedy, or they convey lessons of wide
significance, or they paint vivid and complete pictures, in a few lively
touches, and by a few airy words, as if caught in dropping from the sky.”
Tennyson paints “in words vivid as colors, palpable almost as sense.” As
another critic observed, Tennyson was “a mighty painter,” combining the
palpable power of Raphael, the grandeur of Michelangelo, the richness of
Titian, and the softness of Claude, “through all the gradations and changes
of nature’s aspects.” His “Mariana,” for example, is a “perfect picture”
of a lonely and desolate woman, “framed in every circumstance of life’s
and love’s cold sorrow.”

When the *Idylls of the King* appeared, a critic wrote that in the early
work of Tennyson every poem tended to “sumptuous colour and picture.”
More than any other poet, this critic said, Mr. Tennyson seemed to have
written express designs for painters. There were palaces of art, glowing
tropical landscapes, gorgeous flowers and fruits, princely gems and jewels
in abundance. In fact there was an excess of the pictorial. The reader
longed for less brilliance, less of the pictorial quality.

Thus Tennyson, in his early poetry, provided such landscapes “as a
painter could copy after.” His poetry was, in the real sense, picturesque,
eminently suitable for pictorial representation. Though not limited to land-
scape, pictorial may here refer to landscapes with a definite romantic quality
and sometimes an antique character. The pictorial emphasized the visual
at the expense of the rational; the appeal was to the imagination.

The attitude of the artist with respect to Tennyson’s poetry is indicated
by the following notice, which appeared in *The Art Journal* soon after
“Enoch Arden” was published. The sense is that the poem is a gold mine
for painters.

“Enoch Arden” for Artists.—No poem to which the century has given birth is
so full as this of pictures; none to which the artist can turn with surer certainty
of harvest.... Here, then, is a rare gallery for the painter: every page supplies
a subject—nay, subjects more than one—for the pencil; and, no doubt, “the
exhibitions” will be full of evidence that the Poet has conferred an incalculable
boon on Art.

Later a landscape painter bore witness to the vogue of painting from
poetry. Because of the contemporary attitude towards the poetic in art, he
wrote, these are indeed “piping times” of plenty and appreciation for “the
poets of paint.” The fashion is decidedly for the “so-called poetic picture,”
and it is the custom “to ransack the pages of our writers and elaborately
illustrate their ideas.” This is the established road to fame and fortune.
This painter thinks that Shelley and Keats and “Tennyson (especially
Tennyson)” have a very bad time of “reincarnation upon the Academy
walls.” Our artists are indeed “all poets together.”

In an essay entitled “What the Brush Cannot Paint” Claude Phillips,
making the obvious point that poetry can actually accomplish what the
brush, even that of the greatest masters, can but "shadow forth in faltering and incomplete fashion," cites examples from Shakespeare and Milton (whose *Paradise Lost* is a "true painter's vision") and comes at last to Tennyson. "Where," he asks, "has Constable, or Carot, or Daubigny, painted more exquisitely, with a more subtle perception of Nature's outward beauties, and what is beneath them, than Tennyson?"

In the following pages, I shall consider the painting and sculpture of the time in its relation to Tennyson's poetry. As far as possible I shall follow the chronology of art, relying on the dates of the exhibitions in which the works appeared and grouping together examples dealing with the same subject or poem. Where the information is available, the galleries where the works were exhibited will be indicated. This survey is based upon a thorough examination of the reports on thousands of works of art in the annual exhibitions in the London galleries and some in other cities in England and Scotland from 1837 to 1900. It is possible that some works of art based upon Tennysonian subjects or related to these were ignored by the critics—especially when the subject became hackneyed. The works here mentioned and briefly described may be regarded as the best of those exhibited. Throughout the survey samples of contemporary criticism are summarized and quoted, to compensate for the absence of illustrations, and also to indicate something of the methods and standards of Victorian art criticism.

NOTES

3. This subject is very briefly treated in George S. Layard's *Tennyson and his Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators* (London: E. Stock, 1894).
8. *The Athenaeum*, July 9, 1859, pp. 73-76.
CHAPTER I

FOREMOST IN THE VARIOUS GALLERY

I have found reference to the exhibit of only one work of art on the subject of Lady Godiva before the publication of Tennyson's "Godiva" in 1842. This work of art, a painting by W. Jones, entitled Godiva Preparing to Ride through Coventry, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833.

But from 1842 to 1900 a very large number of works of art on this subject were exhibited in England. Even in 1842 the "gem" of the exhibition at the Royal Academy, "among its works of the fanciful kind," was a small sketch by W. Behnes, The Lady Godiva, "a study—or indeed model, for it is perfect—for a larger work, which we shall think him fortunate who is the first to commission in marble." Here, the critic says, "nothing can exceed the spirited execution of both horse and rider. The former, as he bows his head to his pawing feet, is full of life, and the lady sits in the easy and unconstrained attitude of her own conscious purity and supposed freedom from observation." Another critic praises the original design and beautiful execution of this work. The horse is in a novel position, being in the act of rubbing his nose against his leg, "a most ingenious conceit." The Lady is admirably modelled and is seated "on her palfrey with much ease and grace."

Executed in marble, for "we believe, Lord Chesterfield," this work was in 1844 praised as fulfilling "all the conditions of poetical sculpture."

Rider and steed are charmingly conceived and modelled and composed. The lady sits her palfrey in the graceful and unconstrained attitude of her own conscious purity—or rather that unconsciousness which is its gift; the spirit of modesty clothes her, as with a garment; . . .

The emphasis here upon the Lady's conscious or unconscious purity—"the spirit of modesty clothes her, as with a garment"—suggests that the critic and the artist may have been thinking of Tennyson's heroine, who rode forth "clothed on with chastity." But this marble statue was obviously modelled upon the sketch of 1842, and the critic does not mention Tennyson's poem, though he does emphasize the poetic quality of the work of art.

Godiva appears often in the art of ensuing years. One example was Edward H. Corbould's Godiva, which, when it was exhibited at the Society
of Painters in Water Colours, in 1852, was described by one critic as a partially nude study, with a figure beautiful in colour and graceful in bearing, a work of great power and originality, but by another critic as merely a study of a "ripe and winsome beauty," a nymph about to go forth "unattired,"—a painting in which is lacking the soul of the old story as it is "so exquisitely narrated" by Tennyson. When Corbould's Godiva, apparently the same work, was exhibited at the Institute of Painters in Water Colours in 1877, it was said that the Lady rode forth "clothed on with chastity."

The sculptured model of the Lady by W. C. Marshall, at the Royal Academy in 1854, is said to have been gentle, refined, and elegant but without any very striking claims to originality. Criticism of A. J. Woolmer's Lady Godiva, at the Society of British Artists in 1856, was introduced by a quotation from Tennyson's poem. After that, the critic observes that almost any semi-nude female may be turned into a Godiva. We find her here "undressing for her penal promenade." There is under a distant portico a "shadowy allusion to a caparisoned horse." The "striking" equestrian group by J. Thomas, exhibited in 1861, was based upon Tennyson's poem:

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity;
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.

But the critic does not wholly approve. The heroic Lady is finely moulded, but her face, not a pretty one, is "marked by a painful expression"; and her ample tresses are too heavy and full, rivalling "in their massive folds the mane and tail of the horse." The metal bridle, too, is painfully heavy and angular, and is not suited to "the delicate hand of the fair equestrian."

Sir Edwin Landseer's picture Lady Godiva's Prayer, at the Academy in 1866, deserved commendation, the critic thought, "for the painting of the horse, which in art surpasses the ill-drawn naked woman who is seated on its back." This woman is "not Godiva, in any sense." The critic adds that the dog which stands in front of the horse's head may be "the best-painted portion of this picture." Landseer, one of the most successful painters from the financial point of view, might have been consoled by the fact that in 1892 his Godiva "fetched" 3,360 pounds—but he had died in 1873. At any rate the critic thought that Landseer's position as the first among painters of animals was assured. Another critic declared that in this picture Landseer had "sinned grievously"—not against morals exactly, but certainly against good taste. "Female charms should be painted delicately; and when they are ostentatiously shown... public decency is outraged." There was no doubt whatever that this artist "is more at home among the inmates of the stable and the kennel."
In C. B. Birch's sculptured group, *Lady Godiva*, at the Academy in 1884, the Lady is not mounted yet, but stands by the side of her horse, her right hand resting on its arched neck and mane, her left holding one fold of her ample robe or mantle. Her form is unclad, not concealed by her abundant tresses which descend below her waist. Her gaze is anxiously upward as if imploring divine aid in her approaching pilgrimage.\(^1\)

The next is Thomas Woolner's *Lady Godiva*, which, before it was completed, was described as

> a figure of Lady Godiva at the very moment of unrobing; her last garment has just been released with one hand, when, at a momentary alarm, she instinctively draws part of the robe back again over her limbs. An eager agony of listening appears in her upraised face, which, at the same time, shows a still unshaken resolve to perform the act that is to work so much good for others. This statue is not sufficiently advanced for criticism in detail, yet enough and more than enough, is expressed to excite our admiration for the graceful composition, the dignity and chastity of the attitude, the beautiful and noble face, the large style of the nude, and the just disposition of the draperies.\(^2\)

Later, in 1894, F. G. Stephens, in a valuable article on the sculpture of Thomas Woolner, wrote of "the stately and beautiful statue in marble of Godiva disrobing, letting the last white garment of her sacrifice slide downwards to her feet, and, with her noble face held high, looking out as to the blind distance and empty echoing streets of the city that, so to say, turned its eyes away to let go unseen the sumptuous peeress, as ‘She rode forth, clothed on with chastity’; and, having returned, ‘Built herself an everlasting name’.\(^3\)"

The author says that it has always seemed to him that Woolner's "ideal Countess" is indeed "much nobler and more masculine" than Tennyson's heroine:

> The marble statue, because her very nakedness is armour like that of Britomart, has no "rippled ringlets" showered to her knees, and there is no need for coverings where the very nudity is, because of its completeness, heroic. The cheeks of this Godiva will not “flame,” he says; and no “light horrors” will stir the pulses of this grand matron.\(^4\)

In G. A. Storey's *Godiva*, at the Academy in 1889, the nude Lady is descending the castle stairway before her ride through Coventry. In her right hand she carries a rosary.\(^5\) In E. B. Leighton's *Lady Godiva: the Stipulation*, at the Academy in 1892, the scene is a room in the castle. The Lady, fully clothed, is standing by a table, apparently considering her husband's terms. The grim Earl, accompanied by two dogs, is drawing aside the curtain from the arched doorway. The walls are covered with tapestry, the floor with rugs. The Lady's braided hair falls in two strands almost to the floor.\(^6\) A critic held that this Lady Godiva was tame and that the picture would have profited if "the fair countess had been a nobly-bred lady and not a stupid model of low degree."\(^7\)
Years before George F. Watts's *Lady Godiva* was exhibited to the public view, a critic described it in the studio:

It is an incident in the legend of Lady Godiva. The lady has just returned from her tour of Coventry streets. She is supposed to have borne up during the ride, but at the moment of dismounting all the feelings of womanhood surge up in her mind, the stress of the trial being removed, and overwhelmed she faints in the arms of the attendants who have gathered about her horse and brought her robes.\(^{20}\)

When at last this picture was exhibited, at the Academy in 1900, the critic of *The Athenaeum* remarked that the painter had poetic truth on his side when he decided "to represent the heroic lady as no longer young."\(^{21}\) Another critic said that sentiment "of a subtle kind" is the chief merit of this painting,\(^{22}\) and only one reporter thought that the picture failed to convey the intended moral.\(^{23}\)

Beginning in 1833 and ending in 1900,\(^{24}\) this is surely an impressive number of works inspired by the legend. These works serve to emphasize the distinctive value of Tennyson's poems in supplying an important subject for contemporary artists.

Despite its charm and potentialities, the mournful, picturesque, romantic-classical "Oenone" (published in 1842) attracted only a few artists. One of these was W. Fisher's *The Triumph of Venus*, exhibited at the British Institution in 1850. The criticism in *The Illustrated London News* is introduced by a quotation from the poem:

> She, with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
> The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
> Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee  
> The fairest and most loving wife in Greece."  
> She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my sight for fear;  
> But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
> And I beheld great Juno's angry eyes,  
> As she withdrew into the golden cloud.

The critic thinks there is merit in Fisher's composition but recommends that he study Frost, whose *Musidora* has all the excellencies which this Venus lacks.\(^{25}\) Another critic condemns the picture, in which, he says, "the rankness of the materialism of Art is unredeemed by poetry of feeling or beauty of design."\(^{26}\) After this harsh criticism, one may be surprised to learn that Fisher's *The Triumph of Venus* was sold in 1850 for one hundred pounds.\(^{27}\)

The next art work on this subject is W. Brodie's marble statue of Oenone, exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1858. This work is "one of the finest productions of modern statuary we have ever seen."\(^{28}\) No work that I have examined is more generously praised.
In P. H. Calderon's *Oenone*, at the Academy in 1868, one critic detected "the presence of a higher aim than common." This is "a life-sized, whole-length figure of the mistress of Paris lolling against a low broken wall, and leaning her arms upon its top, in one of those mountain glens to which the Laureate pathetically alluded." Another critic has this very interesting comment:

The picture is in the main a study from a magnificent model who created quite a sensation when set before the students of the Royal Academy. The figure does not answer to the character of Oenone; the girl is redolent of life, not wasted with love. The picture, which is scarcely marred as a picture by a wrong name, may, at any rate, be accepted as a noble type of womanhood, handsome to look at. The whole treatment is realistic, certainly not idealistic; the painter has, in short, trusted to a magnificent, though hardly refined model, rather than to the chaste marbles of Pentelicus.

Obviously this is not Tennyson's Oenone.

In passing, Oswald von Glehn's *Oenone* may be mentioned. In this painting, at the Academy in 1880, Oenone is placed in ambush to see her faithless lover award the golden apple to Venus. In A. F. Hughes's *Mournful Oenone*, the damsel or nymph is "kneeling in a saffron robe before a time-worn altar in the lofty glade she was wont to walk in with 'evil-hearted Paris,' and praying for release." Though the saffron robe is inappropriate, the artist seems to have tried to represent the spirit of Tennyson's heroine.

George F. Watts's *The Judgment of Paris* was at the Grosvenor Exhibition in 1887. From the description it is obvious that this picture is not derived directly from "Oenone":

The divinely tall, stately goddesses stand side by side before Paris in a golden haze, which is suffused with their own radiance; their feet are on a cloudy floor far above the earth. Juno is in the middle, and is letting fall the red drapery from her waist while she draws off a white garment from her head. The figure of Pallas has an almost silvery sheen when placed in contrast with the golden flesh of the Queen of Heaven and the rosy Venus on Juno's left. Venus's long pale auburn hair trails about her shoulders and body, and is her only covering. Mr. Watts has made his goddesses, even the soft-limbed Venus herself, stalwart, and though Pallas is slender, her limbs and torso are grand in proportions and contours.

Tennyson's goddesses were naked:

Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower.

However, the Venus described here does closely resemble the Venus of Tennyson's poem:

Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder; from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Mariana" (published in 1830) inspired or at least provided subjects for many painters. In fact by 1855 "Mariana" had become a hackneyed subject, and many of the pictures having their source in this poem were probably ignored by the critics. John Everett Millais was among the first to use this subject; his picture was exhibited at the Academy in 1851. One critic reported that in a scene from Tennyson identified by the verse "She only said, 'My life is dreary,'" the sentiment is attained but it is conveyed "extravagantly in the church-window fashion of the thirteenth century." Another critic declared that "Mr. Millais exhibits his old perversity in a scene from Tennyson, Mariana . . ." which probably means that the critic disapproved of this Pre-Raphaelite style. Another critic was more specific:

The subject of this nameless picture is Mariana from Tennyson:—

She only said, my life is dreary,
He cometh not, she said;
She said, I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead.

It contains only one figure, that of a lady laid in with the utmost force of ultramarine, and finished and circumstanced according to the state of the young England school. If we analyse the sentiment of the picture it tells no story, we find only an ill-complexioned lady straining herself into an ungraceful attitude. There is power in the picture but it is sadly misdirected.

Without criticizing the picture, I simply add that in 1883 this picture was sold for 850 pounds. Three years later, in 1886, this painting is described more fully, and details regarding attitude and color are given:

In her bower in the Moated Grange, Mariana rises from the embroidery that lies on her window table; the leaves, her models, fall fluttering about her feet, and with the gesture of one who straightens a stiffened back she lays her hands upon her loins and stretches herself to her height. Wonderful depth is given to the picture by the small oratory with its ruddy lamp in the background. The colour, as a whole, is purer and more aggressively brilliant than in any other picture here. The deep, glowing ultramarine of Mariana's robe is a centre round which scarlets, greens, and yellow circle lavishly. The impasto is as solid and the pigments as clear as on the day the painter laid down his brush, and when a century or so has passed over its head and given it an added harmony, 'Mariana' will be worthy to hang beside the best works of the Early Flemings without whose example it would never have been painted.
In the biography of his father, John Guille Millais adds some important facts. He says that Mariana’s dress “of deep rich blue contrasts with the red-orange of the seat before which she stands.” In front of her is “a window of stained glass, through which may be seen a sunlit garden beyond; and in contrast with this is seen, on the right of the picture, an oratory, in the dark shadow of which a lamp is burning.” In reply to Spielman’s criticism that the color is too strong and gay to be quite in harmony with the subject, he quotes the lines which Millais tried to illustrate:

but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moated sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping towards his Western bower.

He declares that his father used contrast effectively. After citing Ruskin’s crochety opinion that Mariana should have been represented at work in an unmoated grange, he tells how Millais happened to paint the mouse which appears in the picture. One day when the artist came to work there was no model, and he decided to sketch in the mouse that

Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peer’d about.

Millais’s father thought of scouring the country in search of one, but fortunately just then “an obliging mouse ran across the floor and hid behind a portfolio.” The mouse was accidentally killed, and there was the model for the mouse. The window in the background was taken from one in Merton Chapel, Oxford. The scene outside was painted in Combes garden, “just outside their windows.”

Miss Egerton’s Mariana in the South, at the New Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1852, was, according to the critic, a “womanly and graceful piece of championship on behalf of Mr. Tennyson’s heroine,” who was “last year libelled with such . . . Pre-Raphaelite harshness” by Millais. This lady’s sadness is at least as potent and true “as the terrible yawn with which she was credited by Mr. Millais.” And her costume, if too nice for one whose device was to “live forgotten and die forlorn,” is at least more delicate than the “Mazarine blue petticoat” of her predecessor. Of R. S. Cahill’s Mariana, at the Academy in 1855, the critic says only that this is “one of the hacknied subjects of which we see so many now yearly.” W. Dyer’s Mariana, at the British Institution in the same year, was judged to have “something of the poem about it,” but the critic added firmly, “Mariana need not be ugly and grim because she is melancholy.”

Johnstone’s painting with the motto “‘He cometh not,’ she said,” at the Academy in 1860, is described as “a simple female figure, life size, with hands loosely joined, resting on the ledge of an old stone wall, her intelli-
gent, ladylike features marked with pensive melancholy." Her dress is a “silver-grey shawl,” which hangs in easy folds from her shoulders. The colour throughout is subdued, save the sky, “which is dark and angry, lighted below with a last gleam of the setting sun.” A few ivy leaves trailing up the stonework overhead give “a poetic finish” to the composition. In the picture the dark and angry sky “lighted below by a last gleam of the setting sun” refers of course to these lines:

but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moated sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.

Here in the poem and the painting is the one dash of color, more lurid in the picture. Without being specific, another critic held that the movement and expression of the figure responded to the feeling of the quotation from the poem. On the contrary, a Mariana, by Jopling, at the New Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1861, was not thought to show “the clear perfection of her face,” and the mirror’s reflection was “infelicitously rendered.”

F. R. Pickersgill’s Mariana, at the Academy in 1875, seems to have been the worst received of all. His “big female figure leaning in a melancholy mood on a vase, professedly in illustration of the Laureate’s lines:—

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,”

is “simply absurd.” This work has no charm to counterbalance “the unpleasant face and the lugubrious dullness of the design.”

This brings us to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, one of the most famous painters of the time. His Heart of the Night is an illustration of Shakespeare’s Mariana, Tennyson’s original of “Mariana in the South.” In this painting, which was seen in the collection of George Rae, Birkenhead,

the mournful lady has risen from her place in an inner room and left the spinning-wheel at rest below the lamp. Clad in white, she has come forward to kiss the feet of a crucifix. This is as much a study of colour as an illustration of the special subject in view. It combines deep tones and rich tints with extreme breadth of light and shade.

In 1866 Rossetti’s Heart of the Night was sold for 661 pounds.

Omitting other examples, we come finally to J. W. Waterhouse’s Mariana in the South, at the New Gallery in 1897. One critic held that this painting does not have enough of that inspiring and romantic force which the subject requires. However, another critic found the painting absolutely individual and unique and quite admirable in technique and in the management of color. A third critic is still more definite. He declared that
the colors are "exquisite and generous, though restrained chiefly to blues, violets, and greens, and purples." Of a "singular type of beauty," Mariana has with passionate devotion knelt before the great round mirror, not however with quite that hopeless abandon conveyed by the poem.51

Presenting Millais, of whom it was said that he was "more keenly sensitive to the highest forms of written poetry than any other painter of his eminence who ever appeared in England,"52 as an illustrator of Tennyson's Poems, 1857, George S. Layard wrote:

The poem of St. Agnes was first published in the Keepsake for 1837, and here in 1857, just twenty years later, it found its true pictorial counterpart in simple black and white, a so-to-speak journeyman drawing, printed from a wood-block a few inches square, and more significant than the largest canvas that has ever been painted on the subject.53

In the same vein Layard wrote: "The poem, like some perfect plant, connotes a flower, and suddenly under the artist's hands it bursts forth into necessary blossom, fragrant with a mental odour at once subtle and refined."

Millais's St. Agnes was exhibited first at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1886, as one of nearly one hundred and fifty examples of Sir John Millais's art.54 The reporter and critic writes as follows:

Our notes conclude with a work which has not been seen till now, and which, as he has never parted with it, must needs be a gem in the eyes of Sir John Millais. This is the picture in monochrome of ink and white, very delicately touched with green, representing St. Agnes gazing from her convent window on the snow-clad landscape, a work of 1854, and unsurpassed in its way. Finish of the highest order has produced a velvet-like texture analogous to that of Elzheimer. The work shows much sympathy with the poetry of the subject:—

Deep on the convent roof the snows
   Are sparkling to the moon;
My breath to heaven like vapour goes,
   May my soul follow soon!

In the chilly lustre reflected from without the nun's face looks inexpressibly wan and pathetic. Yearning devotion is shown in her eyes. She seems uplifted by the spirit within, and yet nothing can be simpler than this standing figure of a woman seen by the open window of a room filled with greenish reflections of the snow without, so dim that the furniture is but half revealed, while mysterious shadows surround the visionary, who gazes on the landscape with its all familiar farmhouse canopied in solid white. She sees, but thinks not of, the narrow convent garth, its half-buried graves, its iron gate loaded with snow and significantly set open, and the steps marked by feet of those who have gone before. Within view are the espaliers outlined in white on the shadowed wall, the drooping evergreens, and the black belfry drawn hard against the sky. The snow on the long perspective of the roof knows neither stain nor shadow, but it sets off the dark figure of the woman and fleeting vapour of her breath. Thus even the arrangement of an incident in his subject has been made to serve the artist's purpose.55
There was, at the British Institution in 1861, another *St. Agnes Eve*. This painting, by E. W. Russell, is described as follows:

The pale, white-robed nun rests with one hand against one of the heavy pillars of the cloister, looking out upon the snow-covered ground and quaint roofs of the neighbouring church and other buildings, which loom strangely in the heavy midnight darkness; in the other hand bearing a taper which partially illumines a wall-painting of the Crucifixion in the recess of the corridor. The chiaroscuro is admirably managed; the white snow being slightly tinged with green, in strict accordance with the truth under the circumstances, and offering a marked contrast to the stronger and warmer local white of the nun's vestments.56

The "heavy midnight darkness" strikes a false note. In the poem the snow is sparkling in the bright moonlight.

In 1884 The Magazine of Art published a "snow piece" entitled *St. Agnes' Eve*, by Adolf Schweitzer.57 This delightful picture, the magazine explains, corresponds not to Keats's rich and sensuous "The Eve of St. Agnes" but to Tennyson's pure and true "symphony in white major." The picture shows a winding brook bordered by trees with tufts of snow clinging to the bare branches, where no birds sing. Nearby is a small village with its church and steeple. All is hushed and still. At some distance and partly concealed by the trees two persons are seen on the path by the brook. Through the clouds the moon (or perhaps the sun) dimly shines. It is a study in white. But the religious note is not emphasized, and there is no nun. The painting does not in fact represent Tennyson's poem.

NOTES

3. The Athenæum, June 8, 1844, p. 532.
5. The Athenæum, May 1, 1852, p. 494.
6. The Art Journal, 1877, p. 188.
10. The Athenæum, May 12, 1866, p. 640.
16. Ibid., p. 86.
17. Academy Notes 1889, p. xii; the illustration is on p. 36.
18. The Illustrated London News, April 30, 1892, p. 3.
19. The Athenæum, May 21, 1892, p. 671. See also Academy Notes 1892, p. 93.


31. *Academy Notes* 1880, p. 11.

32. *The Athenaeum*, May 6, 1893, p. 577. This picture was at the Academy.


47. *The Athenaeum*, October 9, 1875, p. 481. This is one of a series of reports on the private collections of England. See also W. M. Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti Letters and Memoir* (2v. London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895), I, 282-283.


53. *Tennyson and his Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators*, p. 31. For the illustration see p. 30.

54. *The Athenaeum* of January and February, 1886, devotes four detailed reports to a very valuable account of this exhibition.


57. The illustration faces p. 424.
CHAPTER II
WITH YOUTHFUL FANCY REINSPIRED

Before paintings of a more serious nature are considered, several works of a lighter or more idealistic cast may now be described. It must be stated, however, that it is impossible both here and elsewhere to set up rigidly logical divisions. The classifications are merely convenient groupings, though within the divisions some unity of idea may be perceived.

The first to be noted is Frank Stone’s picture, at the Academy in 1850, illustrating these lines in “The Gardener’s Daughter”:

One arm aloft—
Gown’d in pure white that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour’d on one side; the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled at her waist—

. . .

But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn’d
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom.

This picture is said to show a sense of graceful form as well as skill in the description of landscape. Another reporter adds that the girl is attired in white, that her face is equal in finish to the most careful miniature, and that two youths stand at a short distance watching her—as in the poem. A third critic asserts that this painting is proof that the artist can do something better than paint young gentlemen in green silk breeches and satin waistcoats. Obviously this painter was directly inspired by Tennyson’s

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it.

G. H. Boughton’s The Gardener’s Daughter, at the Academy in 1896, takes its motto from “Tennyson’s famous idyl,” but it is said that the picture is poor. The figure, in profile and clad in white, is stiffly posed, and her features are expressionless. This Gardener’s Daughter is hardly more than
“a coloured silhouette of a woman in plaster dressed in muslim or, we might say, paper.”

A. E. Chalon’s *The Seasons*, at the Academy in 1851, is described as a “circular composition” from another passage in “The Gardener’s Daughter”:

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro’ that still garden pass’d;
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch’d with some new grace . . . .

The critic objects that it is a new arrangement to pipe the seasons all on deck at once. In pagan poetry as well as in Christian verse certain societies are presentable “either entire, en petit comité,” or individually. The Graces are unacceptable individually, and the seasons “are ‘very tolerable and not to be endured’ as an agroupement, the more especially as Tennyson, like a reasonable man, leads them through his garden ‘one after one’.”

*The Lotos Eater*, by E. Armitage, was at the Academy in 1854. It is said to have been suggested by Tennyson’s lines

And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against the rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotus-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; . . .

The rosy flame of course comes from the charmed sunset in the west. This picture, the critic says, is simply a head, but it makes a very striking painting. “The pallor and melancholy spoken of in the verse are impressive in the expression of the features, which are moulded as of that cast attributable to the Lotophagi and also to the Egyptians. The face is shaded on the near side, but lighted by reflection . . . .”

At the Exhibition of Water Colour Drawings in 1867 a prominent position was accorded to James D. Linton’s work which took as its text these lines from the poem:

Music, that softlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids on tired eyes.

This composition, one critic said, was well thought and worked out, with
expression in the heads, intention in the hands, and detail in the drapery. Another critic is somewhat more helpful. He gives the title, *Lovers before an Organ*, and he describes the situation: a lady standing behind the chair on which a gentleman is seated, pressing the keys of the instrument.7

I need hardly say that Linton’s painting had no relationship to the setting and the characters of Tennyson’s “The Lotos-Eaters,” and the same criticism applies to G. L. Fildes’s *Fair, Quiet, and Sweet Rest*, which was at the Academy in 1872 and which purported to have been suggested by the same poem.8

At the Academy in 1898, H. G. Riviere’s *Lotus Land* is said to be “an excellent illustration of Tennyson’s poem, although there was some lack of robustness and solid painting in the group of antique figures who have “sat them down upon the yellow sand,/ Between the sun and moon upon the shore.” The critic finds exceedingly good the effect “of glowing, almost shadowless twilight, mingled with a sort of golden haze.”9

Mrs. E. M. Ward’s *The May Queen*, depicting an episode from Tennyson’s poem of that name, was exhibited in 1856. It was described as “a very clever little picture,” done with an almost masculine vigor.10 In 1870, in the news of the studios of Rome, Miss Hadwen, a young English lady, is praised for “a pretty medallion of Tennyson’s May Queen.”11

T. Creswick’s landscape *Autumn Morning—Where Brook and River Meet*, at the Academy in 1857, was assisted by this quotation from Tennyson:

“O, babbling brook,” says Edmund in his rhyme,
“Whence come you?” and the brook—why not—replies:

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

The foreground in this picture is rich and solid; the stones and shallow water—the latter repeated in the sky—are highly satisfactory to the critic viewing the picture. A small footbridge crosses the stream; and, beyond, the bank rises and intercepts the view. On the right flows the river, its banks shaded by trees. On the left through the trees we see the ruins of an abbey.12

J. C. Hook’s painting at the Academy in 1859 illustrated the following lines from the same poem:

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.
Here the brook is shaded by trees; and over the brook, on the right, passes a wooden bridge. The subject, which is taken from a given locality, is “painted with the happiest reality.” In 1867 this painting was reproduced in The Art Journal, with an article on the painting of J. C. Hook. His main purpose is said to be the narration of a story or the representation of some incident of rural or “fisher” life. The author observes that the prevailing taste is “in favour of whatever is associated with home.” The painter who devotes his talents to home-scenery or home-life is certain of widespread recognition. Hook’s pictures satisfy both requirements. They are “brilliant with the tones of natural colour, and look like veritable transcripts of the localities whence his sketches are made.”

John Finne’s mezzotint engravings illustrating the Laureate’s “The Brook” appeared in 1890. In the first, with the title “I steal by lawns and grassy plots,” a placid stream flows between low wooded banks, and beyond a curving reach there are some trees. The sunset glows in the sky, flushing the evening clouds. In the second, with the title “I chatter over stony ways,” the full stream glides among boulders in its stony bed. The scene suggests impending storm, and the lingering daylight struggles amid clouds. The third, “make the netted sunbeam dance,” is thoroughly poetical. But darkness of tone is said to mar the impression of a brilliant sun upon the little cascade and the smooth and level stream above. Vapors that are supposed to be saturated with light hide the farther bank, the monumental trees, and the distant waters.

A. Bruce Joy’s statue entitled The First Flight, at the Academy in 1879, was suggested, or at least accompanied, by Tennyson’s simple lines in “Sea Dreams”

What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,  
Let me fly away.

A pretty young maiden has captured and holds in her hand a nest full of little warblers, “whose open beaks tell more of breakfast-time than liberty.” She holds one on the tip of her finger, but “birdie” is reluctant to quit its foothold and perches there “fluttering its wings and happy in the sense of security.” The arm of the maiden is too attenuated, and the lower limbs are out of drawing, but otherwise, says a critic, it is a very attractive and graceful design.

A number of paintings with titles or mottoes from Tennyson’s lyrics on the names of various damsels form a distinct group. One of these is J. M. Jopling’s painting at the Institute of Painters in Water Colours in 1866. It was indebted to Tennyson’s lines
THE ARTIST AND TENNYSON

Mystery of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine.\(^{17}\)

Mrs. Robert Christison, whose specialty was portrait painting “in the refined and slightly idealised school of Millais,” painted one portrait of unusual interest. It was “a beautiful and poetic portrait of one of her sisters,” for which the motto was the following passage from Tennyson:

\[
\text{O sweet pale Margaret,} \\
\text{O rare pale Margaret,} \\
\text{Who lent you, love, your mortal dower} \\
\text{Of pensive thought and aspect pale,} \\
\text{Your melancholy sweet and frail?}^{\text{18}}
\]

In this year, 1879, Mrs. Christison herself died of “an intermittent fever.”

The sentimentality of Egley’s The Sunbeam, at the Academy in 1884, was, the critic said, “supposed to be heightened by the following lines which Tennyson supplies in the poem ‘Eleanore’:

\[
\text{In a shadowy saloon,} \\
\text{On silken cushions, half reclined,} \\
\text{I watch thy grace.}
\]

Egley’s lady, clothed “in princely attire,” is seated in a rich boudoir, the walls of which are hung with tapestry. In her lap are violets, but on her face lies “the shadow of an abiding melancholy; the canker-worm has eaten into the roses of her cheek, and the fire of her eyes has been quenched in tears.”\(^{19}\)

Sir John Millais’s Little Speedwell’s Darling Blue, at the Academy in 1892, with a title from the familiar line in In Memoriam, was a study of English childhood. While still in the studio, it was described as

a charmingly demure and delicate picture of a little girl, whose curly brown hair is bound by a white fillet, and whose dress is also white, seated in a meadow under the spreading branches of a tree in its freshest spring attire, and holding some speedwells. Their brilliant enamel-like blueness assorts perfectly with the pure white of her dress and the rose and pearly hues of her complexion.\(^{20}\)

Technically speaking, the critic says, “these passages of colour are most lovely,” but for the public, he says, the charm of the picture lies in the little girl’s innocent beauty and childlike intensity of expression. Another critic was less appreciative: the picture is somewhat slight in handling and flat in the modelling of the face, but it has charm and was obviously a labor of love.\(^{21}\) At the New Gallery in the same year Millais had another portrait-study with a Tennysonian label, Sweet Emma Moreland. Two years later,
Albert Moore's *Pale Margaret*, which was in Connal's collection, was called a beautiful head “with hair crisply and deftly painted.” The following lines are suggested:

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?

At the Academy in 1892 G. D. Leslie exhibited an unusually large and important painting which illustrated his partiality “for certain types of English girlish beauty and his love of painting maidens of choice breeding, whose rosy complexions have delicate tints of under-gold.” This picture, called *The Rose Queen*, had for its motto the line from “Maud,”

Queen Rose from the Rosebud Garden of Girls.

The scene is a garden terrace opening in front upon steps of stone and having as a background “a pleached hedge in its summer dress,” beyond which we see the sunlit leaves of an ancient orchard.

The Rose Queen, a fair and stately damsel in the flush of maiden beauty, has been selected for the honour in accordance with a custom which, we believe, prevails in some parts of Berkshire, and carries as a sort of prize of beauty, a bouquet of red roses on a slender staff. She is descending the steps with an elegant gait . . . . Behind her walk five damsels, each holding a staff surmounted by a nosegay of roses, and clad in white, blue, and citron respectively, and form a lovely procession.

Then there is D. Y. Cameron's *Airy, Fairy Lilian*, with its title from Tennyson’s “Lilian,” which tells of

Airy, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian.

Although painted, as the critic said, “long ago,” W. H. Hunt’s *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* (inspired by Tennyson’s poem of the same title) was not exhibited until 1889, at the Society of Painters in Water Colours. It is described as a “gem” of a picture, marked by “splendid colour and exquisite modelling.”

It embodies the sentiment of the design which appeared, as a woodcut, in the fine edition of Lord Tennyson’s works Moxon published, with illustrations by Sir John Millais, D. G. Rossetti, and other able men. The dreamer who “in the golden prime of good Haroun Alraschid,” was borne adown the Tigris,

By Bagdat’s shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old,

is reclining in his shallop with its sail set and floating through the pure and pearly morning air, upon the blue and shining river.
The critic goes on to say that the fine style, the choice and exquisite
draughtsmanship, "the deep, glowing tints of the figure," rank this among
the best of the painter's achievements.\textsuperscript{25} It was obviously painted in the
ture spirit of the poem.

We may pause here, in a kind of interlude, to emphasize and illustrate
the fact that these painters as well as others to be mentioned later often
used colors freely and effectively. Sometimes no doubt they added to those
of the poet, though addition would in some cases not seem possible or
desirable. What artist could add anything to "Recollections of the Arabian
Nights," with its gardens green and old, its citron-shadows in the blue, its
wards of damask-work and braided blooms, its eastern flowers with
 crimson bells, its solemn palm leaves flushed with sudden splendor to rich
gold-green, and so on and on? In "Mariana," to take another example,
the blackest moss, the glooming flats, the dark fen, the grey-eyed morn, the
silver-green poplars, the white curtains swaying in the gusty shadows—all
this is material for the painter. In "Oenone" the lawns and meadow-ledges
are rich in flowers; Paris leads a jet-black goat white-horned, white-
hooved; and a crested peacock lights in the tree-tops beneath a golden
cloud. With such evidence as this, the reader is not likely to lose sight of
the truth that Tennyson is a painter's poet. The testimony of Christopher
North is valuable on this point: "The descriptive powers of Tennyson are,
in his happiest moments, unrivalled; on these occasions, there is no one
of whom it may be said more accurately that his words paint the scene."\textsuperscript{26}
As we proceed, the illustrations should make this point even more inco-
tronvertible.

The paintings briefly described in this chapter point to a prevailing taste
in poetry and in painting which seems to have continued uninhibited
throughout the nineteenth century. Although its sentimental refinements
may be greeted by cynical laughter today, it is a solid fact in English life,
underlying all forms of art, but especially poetry and painting.

NOTES

1. \textit{The Athenaeum}, May 18, 1850, p. 534.
7. \textit{The Athenaeum}, February 9, 1867, p. 195. A painting by Linton with the title
\textit{Lotus-Eaters} was exhibited in 1874 (\textit{The Illustrated London News}, May 2, 1874,
p. 428), probably the same picture, though I am not sure.


A preceding chapter included illustrations that were on the whole gay, sentimental, bright, and idealistic in tone. On the other hand, in the present division the dominant note is tragic. The first painting to be considered, entitled *Too Late*, at the Academy in 1859, is by W. L. Windus, who is said to have worked upon the following lines from Tennyson:

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.

This painting is described as “a tale of disappointed love and slow heart-breaking.” The critic did not like the subject. The haggard cheek and the sunken eye of the tall, bereaved heroine reveal all the harsher points of feature and form.

She is in the last stage of consumption, and should have been allowed to remain secluded from the vulgar gaze of rude health. The artist seeks to awaken interest in her by the affectionate conduct of the sister who approaches to embrace her, but the truant lover, the cause of all this suffering, in his complete suit of frieze and magnificent whiskers, is evidently a commonplace fellow, though he hides his features with his arm—for which act of consideration we are grateful.1

I am not sure that this is a correct interpretation of the picture or the poem:

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 wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

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.
The poem is addressed to a child, who is now no longer young and whose folly and selfishness were the immediate causes of the parent's death. The poem does not seem to be addressed to a truant lover.

In 1892 this picture was in the collection of Frederick Leyland, in Prince's Gate. It is said to have been painted in the Pre-Raphaelite manner, "with an intensity of feeling seldom surpassed by Millais or Holman Hunt." Not knowing its real source, Lionel Robinson conjectures that the subject "might be one of Tennyson's early idyls of village life" of the period of "Edward Grey" or "Dora." The picture, he says, tells its own story of a life's mistake, "a lover returning to find the girl he loves dying." The man's face is concealed so that attention may not be diverted from the woman; and "the group of the two women and the child—at once a link and a barrier between the man and his former love—is admirably conceived." Robinson, not knowing Tennyson's poem, could not say that the picture rendered it falsely. But he did say that the name of Windus is almost forgotten even by those who thirty or forty years ago prophesied for him a brilliant future. The lines of the poem might be his epitaph:

There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

This, it might be thought, was the fate of this painter. But in 1905 this painting, by one whom the writer called the "leader of the Liverpool school," was in the Victorian Exhibition at Whitechapel. It was described as "a marvel of achievement," though "as consumptive as the lady," with raw and hectic colors.

Three works are illustrations of "A Dream of Fair Women." At the New Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1859 E. H. Corbould's Dream of Fair Women was the largest and perhaps the most costly piece of luxury in the gallery. The Laureate's "well-known poem" furnished the theme, but the subject was poorly executed, said a critic:

Perhaps to heap together all that beauty of different lands, eras, creeds,—to present Helen and Jephtha's daughter, Cleopatra and Fair Rosamond in one and the same Elysium, as they met and mingled in the poet's vision—not marshalled there procession-wise,—would transcend the genius of any painter.

The artist has attempted to present some fair women in one garden but with almost no attempt at grouping. The result is contradiction, not contrast. The Queen of Egypt, "Brow-bound with burning gold," has too much of that "Odalisque character which French sensualists in painting have made us hate," and she has a sort of masquerade effect from being foiled by the Flower of Woodstock. The critic emphasizes the difference between poetry and painting:
In 'the visions of the head upon the bed,' and in the poet's measures, these discrepancies flow together—are fused—'come like shadows, so depart'—we know not how, we care not why. Can any 'Dream' be worked out, in place of being only sketched (as it was with such wondrous spirituality by Blake in his drawing of 'Queen Katherine's Dream')?—This dream, at least, has not been happily caught by Mr. Corbould. The reconciliation of various types of one prevailing dream-spirit, has not, it would appear, suggested itself to him.

The best of his disconnected troop of Fair Women is the "Serpent of old Nile," but she is "too anxiously posed," and so she is deprived of the witchery with which Shakespeare endowed her. Another critic agrees. This picture outrages a fundamental principle of painting, the unity of composition. The figures are disjunctively conjoined. And Cleopatra has no speculation in her eyes, nor is she "the voluptuous fiery Egyptian queen of whom we can have but one idea." And the critic makes the suggestion that when Tennyson wrote his dream, his mind must have been full of the Inferno. The painter would have done better to have assumed a tone more visionary. However, the radical fault in this painting was the lack of unity: the figures were unrelated.

In 1868 H. Weekes had just executed for a collector of "high-class modern Art" an elegant marble statuette entitled Cleopatra. Appareled in imperial magnificence, with a head-dress adopted from Athos, the Egyptian Venus, Cleopatra, the Empress of the East, "raises her left arm, covered with the folds of her flowing mantle, as though indignantly spurning the proffered love of Augustus." With her right she clasps the asp, preparatory to placing it on her bosom, "ere dying by its fatal bite for her dear lord, Antony." Thus she realizes the words of the Laureate in his "Dream of Fair Women":

And when I heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life, I would not brook my fear
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd his fame.
What else was left? Look here!

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

The description continues: "At her feet is a basket of lotus plants, from among which she took the instrument of her death. Decorated with the sphinx, lotus, and other emblems of Egyptian faith and character, the pedestal forms an object of singular and appropriate beauty, and is deservedly worthy of the exquisite gem of cabinet sculpture for which it has been designed." This small masterpiece is based not upon Shakespeare's play but upon Tennyson's poem—a noteworthy fact.
Undeterred by Corbould's alleged failure, E. Armitage in his *Dream of Fair Women*, at the Academy in 1874, treated a series of female figures "in a frieze-shaped design" with equal spaces between them. There is no definite design, and the figures are not linked in a complex pattern. Although the individual figures are drawn with sufficient skill and knowledge, they "do not hold together for the purposes of one design." Obviously no painter succeeded in presenting what was accepted as an artistically unified version of Tennyson's vision of

Beautv and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

From Tennyson's series of portraits they could not compose a unified picture. Theirs was a failure of composition. It is not to be attributed to any indistinctness in the poem—with its "glittering mist, where there is more color than form, and where colors themselves are flung one upon the other in lawless profusion," which Christopher North thought was the fundamental flaw of this poem.\(^8\)

"The Princess" was the source of several paintings, one of the first of which was by A. H. Heath. The sentimentality of this work, which was at the British Institution in 1854, was pointed out in a report which fore-shadows the sarcastic tone of a review of the first *Idylls of the King*.\(^9\) The critic of Heath's painting writes that those "who are addicted to sentiment, even when run mad, will mightily enjoy" this representation of "The Princess Ida, discovering that she, too, has a heart" and upon that discovery about to yield to the voice of love. This event is "touchingly described in Tennyson's 'Princess':—

[Prince, speaking faintly,]

'If you be what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfill yourself;
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing; only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'"

Then the critic goes on:

The poor prince, as he utters this affecting appeal, reclines uncomfortably on a cushioned sofa; his face of a shockingly unwholesome hue and his glazed eyes fixed imploringly upon the Princess, who stands struggling violently with the awkward discovery touching the possession of a heart, which she has just made; the blood has flown to her face, her eyes roll vaguely, and though still averted from her prostrate victim, it is very evident that she will shortly be subdued to comply with his last and not very extravagant request. Oh, cruel Princess! How could you have so long trifled with the feelings of one who has "loved not wisely, but too well"; and who, swan-like, dies so musically?\(^10\)
A modern critic could scarcely be more unsympathetic. The other paintings mentioned here refer to the lyrics in “The Princess.” In Frederick Leighton’s painting at the Academy in 1859 the quotation

Looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more,

designates a study of a female “of a dark southern type. . . .”

J. E. Millais’s painting at the Academy in 1865 had for its subject “a well-dressed but somewhat dreamy and dolorous lady in a drawing-room, who meets half way a swallow perched at the lattice, the bird bearing as the burden of its message the song of Tennyson—

     O swallow, flying from the golden woods,
     Fly to her and pipe, and woo her, and make her mine,
     And tell her—tell her—that I follow thee.”

This picture, the critic explains, gets its results “by mastery not minuteness.” The effect chiefly depends “on a concord of colour, wherein blue plays a principal part, and then purple and black come in to complete the harmony.”

Another critic of the same painting writes:

    The modern idyl, to which is appended Mr. Tennyson’s line,

     O swallow, flying from the golden woods,

    shows a young lady in a blue bodice, leaning her elbow upon a chair, standing at a window, and looking at a swallow which is without.

This work was painted for Sir J. Kelk, and the model was one of Lady Millais’s sisters. In 1899 it was sold for 756 pounds. It is of course not one of Millais’s major paintings. It might be compared with his Mariana, an earlier picture, previously described.

J. H. S. Mann’s untitled painting, at the Academy in 1873, represents “a lady gazing thoughtfully into the far distance of an open country.” In place of a title stand the following lines:

Looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

This picture is painted with grace, and the lady has intelligence,—not very high praise for a painting which should have interpreted one of Tennyson’s most celebrated lyrics.

Of the half dozen works which he sent to the Academy in 1877, P. H. Calderon’s most important was a large picture illustrating Tennyson’s lines:

Home they brought her warrior dead;
She nor swoon’d nor utter’d cry.
All her maidens, watching, said,
‘She must weep, or she will die.’
The warrior, clad in mail, has been laid upon his curtained bed; and, "with a dazed indifference, a wild calmness," his lady gazes upon him "as he lies before her stark and still."

The world fades from her, her breast heaves with a long deep pain that brings no relief, life is on the point of leaving her, and she is following her dead warrior, when

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee;
Like summer tempest came her tears;
"Sweet, my child! I live for thee!"

Another critic supplies more details: the coverlet is embroidered and the couch is richly carved and curtained; the steel of the armor gleams in the shadows; the little son rushes to his mother's arms and she clasps him in an embrace; the nurse of ninety years wears a white hood; and two waiting-maids with sympathizing faces and in graceful attitudes assist to form an excellent and expressive design.

J. M. Strudwick's painting at the New Gallery in 1895 was called a "laboured illustration" of the Laureate's

O swallow, flying from the golden woods.

In an elaborately adorned chamber, crowded with all sorts of bric-a-brac and antiques, sits "a rather weak-minded young lady with lightless eyes and an expression which has not the least animation." Inane and passionless, this lady will never "trouble herself to rise to admit the swallow" and her eyes will not attract her lover. She is doing something with a necklace, "but what that is does not appear." Although this critic obviously did not like the picture, it was considered good enough to be reproduced in the selection of paintings from the New Gallery.

Although it is not an example of painting, I must not overlook here the 1866 edition of "The Princess" with twenty-six illustrations from drawings by Daniel Maclise. The subjects of the pictures are, consecutively, as follows: the ruins, "High-arch'd and ivy claspt," with the broken statue of Ralph and the guests feasting while the maiden Aunt preaches a universal culture for the crowd; the Prince's father in his wrath vowing to fetch the Princess by force; the Prince and his companions dropping like spiders from the bastioned walls; Gama, the Prince's father, he of the cracked small voice and bland smile, protesting to the Prince his good will and admitting his impotence; the three adventurers assuming female disguises; the estranged lovers reconciled above the grave of the child they lost in other years; the Princess, "All beauty compass'd in a female form" and accompanied by "two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne," welcoming the visitors; the Lady Psyche, erect behind her desk, lecturing to her
patient range of pupils while her child Aglaia, “a double April old,” sleeps at her left.

J. C. Hook’s painting at the Academy in 1860 is a tour de force, “a perfect poem in painting, almost equal to that real lyric of the Laureate’s which supplies its theme—the well-known and exquisite Break, break, break,” Tennyson’s lament for the loss of Hallam:

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!

The critic describes the painting thus:

One of those hazy autumn days, when a mist half-absorbs the land, screening its details, and bringing out its masses in large, grand and uncertain glooms—glooms not of darkness but of light withheld, the negation of sunlight only. The sea, whose shining levels spread through the bay before us, guarded by its horns of lofty cliffs, seems sleeping in the arms of the dying year, with such depths of repose that its suspirations are only to be seen far off in the dreamy heavings that pulse slowly from shore to shore. Sleeping thus and filled with light,—indeed, saturated with light,—the ocean is; and about its repose in this opaline splendour, there seems to hang a melancholy monotone, like the air of a pathetic piece of music, recalling most aptly and subtly our feelings when we hear Tennyson’s lyric itself sung by a veiled voice. Floating upon this vast jewel lies a boat, and in it a sailor-lad sits singing; a girl, his sister, leans back upon the thwarts, dipping her arm elbow-deep in the warm sea. Behind a point of rock, in the mid-distance, but yet far removed, go glimmering the white sails of a ship, as she slowly drifts away from sight.

In J. C. Lewis’s untitled painting of 1862, the first stanza of Tennyson’s poem,

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

is the aspiration uttered by a fisherman’s wife seated at the window of her cottage and in the fading light looking out on the sea and the beach. Somewhat haughtily the critic declares that “the lines and sentiment are much too refined for the wife of a fisherman.” At the Society of British Artists in 1867, Barnes’s painting to illustrate the Laureate’s words

Break, break, break,
On thy gold gray stones, O Sea!

is “true in its monotone to the solemn cadence of the verse.” It is also delicate and refined. At the time this was the characteristic stamp of approval.
In Frank Dicksee’s *Memories*, at the Academy in 1886, there is no sea and no sailor lad and there are no ships—in fact there is nothing of Tennyson’s lyric except the lines,

But O for the touch of a vanish’d hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

The critic explains the picture: “True feeling is expressed in the face of the young widow as, with the child at her knee, she sits listening to the girl at the piano, and yearns, with an indescribable yearning for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is stilled.” It is said that the effect of this picture, “which is very deep and rich in tone,” was impaired at the Academy by the proximity of some very light canvases. It was seen to better advantage in the Manchester Exhibition. At that time it was the property of William Carver, of Broughton. The picture is unrelated to Tennyson’s poem.

Only a few paintings are definitely replated to *In Memoriam*. One is Margaret Gillies’s *The Mourner*, which was exhibited at the Old Water Colour Society in 1854. The subject was suggested by the following lines of Tennyson:

I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.

The two figures which render the spirit of the verse are, the critic says, “conceived in appropriate feeling.” In 1855 this painting, then the property of John Taylor, was among the British pictures exhibited at the great French Exhibition.

The point of view of M. Anthony’s *Stratford-upon-Avon*, at the Academy in 1855, is given by a verse from Tennyson:

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening, over brake and bloom,
And meadow . . . .

Not much of Stratford is seen: only the spire of the church which rises over the ashes of “the Swan of Avon,” in fact. The foreground is composed of a canal lock, beyond which lies a screen of trees. To show only the spire of the church is hailed as “an elegant thought.” Another critic, who does not quote Tennyson’s lines, finds the sky “of an unpleasing yellow,” the foreground heavy and wanting in air, and the scene itself “not chosen with much felicity.” But the lock and the weedy banks are all singularly
and rigorously truthful.  It is obvious that this painting of landscape does not do justice to this part of the poem.

In the Exhibition of the Bristol Academy in 1861, a painting by S. G. Tovey illustrated a portion of *In Memoriam*. In this picture a “grim ray of moonlight falls upon the marble tablet on which the poet laureate has written with so much mournful feeling.” In the “cool, calm, placid moonlight” the Hallam memorials “are rendered with picturesque truth and poetical justice.”

The picture and the critic refer of course to the following stanzas:

```
When on my bed the moonlight falls,
    I know that in thy place of rest
   By that grand water of the west
   There comes a glory on the walls:

   Thy marble bright in dark appears,
     As slowly steals a silver flame
    Along the letters of thy name,
    And o'er the number of thy years.
```

In the Water Colour Exhibition of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists in the spring of 1869, the pictures of R. S. Chattock showed landscape under various light. One illustrated two lines which, as quoted for the painting, read thus:

```
Mildly dash'd on tower and tree,
   The sunbeam strikes along the world.
```

Perhaps “mildly” is just a misprint for the correct reading “wildly.” However, in Mrs. H. Rae’s picture at the New Gallery in 1900 there is a plain mistake. The picture is an illustration of Tennyson’s line which, as quoted in the catalogue, reads

```
Her eyes are zones of silent prayer.
```

The critic explains that this is not Tennysonian but a sort of “caricature of what the Laureate might be supposed to mean with regard to ‘zones’.” Fortunately Tennyson wrote “homes,” not “zones.” But even this, the critic says, does not help the visitor to understand the picture.

Mark Anthony’s *The Old Churchyard* was a part of “one of the largest and richest gatherings of drawings and French and English pictures which even the merchants of the Mersey can boast of.” The collection was made by Grant Morris and was housed at Woolton, a suburb remote from the “smoke and din of Liverpool.” After several paragraphs recounting the treasures of this collection, the reporter writes:

“The Old Churchyard,” by Mr. Mark Anthony, deserves all praise for its
vigorous color, grandly simple composition, and profound sentiment. Enormous yews are grouped about a low white tower, a small porch, and a long roof of lichen-laden shingle, and they cast shadows on the shining grey-white and silvery stones

That name the underlying dead.

We know their roots are "wrapt about the bones," and their "fibres met the dreamless head." To the foremost giant of the group the spectator can hardly fail to say that

In the dusk of thee the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.
O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale;
Not branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.
And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate with thee.30

Sir John Millais’s *Dew-drenched Furze*, with a motto from *In Memoriam*,
depicts an autumnal scene in a dense wood, with a fern-crowded vista between trees opening to and ending in a lofty mass of russet oaks, ruddy beeches, and grey larches; the vista is formed by similar foliage to right and left, but, being nearer, is more distinct, because the vapours which surcharge the view have been searched by the sun, whose luster glows

On these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold.

The underworld is pierced through and through by the long crimson arms of a brier, half smothered in the dark-green masses of the gorse, and nearly lost in the multitudinous fern stems, whose massed fronds hide the earth, and the trees are "knee deep" in them. The pervading vapour has condensed upon the furze, ferns, and leaves, and upon the gossamers which seem to laze the one to the other and glitter in silvery films amid the thicket. Quite in the front, embedded among the fern stems, is ensconced a hen-pheasant, while her mate, his splendid plumage merged in the shadow of the herbage, is close at hand.31

This description, quoted from the column "Fine-Art Gossip," describes the picture in the studio. With a few slight changes and some additions, it is repeated in the account of the picture when it was exhibited in the New Gallery later that year.32 Here it is said that no one knows better than Sir John Millais "the value of sentiment in landscape" and that few have been more happy in imparting "that precious quality" to the subjects he handles in such a masterly fashion.

These are the pictures—not a large number, certainly—inspired by *In Memoriam*. Probably not more than this brief pictorial record was to be expected from a poem that is soberly reflective and thoughtful rather than picturesque and dramatic.
9. The tone of this review (in *The Illustrated London News*, July 30, 1859, p. 98) may be indicated by the following statements, which refer to “Vivien”: “This, no doubt, will be called ‘sweetly pretty’ by the boarding-school misses of the land, if the book escapes the vigilant eyes of the schoolmistresses and penetrates into such places at all. And, perhaps, the fashionable critics, admiring the manner, may praise the bard, and dignify this maudlin stuff with the name of poetry.” With every disposition to be grateful to Mr. Tennyson for past service and wishing to rank him among true poets, the critic insists that “all this appears to be but inane and unwholesome puerility.” He points out that Merlin, “whom tradition represents as a sage and philosopher,” yielded at last “to the blandishments of this impudent and selfish courtesan. But the blandishments were so offensively offered that none but the silliest and most vicious of dotards could have been moved by them.” The poet’s license does not entitle him to play false with the great myths of tradition or the great heroes of history. “If Mr. Tennyson wanted to make an old sage ridiculous, and to show the weakness of the spirit and the strength and wickedness of the flesh, he should have been just to the memory of Merlin, and created from the resources of his own fancy the gentleman as well as the lady of the story. Vivien is all his own, and the ancient inamorato and fool should have been his also.”
23. Sydney Hodges in *The Magazine of Art*, 1887, pp. 217 ff. There is a full page illustration of Memories. See also *Academy Notes* 1886, p. 53.
29. For Chattock's painting see *The Art Journal*, 1869, p. 143; for Mrs. Rae's see *The Athenaeum*, April 28, 1900, p. 534.
CHAPTER IV
MIRRORS OF THE REAL AND THE IDEAL

At this point we may state and on occasion attempt to apply an important critical distinction. In the *Dublin University Magazine* of 1860 a writer remarks that the critics of France and Italy are beginning to classify poets “no longer as classical or romantic, but as *formists* and *colourists*.” The formists, the writer explains, are “principally occupied in finding great thoughts and clothing them in the purest forms.” On the other hand, the colourists seem to consider thought and conception secondary and are engaged in “exalting sentiment, images, and colouring.” The formist of commonplace talent goes back to the Greek classics or to their modern imitators and “produces an elaborate mosaic of puerile archaisms.” The inferior colourist writes not at all to express his thoughts but “to relieve or intoxicate himself with harmony.” Our most important writers of the last poetic age were colourists: Byron, Shelley (“more intensely a colourist”), Wordsworth, sometimes a colourist, sometimes a formist. “Mr. Tennyson is an eclectic.”

He is formist enough to choose a tolerably large canvas for the development of his conceptions, and to subordinate all beauties of detail to the effect of the whole. He is colourist enough to hang over a sentiment with a loving iteration; to set out a comparison, sometimes fantastic enough, as if its prettiness over-mastered his sense of propriety; to forget his design occasionally in order to give a richer roll of tinting.

The writer approves of the *Times*’ reviewer’s remark that the “blaze of colouring” in “The Lady of Shalott” is softened down in “Elaine.”

Whether this softening or chastening of Tennyson’s style is a fact, it is a question whether the change would be reflected in painting, which by its very nature depends upon color.

The pastoral tragedy “Dora,” which is severely simple in style, was the source of three paintings, each of which presented different scenes. In C. Lucy’s picture at the Academy in 1852, the subject is from these lines in which Mary addresses her uncle:

Oh father! if you let me call you so,
I never came a-begging for myself.

(35)
And so, the critic says, she continues “her supplication for Dora; which is powerfully expressed by the figure. The grief of Dora, the prayer of Mary, and the harder nature of the man are forcibly described.”2 Ten years later, in 1862, Lucy’s *The Reconciliation of Dora*—probably the same picture—was at the British Institution. The reporter now adds a detail: Dora stands beside Mary hiding her face. This work is called “a finished sketch,” from which a larger painting will presumably be executed.3

The scene in A. H. Burr’s *Dora*, at the Academy in 1863, was derived from “the well-known poem by Tennyson:—

The door was off the latch; they peep’d and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire’s knees.”

The attitudes of the grandfather, the child, and the women have a purpose, and every detail contributes to the effect.4 According to another critic, Burr avoids “the over-sweet, almost treacly” style of painting, and yet the pathos is beyond question.

At a table sits the old man, with the child standing between his knees. His lined and wrinkled face, that has kept its hardness for so long, his habitually hard eyes, set mouth, set still in its old lines, but quivering, his eyes that disdain to weep, but are suffused and red, while memory of the boy’s father and the sunny days of old comes back to his mind, are subtle readings of expression and the heart; not less fine is the old man’s attitude, bent forward in the chair, his face upon his hand. The figures of the two women are good, but unequal in merit; that of Mary, the withered, anxious mother, with the lank and falling hair, remnant of her old beauty as it is, streaming in loose ringlets from under her battered hat, her poor, pinched face, her lean and hungry look, has a pathos far beyond most pictures . . . . The effect of firelight is truer than it looks, but not quite.5

The reporter for *The Illustrated London News*, which published a large reproduction of this painting, considered this work by Burr “the most admirable . . . in the last exhibition of the Royal Academy by any artist comparatively little known previously.”

We remember nothing finer in the whole exhibition than that rugged head of the old farmer Allen, with the writhing of the hard muscles of the face, the tearful eyes, and clamped mouth—presenting so true an index of the contention between stern, resentful pride and newly awakened remorse—hopeless regret and yearning paternal affection.

The critic adds: “A more simple, touching story than Tennyson’s ‘Dora’ is hardly to be found in the language.”6

At the Royal Scottish Academy in 1868 William McTaggart had “a charming piece representing Tennyson’s Dora in the cornfield, holding the boy by the hand whose sight she trusts will conciliate the farmer’s heart. There is a tender feeling about the figures and a dewy softness in
the full springing grain, irresistibly sweet." Later, in 1894, *The Art Journal* in an article on McTaggart, who is called "a Scottish Impressionist," published a full-page reproduction of this painting which was in the National Gallery of Scotland. Although the poem is the source of the picture, the critic James L. Caw declares that McTaggart "has not striven to exactly realise the incidents as described by the poet, but has used them as pictorial motives." The picture is, he says, something more than an illustration of the poem.

Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" was published December 9, 1854. It is said that he "dashed" it off after reading in the *Times* the account of the charge. It is a remarkable fact that after the heroic and tragic charge and the famous poem celebrating it, some twenty years passed before the first painting of the battle was exhibited. This work was by Thomas Jones Barker, who is called Britain's principal battle painter. There is a description of his picture *The Return through the Valley of Death*, which was exhibited in 1876. The picture represents Lord George Paget with his brave companions of the 11th Hussars and the 4th Light Dragoons, about seventy men out of the "gallant six hundred," forcing their way through the forest of Russian lances. There is none of the confusion of battle. It is almost as if we were looking at a charge at a review. "We believe that every soldier here introduced is a portrait." It is said that the picture was painted under the supervision of Lord George Paget himself and that the work "has a national historic interest, being in every respect trustworthy." It was Barker's last picture exhibited at the Academy.

In John Charlton's *Incident in the Charge of the Light Brigade*, at the Academy in 1889, riderless horses from the first charging line meet the second line, then turn and charge with them. This is "a fine design, full of spirit, and marked by several profoundly pitiful incidents."

C. Caton Woodville's *Charge of the Light Brigade*, at the Academy in 1895, was full of dash. It showed that the artist had "studied Meissonier to good effect." Finally, at the Graves Galleries, Pall Mall, in 1899, might have been seen R. C. Woodville's "expressive and energetic battle-piece entitled

*All that was left of them,*  
*Left of six hundred.*

Thomas Woolner supplied the story for the domestic tragedy "Enoch Arden," a poem which *The Art Journal* highly recommended as "a rare gallery" for painters. "No poem to which the century has given birth is so full as this of pictures; none to which the artist can turn with surer certainty of harvest." It is "an exquisite story, pure as a sunbeam before it touches the earth." No production has been more read—"sign infallible that love of the holy and the beautiful has not faded out from the human heart."
Every page supplies a subject,—nay, subjects more than one—for the pencil. By this story the poet has conferred an incalculable boon upon art. Actually the poem was not a favorite source of art. The reason is not apparent. In the light of what has been said and the poem itself, it can hardly be that the artists shared the view of the critic who condemned the story as immoral, as a poetical treatment of the “dark and shameful misery” of having two husbands living at once—a gross offence against morality veiled under romantic lights and poetical idioms. In fact “Enoch Arden” was almost universally admired—but it was not painted.

In 1869 a dramatic version of “Enoch Arden,” by J. Stirling Coyne (completed by his son Denis Coyne), was acted at the Surrey. But, as the critic observes, much of the merit of the poem lies in the descriptive passages, and these were of course unavailable in the drama. “It is the scene-painter who has to bring before us the

Winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
The slender coco7s drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses;

or—

The league-long roller thundering on the reef.”

This task, the reviewer reports, was “fairly accomplished by the artists employed.” The view of the island is picturesque, though the atmosphere is “ultra-poetical in glow of colour and light.” A very clever scenic effect was the representation of a stormy sea. “The manner in which the phosphorescent light of the breakers dashing upon the rocks is managed is very ingenious.”

At the Galleries of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1881, William McTaggart’s Enoch Arden illustrated the opening lines of Tennyson’s poem. “We have the three bright little children as they gambolled on the beach a hundred years ago, and

... built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow’d, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily washed away.”

At the Royal Academy in 1897, Charles Vigor’s The Return of Enoch Arden illustrates these lines:

His wife, his wife no more, and saw his babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father’s knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness.
Aside from the illustrated editions, these seem to be the only evidences of the artists' interest in a poem that was one of the most popular of Tennyson's works, not only in English-speaking countries but also on the continent of Europe. This meagerness of artistic interest is especially puzzling in view of the vivid descriptive passages—or what has been called the ornate or baroque quality which one critic thinks was "disastrously present" in this work.

NOTES

17. *Academy Notes* 1897, p. 27.
Yeats said of his early style:

I made my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat.

So it may be said of Tennyson’s poetry and the paintings associated with it discussed in this division. These are concerned with the idealization of love or the beloved, with the invincibility of true love, with the preservation of the golden fruit, symbol of beauty and wisdom. There is in all this the fascination of the visionary, the charm of undiluted romanticism, the enchantment of beauty that never was on land or sea. As Tennyson says,

Kingdoms lapse, and climates change, and races die;

but

Honor comes with mystery.

These are in general the themes of this chapter.

Although Shakespeare and a ballad in Percy’s Reliques are potential sources of the paintings entitled King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid, it is important to note that in a description accompanying a handsome reproduction of Sir E. Burne-Jones’s King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid, the critic quotes Tennyson’s lines:

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 swore a royal oath:
'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'\[1\]

At the Academy in 1869 there was exhibited Daniel Maclise's picture with the same title, "with the pendant explanatory quotation from *Romeo and Juliet*." In the ballad, in Percy's *Reliques*, the King, already struck by Cupid's dart, appears at the palace gate, and there among the importunate beggars he sees the "silly maid." He gives her his chain as a pledge of his love. Then, when she has cleaned her shift, they enter the palace to be wed, to live a quiet life, and finally to be buried both in one tomb. It does not seem probable that Maclise, who had illustrated "The Princess," would have been unfamiliar with Tennyson's "The Beggar Maid," which indeed tells us something more than we find in Mercutio's lines:

> Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so trim,
> When King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid.

Another critic declares categorically that the subject of this picture is derived from the ancient ballad. He then describes the painting, which represents the King as "encamped in a roving or hunting expedition, with his boon companions and attendants about him." The maid passes before him; she is "beautiful and in utter raggedness" but extremely clean. The raggedness and the extreme cleanness are, the critic thinks, inconsistent. "With a finely-rendered action she covers her breast from the eyes of the ardent king as he sits looking on her graceful form."\[2\]

With reference to the maid's modest action in covering her breast from the eyes of the ardent King, I must cite these lines from Tennyson's poem:

> Her arms across her breast she laid;
> She was more fair than words can say.

Surely Maclise had been reading Tennyson.

Another critic finds that the painting has the air of a carefully prepared set-scene. The critic also deplores the excessive accumulation of detail. This crowding of detail is most apparent in "the contents of the ragged girl's basket, which is heaped with rich reliquaries, rosaries, censers..." There is also a question: were jelly-moulds in use in the days of King Cophetua? There is in fact a very artificial air about the entire picture. The beggar maid, "though a sweet figure," is acting a part, and so of the rest.\[3\]

This painting by Maclise is obviously far inferior to Burne-Jones's *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*, the "main attraction" of the Grosvenor
Gallery in 1884. In this painting the figures are life-size. The scene is the interior of the throne room of King Cophetua. The time is “just after he has placed the maiden, clad, or rather half-clad, in the roughest weeds, upon the topmost seat of a golden throne, while he, bareheaded, and clad in black armour, has taken his place upon a lower step.” His ponderous two-handed sword lies against his breast; his hands hold the royal crown upon his knees, while he looks upward to the face of the “beggar all in grey” whom he has exalted. After quoting several stanzas from the old ballad (which he regards as the source of the painting), the critic goes on:

Mr. Jones has conceived his subject in a dignified and highly poetic fashion, and carried his ideas into effect with corresponding magnificence. The throne . . . is of shining gold, and . . . draped with superb tapestries, while in the golden surface are reflected the deep tints of the hangings, the grey weeds of the beggar, her ivory-like carnations, the gloomy armour of the king, and the multitudinous shadows of the hall.4

After describing the King, whose swarthy face is turned upward as with chivalric reverence and self-abnegation he contemplates “the soft, yearning eyes and half-bewildered countenance” of the Maid, the critic concludes:

the whole of this magnificent picture is glorious in the fulness of its dark rich tints of gold, black, bronze, crimson, olive brown, and grey, each color of which comprises a thousand tints and tones exquisitely fused and subtly graded.

More complete, more solidly painted, better drawn, and more searchingly finished than any other painting by Burne-Jones, this picture, it is declared, “ought to mark this year in the annals of English painting.”

In the year when it was first exhibited this splendid painting was highly praised by The Art Journal, which had formerly attacked Burne-Jones’s work. In 1865, for example, although admitting that The Enchantments of Nimue and Cupid and Delight have extraordinary color and originality, this journal asserted that Burne-Jones overlooks anatomy, that his drapery is unrelated to the figures, and that he should correct his mannerisms by the study of nature. He should deliver himself from mediaeval bondage and enter into the free service of nature.5 In 1869 this journal declared that Burne-Jones’s art has not “the breath of life, the health of nature, or the simplicity of truth” and insisted that his painting belongs to “the realm of dreams, myths, nightmares, and other phantasms of diseased imagination.” His most grievous fault was that he would not condescend to look at nature.6 The picture especially referred to is The Wine of Circe.

By contrast, in 1884, there is only praise for King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid, which the critic associates with Tennyson’s lyric. At the Grosvenor Gallery, he says, all visitors will be attracted to the center of the long wall where hangs “the picture of the year, Mr. Burne Jones’ ‘King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid’.” In a few lines it is impossible to do justice
to the "high humility, the manliness, the chivalry of the noble figure" of the King, who with his crown in his hand sits on the lowest step of the throne on whose summit sits the Beggar Maid. "His gaze is turned towards his love, a gaze of reverence, almost of adoration, for her simple beauty and purity." In the King's mind there is no feeling of condescension.

We feel the high nature of the man, we feel that poverty and lowliness do not blind him in the least to the "sweet and angel mien" of the woman he has exalted to his throne and the worship of his heart.

The line in Tennyson, "So sweet a face, such angel grace," is appropriate. The critic goes on to say that the King, a young and beautiful Don Quixote, is more interesting than the Maid, who is infinitely less moving than her lover.

Her pale fair figure, still clad in its ragged dress of grey, her white wan face and wondering eyes, realise well Tennyson's line, "As shines the moon in clouded skies." Her bewilderment at the unwonted splendour of her golden seat, of the rich red and purple hangings around her, above all at the homage of the king, are rendered with exquisite delicacy.

It is the idea, the inspiration of the picture which makes it equal to the work of the great masters of the past. It is this idea that the critic emphasizes rather than "the glowing eastern colour—the rich reds and purples, browns and yellows—" or the fine drawing, which errs in only a few minor points.

With a reproduction of the painting, the same journal in 1900 printed from The Art Annual the following description of this painting:

'King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid' is the most generally admired, and, in some ways, the most complete of all Burne-Jones' works. The same romantic sentiment which had inspired 'Love among the Ruins,' the 'Chant d'Amour,' and the 'Garden of Pan,' here attains its highest development. All the wealth of the painter's fancy and splendour of colour at his command are employed to glorify his favourite theme. The most costly marbles and richest draperies, the brightest hues of blue and purple, of rose and violet, adorn the throne where the maid of low degree sits in her plain grey robe; the chased armour of her royal lover and the crown which he bears in his hand are marvels of the goldsmith's art, and beyond the faces of the fair children who stand behind the throne, we catch a glimpse of blue sky and woodland. But all these separate details only serve to give fuller expression to the central thought of the picture—the passion of worship in the eyes of the warrior king, as, lost in the supreme abandonment of love, he gazes on the face of the shrinking beggar maid whom he has raised to share his throne.

It is added that this picture, which attracted universal admiration in Paris at the International Exhibition in 1889, has now been added to the National Gallery.

The importance of the picture seems to justify the addition of other
criticism, some of it unfavorable. Although admitting that this picture in its “ornate Italian frame and with its rich and sombre tone” is not a little imposing, one critic firmly asserted that the painter had “finally broken with common sense.” The lovers should not be so dismal or the Beggar Maid moribund. Besides, the styles of the picture are mixed. The plate and chain-armor and spear of the King are Italian; his type is such as Giorgione might have painted; the architecture is in general that of the Renaissance. But the ornamentation is Byzantine of the twelfth century; the steps and other structural parts have Arabian details; the golden bronze is introduced, in defiance of probability, merely for the sake of color. In short the picture is a medley from many sources, ingeniously combined. However, after all deductions have been made, “including the large concessions of morbid sentiment,” there is in the draughtsmanship, in the figure of the Beggar Maid, and in the novel and fine harmonies of color, much to admire. The texture has “an inner glow like those of the Venetians,” whose art Burne-Jones “successfully mimics.”

Though brief, the criticism in The Saturday Review is most pertinent. Its critic says that this painting is unquestionably the greatest work in the Gallery. The Beggar Maid sits high on the throne; the King, “in fantastic armour,” with the crown in his hand and his shield and lance leaning against the wall, gazing up at the object of his adoration—this is “one of the most beautiful” works Mr. Burne-Jones has ever conceived or painted. “We wish we could feel as well satisfied with the lady. She is, in the first place, far from being lovely. Her hands hang listlessly down, and she does not in any way answer to Tennyson’s heroine:—

Her arms across her breast she laid;  
She was more fair than words can say.”

In this critic’s opinion, the artist should have tried to paint Tennyson’s Beggar Maid. However, he concludes, this is a fine work, the finest by far in the gallery, if not the finest of the year. This is the third critic who associates Tennyson’s lyric with the painting.

At the International Exhibition in Paris in 1889, this picture had the place of honor in the English gallery, where it aroused the enthusiastic interest and admiration of French connoisseurs. In a tribute to the artist in 1898, the year of Burne-Jones’s death, Robert de la Sizeranne says that it was in 1878, when Merlin and Vivien was shown at the Universal Exhibition, that attention was first drawn to this “singular painter.” Ten years later King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid was "a revelation.” Sizeranne writes of the startling contrast between this picture and the other works at the exhibition:

The subject was unfamiliar to French people, the painter unknown to them, the treatment new.
And yet we gazed with secret sympathy at this enigmatical picture. As we came out of the Gallery of Machinery, in which the rumble of wheels fatigued our ears, and the writhing of endless bands wearied our eyes, we found ourselves in the silent and beautiful English Art Section, and we felt as though everywhere else in the exhibition we had seen nothing but matter, and here we had come on the exhibition of the soul. The great idealist writer who delighted with his original views all the younger men of this generation—the Vicomte E. Melchior de Vogüé—wrote the very next day a splendid passage on the subject, in his “Remarks on the Centennial Exhibition,” declaring that here “the spot had been created in which to read Dante’s ‘Vita Nuova’ amid serene beings murmuring unspoken things.”

It was, Sizeranne continues, as though we had come forth “from the universal Exhibition of Wealth to see the symbolical expression of the Scorn of Wealth.” All round this room, collected from all the nations of the world, were the emblems and signs of strength and luxury: pyramids, silvered or gilt, representing the amount of precious metal dug year by year out of the earth; palaces and booths containing the most sumptuous products of the remotest isles—

and here behold a king laying his crown at the feet of a beggar-maid for her beauty’s sake! There might be seen the most highly wrought instruments of war; cannons, models of armour-plated ships, and torpedoes; and here a knight duly clad in iron, bowing in his strength before weakness for its innocence’ sake.

“It was a dream—but a noble dream—” Sizeranne says sadly; “and every young man who passed that way, even though resolved never to sacrifice strength to right, or riches to beauty, was glad, nevertheless, that an artist should have depicted the Apotheosis of Poverty.” And they wondered:

Who is this man who dares even now to paint the ideal of poverty when we all aim at the reality of comfort? Who is the artist whose anachronism inculcates repose in the midst of railways, ... Who is the thinker so scornful of prejudice, so indifferent to all that is not inspired from on High, who might just take for his motto—somewhat altering the sense—the words inscribed on a sun-dial:—

‘Ne lumen, vos umbra regit’?\(^{11}\)

The upshot of these reflections, he says, was that a “great many young Frenchmen” decided to take an extraordinary and somewhat alarming step: they resolved to cross the Channel—and they discovered England. As we shall see later, they also discovered The Briar Rose.

At the International Exhibition in Paris, in 1889, King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid received a first-class medal. In the following year Burne-Jones received the Legion of Honor. In 1900 a group of the artist’s friends bought this picture from the executors of the Earl of Wharncliffe and presented it to the nation.\(^{12}\)

It is my belief—and not mine alone—that the romantic and idealistic sentiment which culminated in King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid owes much to Tennyson’s lyric. When Joseph Jacobs asked the artist whether his
pictures came to him in the first instance as ideas or as visions, Burne-Jones replied that “it was mainly as illustrations of something he had read that the majority of his designs came to him.”¹³ Robert de la Sizeranne’s account is different. When he asked Burne-Jones where he found the subjects of his pictures, the painter replied, “I do not find them . . . I make them—or, at least, I entirely re-make them from vague impressions left by poems which I have forgotten.”¹⁴ This, Sizeranne declares, was the origin of *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*. Taking into account all the evidence—some of which will be presented later—and certainly not being disposed to disparage the originality and individuality of Burne-Jones, I agree with the Englishman Jacobs rather than the Frenchman Sizeranne. Tennyson’s lyric cannot be ruled out. It is worth noting, for example, that in the painting the Maid is barefoot—a condition doubtless not rare among beggars. But the old ballad does not mention the fact, and Tennyson does:

_Barefooted came the beggar maid_

_Before the King Cophetua._

All things considered, I believe that Tennyson’s lyric helped Burne-Jones to paint one of his masterpieces, his apotheosis of the Beggar Maid.

_As shines the moon in clouded skies,_

_She in her poor attire was seen;_

_So sweet a face, such angel grace,_

_In all that land had never been._

This is Burne-Jones’s heroine in “her poor attire,” idolized by the King in a setting somberly regal and religious.

As has been said, Sir Edward Burne-Jones’s conception of art was unique in his time. “I mean by a picture,” he wrote to a friend, “a beautiful dream of something that never was, never will be—in a light better than any light that ever shone—in a land no one can define or remember, only desire—and the forms divinely beautiful. . . .” This definition admirably indicates his thought and purpose in the four important paintings in oil which were designed to illustrate the “Legend of the Briar Rose,” a version of the ancient story of the Sleeping Beauty. These paintings were commissioned by one Graham but in 1890 were the property of Agnew and Sons, in whose gallery in Old Bond Street they were exhibited, having been finished in that year after about seven years of “intermitting labour.”¹⁵ They were very fully described and evaluated in the year when they were exhibited, and so information regarding these celebrated paintings is abundant and interesting. One writer points out that the story is the subject of a poem, “The Day Dream,” by Tennyson,¹⁶ with the implication that *The Briar Rose* is indebted to the poem. Another critic is more positive: Burne-
Jones "obviously had in mind Tennyson's version of the tale and the scene," although he allowed his own imagination free play.\(^\text{17}\)

It is not surprising that this poem, with its wealth of pictorial detail, appealed strongly to the rare aesthetic imagination of Burne-Jones, who spent years of labor and a whole world of exquisite invention upon *The Briar Rose*, which is in four parts, each with its own title and a motto supplied by his friend William Morris. The titles with their mottoes are as follows:

1. *The Briar Wood:*
   The fateful Slumber floats and flows about the Tangles of the Rose, but, Lo, the fated Hand and Heart to rend the slumbrous Curse apart.

2. *The Council Chamber:*
   The Threat of War, the Hope of Peace, the Kingdom's Peril and Increase; sleep on and bide the later Day when Fate shall take her Chain away.

3. *The Garden Court:*
   The Maiden Pleasaunce of the Land knoweth no Stir of Voice or Hand. No Cup the sleeping Waters fill; the testless Shuttle lieth still.

4. *The Rose Bower:*
   Here lies the hoarded Love, the Key to all the Treasures that shall be. Come, fated Hand, the Gift to take, and smite this sleeping World awake.

This remarkable series of paintings was promptly greeted by much vivid description and searching criticism (the one incongruous note being the statement that the style of Burne-Jones and Rossetti is "false and unsubstantial . . . wanting in all the more vital attributes of an art, . . . and certainly destined to prompt extinction,"\(^\text{18}\) which should enable the reader to understand the pictures and their relationship to Tennyson's poem. As an introduction stating the theme and tone of the series, the following statement is by its clarity and sensitive appreciation invaluable:

Here, at the outset of the series, we observe that each work is pervaded by a pure, soft, and mystical light, differing in degree of intensity, and adapted to the progress of the legend from the semi-darkness of the woodland which is the scene of the first painting to the uniform but subdued brightness of the "chamber far apart," where the enchanted maiden and her ladies lie at rest. We are to understand that since the "slumbrous curse" began to operate centuries have passed. The lives of the king, his councillors and knights, the royal damsel and her attendants have been suspended; but all the rest of the world has gone on its way. The trees have grown larger and more numerous, the shrubs have flourished unchecked, so that the building was almost covered by the briars, which, developing in the magic air, form a dense thicket, till now impenetrable, and have blocked the doors and crept in at the windows, and thrust themselves along the corridors until they have reached the chamber of the princess.\(^\text{19}\)
In Tennyson's words,

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
   At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
   And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
   Close-matted, bur and brake and briar.

In the years gone by many knights had striven to deliver the Princess. "Adventurer after adventurer has entered, but none has passed through or returned." Overcome by the spell, each succumbed to it, and "sinking to the earth slept as the inmates of the palace slept. Suffering no change, his weapons not rusted, nor his attire decayed." The painter has represented each knight in the attire of his time: "the Celt in tegulated armour, the Gothic knight beside the Saracen or Moor; here a champion clad in mail, there another in steel plates." From all the heads but one the helmets have rolled away, leaving bare the martial faces, "in which the look of life is stilled, but not lost." Their shields, fallen from their hands, "have been lifted up by the ever-growing briars that have twined about the baldrics, so that each escutcheon hangs above its owner." Their sleep is profound; it is unbroken when the fated knight appears, breaking his way through the underwood. Apparently Burne-Jones found in Tennyson's poem the suggestion for this scene:

The bodies and the bones of those
   That strove in other days to pass
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
   Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.

But obviously there is a difference: in the picture the bodies of the knights have not decayed, and there are no bones. The look of life "is stilled, but not lost"; they only sleep.

Then comes the Prince. In the words of another critic, it is "the young Prince clothed in bright armour, who, like Phoebus, puts the shades of night to flight, casting bright glances across the morning sky." For this idea there is a suggestion in Tennyson:

He travels far from other skies—
   His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
   And lighter-footed than the fox.

In the painting, however, he is an armed knight, handsome, and resolute:

He is clad in steel from head to foot, and upon the polished surface of his armour the gloom of the thicket is reflected, and so are rays of light from above
and flecks of colour from the roses round about. He pushes aside the branches with his shield, and in the other hand holds his sword.\textsuperscript{22}

The second picture depicts the council chamber of the white-bearded king, who sits on “his throne of bronze, wrapped in embroidered cloth of silver, and wearing a quaint crown. Although sleeping, he still holds in one hand an open scroll, which seems to have been the subject of discussion with the lords, who lie on couches or on the floor near their master.” The scene suggests Tennyson’s lines:

\begin{quote}
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention’d half an hour ago?
\end{quote}

Nearest to the King reclines the chief councillor “in blue, a crafty smile fixed upon his face; close by is the treasurer with his hand on . . . the purse; next to him slumbers the general in his armour. On the left the sentry, fixed in sleep, leans upon his spear.”\textsuperscript{23} The entire scene suggests Tennyson’s lines:

\begin{quote}
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather’d in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.
\end{quote}

The scene of the third picture is a courtyard open to the air, and here “the giant arms of the magical briars form great loops,” and from the fountain on one side to the loom on the other “stretch along the sunlight.” Clad in deep rose-red, the maiden at the loom leans over the warp, and, with her face resting on her crossed arms, “sleeps as she has slept for centuries.” Another maiden lies on the floor; a third sits on the loom frame.

At the fountain slumber three other maidens clad in beautiful colors, which are beautifully harmonized with the chromatic and tone schemes of the entire picture.\textsuperscript{24}

Sleeping in graceful attitudes beside the silenced fountain, the handmaidens of the Princess look “as if they were enjoying their customary noonday siesta, but for the century’s growth of flower and briar over the fountain, the sundial, and the loom.” On this, the artist, in the opinion of one critic, “seems to have lavished his full care and delicacy of imagination,” especially on the girl in black seated near the silent loom.\textsuperscript{25} A third reporter remarks that here the maidens, who have been caught at their daily tasks by the universal stupor, are surrounded “as in a cage by the lattice-work of the interminable briar-rose.”\textsuperscript{26}

The fourth painting depicts the Princess’s chamber, “which is surcharged with a rosy golden light.” That the reader may compare the discussion of
the painting with the poem, which is at least in part the source, the relevant parts of "The Sleeping Beauty" are quoted:

I
Year after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl;
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

II
The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright.
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

III
She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

There are hardly any shadows in the picture, "and the delicate splendour of the scene, the beautiful forms of the sleeping ladies, their sumptuous garments, embroideries, and jewellery, lose none of their charms."

The royal damsel, who is clad in warm white, lies under a coverlet adorned with needle-work in silver; her face, which is turned towards us, is a little flushed by the life within, her lips are touched with a smile, and every limb and feature bespeaks "a perfect form in perfect rest."

The slight disorder of her hair and the stillness of her eyelids enhance the charm of her face. The colors should be noted particularly.

The pillow on which her head rests is of dark rose colour and silver; her couch is pale purple, with a broad hem of gold, upon which a quaint line of silver bells hangs from a cord of the same metal.
Near the Princess's shoulder the fairest of her maids of honor reposes upon the floor (in Tennyson's line “The maid of honor blooming fair”), and at her feet two other maidens form a group. In front lies a casket of jewellery, to which a briar has reached; near this is an inlaid mirror; over the Princess's head hangs a silver bell. “The carpet at the side of her couch is of a dark red ground with a pattern of deep blue peacocks.”

To this description I add the views of another critic. Declaring that he would much prefer to eschew criticism and “simply rejoice and admire at a great birth of Time and Art,” he nevertheless must answer objections, especially that of the spectator who was aggrieved because Burne-Jones had not included in the series the awakening of the Princess. In a story, he says, the best moments for the writer and the painter are not necessarily the same. “The moving and speaking parts belong to the writer, the scene and still moments to the painter.” Burne-Jones knew his limitations. His genius is not dramatic. If the awakening is to be painted, he is not the man to paint it. “And more generally, the sleeping part of the story is more the proper field of the painter than the waking.” Indeed, the poet who tells this story is the real usurper in art, if there is one. He does carry the story through, but it is the picture he is tempted to dwell upon.

Indeed, it is characteristic of Tennyson, and of Keats before him, and it explains why they were the inspiration of the Pre-Raphaelite painters, to linger amid the still life of their themes. Their sleepers wake perforce. And the painter here, with a painter’s tact, seizes on the setting of the story—the Roses; and upon the actors in the still part of it—the Sleep.

Incidentally it may be noted that at the New Gallery in 1895 Burne-Jones exhibited another picture called The Sleeping Beauty. This is described as “the completed version of an early design for the fourth in the series Messrs. Agnew & Son put before the world a few years ago. . . .” In this version the Princess is reclining on her couch, but her attendants are fewer, and “the coloration of the whole is less brilliant, vivid, and varied than in the later version.” The design is not so moving. It must be obvious that Burne-Jones’s masterpiece owes something to Tennyson, whose poetic vision and “Magic Music” endowed the legend of that old world which is the new, Across the hills and far away, with rich meaning and lasting beauty.

Burne-Jones’s The Hesperides was an earlier picture, first exhibited with the more familiar and celebrated Love among the Ruins at the Dudley Gallery in 1873. Here the “daughters three” dance with magical songs, round the golden-fruited tree. They “are clad in robes of saffron, having a golden hue within it, which, taken with their dark locks, the weird lighting
of the place,—we are not sure Mr. Jones does not mean it for sunlight, but that does not matter,—and the luxuriously tragic languor of the whole design, produce an effect not only fine in itself and perfectly original, but embodying the subtle spirit of the Italian Renaissance in art.\textsuperscript{30} In 1900 this picture, then called \textit{The Garden of the Hesperides}, was in the collection of Colonel Herbert Jekyll.

The story of the three nymphs, daughters of Hesperus, the Evening Star, and of Ladon, the hundred-headed dragon, keeping watch over the golden apples in the enchanted garden in the far-off country of the Hyperboreans has often been told. I suggest that Burne-Jones may have known Tennyson's version, "The Hesperides,"\textsuperscript{31} from which I quote:

\begin{verbatim}
But when the full-faced sunset yellowly
Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,
The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,
Golden-kernelled, golden-coreled,
Sunset-ripened above on the tree.
The world is wasted with fire and sword,
But the apple of gold hangs over the sea.
Five links, a golden chain are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Daughters three,
Bound about
The gnarléd bole of the charméd tree.
The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Watch it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charméd root.
\end{verbatim}

Something of the mood and beauty of this poem is, I think, reflected in \textit{The Garden of the Hesperides}, "the hues of which are singularly rich and glowing."

The crimson robes of the three fair sisters stand out against the dark and shining leaves of the magic tree, and the golden apples gleam in the foliage above the white marble parapet. Their bright hair is wreathed with oak and myrtle leaves, masses of flowering roses blossom all around, and primroses and shamrock spring up in the grass at their feet, where old Ladon, the sleepless serpent, lies coiled round the stem of the enchanted tree. Their long locks float on the summer breeze, their white hands are clasped together, and their feet move in rhythmic measure, but their faces are wan and weary, and their eyes look out on us with a gaze of wistful yearning. Perhaps they are growing tired, and wait in vain for the coming of a playmate who tarries yet, and whose footstep is not heard.\textsuperscript{32}
The weird mystery of this painting is not, I think, to be found in Sir Frederick Leighton's *The Garden of the Hesperides*, at the Academy in 1892. There can be little doubt that the picture by Leighton is conventional in style. It conveys little of the mysterious beauty which Burne-Jones captured and which is akin to the subtle rhythm and charm of Tennyson's poem. Burne-Jones, the poetic artist who gives wings to our dreams, seems to be the ideal painter for Tennyson.

NOTES

9. *The Illustrated London News*, May 3, 1884, p. 419. While Burne-Jones "on the top of his studio ladder was busy with the beard of King Cophetua," he listened, it has been said, to Topsy declaiming the last instalment of *The Earthly Paradise*, "which was the greatest poem in the world." (E. F. Benson, *As we Were: A Victorian Peep-Show* [London: Longmans, Green, 1930], p. 270.)
20. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
31. Published in the 1833 edition but excluded from later editions.
32. *The Art Journal*, 1900, p. 94. The beautiful picture is reproduced from a photograph by Caswall Smith. An equally beautiful example of this painting is said to be in the Birmingham Art Gallery.
CHAPTER VI

THE LADY OF SHALOTT OR ELAINE THE FAIR

From the rich variety of subjects already surveyed we now turn to the Arthurian material in Tennyson and the artists, a subject with which we shall henceforth be mainly concerned. Among artists the Lady of Shalott or Elaine the Fair, as presented in lyric and idyll, attracted much attention. The works of art thus inspired would have filled a fair-sized gallery.

The first painting of which I have found a record is R. S. Lauder's *The Lady of Shalott*, exhibited at the Portland Gallery in 1854. One critic describes this work as graceful and poetical but adds that it has nothing in common with the "weird lady of Tennyson" and that it has certainly not held her magic mirror up to nature. The critic would like to know why the mirror like any other looking-glass reflects the maiden's face and a wild vapoury sea besides. There is something wrong with the lady's face: "This creamy face, verging to a deep claret colour, may have been like the Lady of Shalott, but is certainly not common in living humanity."1 Another critic thinks that this painting is a great improvement on the artist's former painting of the same subject, exhibited a year or two ago. The mirror here reflects the lady's person with the moon and a cloudy sky.2

*The Lady of Shalott*, by H. Darvell, at the Society of British Artists in 1855, was judged to be much inferior to the "exquisite" version of this subject exhibited elsewhere last season—perhaps this exquisite version was Lauder's.3 But another critic held that Darvell's picture was careful and poetical, and thought that the accessories have none of the insincerity and flimsiness of mere studio properties.4

A. Hughes's *The Lady of Shalott*, at the Academy in 1873, an attempt to illustrate an imaginative theme, was mainly a landscape, in which the depth of the river-water set in the shadow of overhanging trees was of more interest than the faces and forms of those gazing at the lady of Shalott. Hughes has found in nature a complexity and wealth of color which modern art has ignored.

The influence of rich sunlight upon grass and flowers, the opalesque tones of moving water, and the depth and changes of foliage in shadow—these are the facts which Mr. Hughes tries to paint in the "Lady of Shalott."5
The only fault is the prevalence of blue tones and the lack of distinctness and clearness in the faces of the country people and in the grass and leaves.

Another critic identifies the onlookers as rustic children and a nun. He observes that the painting is full of crotchets, and he declares that the naivete of conception verges on the absurd. When this painting was exhibited at the Rembrandt Gallery in 1904, it was said that the lady was drifting down stream, "her white, quiet hands folded, her hair straying, her mauve drapery coiling towards the willow herb on the bank."

Peter Macnab's *The Lady of Shalott*, at the Society of British Artists in 1887, depicts the lady, "stricken by the mysterious curse," voyaging down the river to Camelot, "whose towers loom in the distance of the forlorn winter landscape." The sky is barred with "low-toned clouds of warm purple, with interspaces of green sunset-light." The effect is decidedly in accord with poetic tragedy. But the critic wonders why the lady is pillowed high in the stern in a most uncomfortable position.

Of J. W. Waterhouse's *Lady of Shalott*, which was at the Academy in 1888, there were various opinions. One critic thought it a poor treatment of a hackneyed subject. Here a "dyspeptic and commonplace young female sits, with all the self-consciousness of the stage, in a boat." Her hair drifts in the breeze, but otherwise the painter has done "nothing for the character." The painting is a commonplace and pretentious insult to the poem; the execution is as insincere as the conception is tame; and the landscape is redolent of the lamp. Only the embroidered quilt lying in the boat is cleverly painted. Another critic, who also admires the painting of the cloth, praises the painting as a realistic treatment of a romantic subject. A third critic finds the painting disappointing, the colors flat and drab, and the lady's attitude stiff and unnatural.

Other criticism is entirely favorable. One finds in "this beautiful Academy picture" the new manner of the painter.

The type he chose for the spell-controlled lady, her action, and the garments in which he has arrayed her, bring his work into kinship with that of the 'Pre-Raphaelites' of the middle of this century, but the difference of the execution is thereby all the more marked; the almost impressionary delicacy of the rendering of willows, weeds, and water is such as claims harmony with French work rather than with what was so intensely English.

The painter's direct and vivid imagination has pictured the boat "loosened from its chain, the crucifix laid in the prow, the candles lighted for death, and the expression of the face appearing to join the mysticism of fairyland with the mysticism of religion." In the words of Claude Phillips, this "painted poem" is among the most earnest and satisfactory works at the Academy. The lady is seated in a barge "lined with the rich tapestried quilt which her own hands have worked; her eyes, tearless, though red with
weeping, fix themselves on vacancy. . . . Her blown hair, and the wan flames of the candles placed in the prow . . . would seem to indicate the stirring of a great wind, but this effect is very imperfectly suggested in the green landscape of tall flags, smooth water, and wooded pasture which frames the central motive, . . . the figure is . . . conceived with a restrained pathos which constitutes the chief charm of the picture.”

Some twenty years later, in a richly illustrated article on the art of J. W. Waterhouse, R. E. D. Sketchley wrote that this painting was received enthusiastically by young painters “as a successful reconciliation of the claims of imagination and realism in art.” In color especially the painter sought to express the imaginative meaning of natural aspects.

The harmony of the willow-green darkened with rain and the closing day, of the shadowed white of the dress, the black prow, and the grey light afloat on the water, has the cool open-air unity of French naturalism. Gold and rose of the embroidered web, dipping unheeded into the green shadow of the boat, the candles, taken from the inner quiet of some shrine to burn unfailingly in the drift, are imagery that paint more than the vision of the poem.

Waterhouse’s second Lady of Shalott, at the Academy in 1894, depicts the damsel before her loom, “her face full of wonder mixed with fear.” At her feet are balls of wool, “balls of green, blue, and yellow,” which produce a harmony pervading the whole canvas and fitting ideally the sentiment of the poem. From another account we know that the lady is dressed in white and that she has just risen from her embroidery frame, where she has been weaving “sumptuous blue, red, and gold pictures.” She is looking eagerly out at the living knights whose forms are reflected on the wall behind her, “where the wind-swept stream and gleaming meadows, the flashing armour and the flying plumes, are seen in splendid light.” But the living knights are separated from her hopelessly by the strong black mullions and stanchions of the narrow casement. The blue thread has fallen from her lap upon the floor and entangled with the flowers seems to be lost beyond recall. This vision, for such it is, “of gorgeous colours and ominously dark tones” forms a picture where the design is all that could be hoped for.

In contrast with the preceding is G. H. Boughton’s The Road to Camelot, at the Academy in 1898. Whereas the tragic side of Tennyson’s verse appealed to Waterhouse and others, Boughton was attracted by the vision of picturesque life and movement passing down to Camelot, on which the lady was forbidden to look save as it was reflected in her mirror. Boughton’s picture depicts the gayer side of Tennyson’s poem. Here along the river pass a happy and careless throng: a fair-haired page decked in crimson, holding a hound in leash; court damsels, minstrels, and red-cloaked market girls. Across the stream the knights ride two and two, with gay touches of color in the streamers from their lances, and the gray-towered Camelot in
the distance. Here the various colors, pale salvmons, blue grays, and warm pinks, are subtly blended. However, another critic finds this painting dry and pallid, wanting in animation and virility. And there is something wrong with the page’s legs and with the anatomy of the girl who turns to look at the dog.

With E. H. Corbould’s *Elaine, the Lily Maid of Astolat*, at the New Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1861, we pass from the lyric to the idyll. Corbould’s picture is a version “of the subject so often painted—the bier steered by the dumb old servitor” with the circumstances of the composition, pompous and gorgeous, suggested by the text:

> So these two brethren from the chariot took  
> And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
> Set in her hand a lily, o’er her hung  
> Her silken case with braided blazonings.

The artist paints the “blackest samite,” the “cloth of gold,” the “blazonings,” and so on. The critic admires especially the manner in which black velvet is utilized: “it is subdued, kept in its place, and made to assist the mournful sentiment.” But the landscape and the stream are not consonant with the “solemn sentiment” of the rest. By another critic this picture was branded as a “flagrant sin” against the poet’s text, with Elaine depicted as “a vulgar-faced, sensual-lipped female, in a boat, laden with mere upholstery and gewgaws, instead of the ‘black decks’ and grave trappings of the Maid of Astolat’s last voyage.” The old dumb servitor is as faithless to the character as the background is to nature.

In the same year C. Goldie was represented at the winter exhibition in the French Gallery by a “promising and expressive study” of the head of Tennyson’s heroine. This is said to be delicate without weakness and is elegantly poised “as lying back, dead, with lilies upon the breast, and deep golden hair spread out upon a pillow.”

At the Academy in 1861, H. Wallis’s *Elaine* was noted for its excess of color. It was not so much a picture as “a crude imitation” of stained glass, though some silk stuffs and black velvet are tolerably well imitated. The heroine has a flowing profusion of yellow hair. It would be very hard to determine what “all this blaze of inharmonious colour” has to do with the smooth, flowing, and quiet description of the poet or with the elements of a good picture. Painting to the top of the palette is no more good color than screaming at the top of the voice is good singing. Wallis has become one of the “screaming” colorists. The critic of *The Saturday Review* thought this a conscientious painting but said that the result was not altogether satisfactory. However, in 1873 this picture was sold for 945 guineas.
In November, 1867, it was reported that Thomas Woolner would probably contribute to the next Royal Academy exhibition a large statue in marble which represents Elaine, "the lily maid" of the Laureate's idyll. The design of this sculpture, which had occupied the sculptor during the two years last past, shows Elaine as she lived in fantasy in charge of the shield of Lancelot. She is half-sitting, half-leaning against a high seat, at the foot of which stands the great buckler of the knight. She is wearing a single garment which is gathered low about the neck, leaving the higher bosom bare and disclosing the almost girlish shoulders, slender arms, and plumper hands of "Elaine the lovable.";

The distinction indicated by the poet between the pearly dawn and the "rosy-fingered" Aurora of desire has been warily observed by the sculptor in giving to the features of his Elaine a look of wondering rather than of passion, even in its earliest growth. The half-reluctance, half-advancing of her fancy, is rendered with great subtlety by the action of her limbs, so that one arm supports her weight on the edge of the seat, while the other is placed behind, as if to stay the shoulder as it is borne forward by the eagerness of hopeful emotions; also by the steadfast straightening of one lower limb to bear up the frame, and, on the other hand, the timid bending of its fellow at the knee. The timorous balancing of the maiden's mind is thus rendered in form, her all-unconscious chastity by the drapery, which, although thin in its substance, covers her body to the feet, yet in long and voluminous folds, shrouds, but does not entirely hide, the virginal contours and budding bosom within. . . .

The contemplative fancifulness of such a love as hers is not less happily given by the sweet gravity of her eyes, which are soft in their regard, and fixed in forward-looking rather than in plainly seeing the object of her love. Like a maiden's, her hair is knotted behind, and closely bound to the head, except where a slender wave from the mass traverses the brow and softens the meeting of the face and tresses. The neck is long, the shoulders slope; in its exquisite modelling the bared back shows the contours of youthful beauty. . . . Than the face it would be hard indeed to conceive anything sweeter, purer, or more innocently lovely, more tenderly delightful, grave, and even sorrowful in regard, and bearing the impress of . . . that love which was her doom.

As predicted, this statue was exhibited at the Royal Academy, but without further description. With regard to a "sun-copy" of this statue, then in the Royal Academy sculpture vault, it was remarked that it is a very beautiful work but that the face is "rather too girlish for the free and fair mistress of Sir Lancelot du Lake and the mother of Sir Galahad," and it was held that Woolner had a perfect right to follow Tennyson's idealization of the lady. The poet was perfectly right in deviating from the Arthurian romance.

R. Gibb's *Elaine*, at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1875, is praised as an "exquisite embodiment of the poet's vision," and "the whole conception and treatment [is] worthy of the Idyll." Mary L. Gow's *Elaine*, at
the Institute of Painters in Water Colours in 1876, with her fair hair and blue dress, in a tapestried chamber, is said to be full of antique feeling.30

Although I do not as a rule comment on illustrated editions of Tennyson, I must notice *Elaine; By Alfred Tennyson; Illustrated by Gustave Doré* (London: E. Moxon & Co., 1867). There are nine illustrations. The frontispiece is “The Body of Elaine on its way to King Arthur’s Palace:

And the dead
Steer’d by the dumb went upward with the flood.
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter . . . . . . .
. . . for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as though she smiled.”

The boat, “palled in the blackest samite,” with the corpse stretched along almost the whole of its length, leaving only just room enough for the sturdy rower seated in the bow to use his oar, occupies almost the whole width of the foreground. In the background, rising abruptly from the rocky banks of the river, are the massive turrets of a vast castle, behind which the moon, emerging for a moment from the clouds, lights up brilliantly the face of the dead maiden and flashes its beams fitfully on the waters. It is a grand and solemn scene. Number 2 is King Arthur on horseback discovering the skeletons of the brothers in the glen. Number 3 is Sir Lancelot riding through a dense forest on the outskirts of the Castle of Astolat. Number 4, in the interior of the Castle, depicts Sir Lancelot relating his adventures to its lord, his two sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine, and the fair Elaine, who

Won by the mellow voice before she look’d,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.

In Number 5 Sir Lancelot with Lavaine takes leave of the lord of Astolat, while in the distance he saw

The maiden standing in the dewy light.

In Number 6 Elaine is on the road from Astolat to the cave where Sir Lancelot lies wounded. In Number 7 Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine take leave of their sister, having conveyed her dead body to the boat and placed it there according to instructions. While they stand weeping, the dumb old servitor pushes the boat from the bank. Number 8 is in the interior of King Arthur’s castle where King Arthur, surrounded by the Queen and her ladies and a host of knights, reads the letter which he had taken from the hand of the dead maiden.

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.

The last shows the remorse of Sir Lancelot. The King is not suspicious of his valiant knight. But "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," and Lance-
lot’s conscience rises up to bear witness against him.

It is said that the idea of getting Doré to illustrate "Tennyson’s beautiful poem" originated with J. Bertrand Payne, F.R.S.L., who edited the volume and gave the artist, "who is ignorant of our language," valuable aid.31

F. J. Williamson’s statue of Elaine shows the maiden

High in her chamber up a tower to the east,

contemplating the sacred shield of Lancelot. The lines which especially suggested the spirit of the subject are in the opening passage of the poem. Elaine

Day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climb’d
That eastern tower, and entering, barr’d the door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,—
Now guessed a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it.

And ah, God’s mercy! what a stroke was there!32

This work was in the International Exhibition in 1874. The sculptor enjoyed royal patronage, it was said.

In passing, we may notice Ellen Montalba’s Elaine, at the French Gallery Winter Exhibition in 1880. It is said to have been a beautiful realization of Tennyson’s heroine, garbed in a white robe and leaning pensively on her arm against the wall, watching through a window Lancelot as he sadly rode away. The artist has realized the fine spiritual face which we associate with the name of the hapless Elaine.33

With two other paintings of the maiden this survey will be concluded. J. M. Strudwick’s Elaine, at the New Gallery in 1891, was, it is said, an imitation of the work of Burne-Jones, and was very good of its kind.34 The maiden sits on an elaborately decorated chest and is gazing at a shield or mirror. At her feet on a figured rug are lilies. The chamber is spacious, the walls decorated; and there are two windows revealing a landscape. The scene, says a critic, is the maiden’s tower-chamber, where she guarded and studied the shield of Sir Lancelot. She is attired in ivory-like white.35

Blair Leighton’s Elaine, at the Academy in 1899, teems with a knowledge of mediaeval pattern and circumstance. The corpse of the ill-fated damsel
lies upon "the quaintest-fashioned bier" and the yellow shroud is painted with remarkable power. At her head and feet hang pale flowers "in mournful balance," and at the bow stands the gloomy oarsman in an attitude of grief exposing to the King and Queen the body of the maid of Astolat. Down the darkened entrance leading to the river throng knights and ladies, hushed by the solemnity of the spectacle before them. Lancelot, conscience-stricken, gazes in awe at the dead Elaine. In her left hand Elaine holds the scroll. On her breast are white lilies.

To conclude, I mention E. Normand's *Elaine*, a design for a frieze, at the Academy in 1904. Here Elaine lies on her couch of death in the barge. She is surrounded by a border of flowers; two candles are at her feet; the dark-robed oarsman stands in the stern.

NOTES

16. *The Athenaeum*, May 5, 1894, p. 586; *The Art Journal*, 1909, p. 25. In this volume of *The Art Journal*, in the section devoted to Waterhouse, there is an admirable reproduction of this picture which was then in the Leeds Gallery.
23. May 25, 1861, p. 531.
26. Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

THE STYLE OF THOSE HEROIC TIMES

It is surprising that artists seem not to have been much attracted by some of the important characters of the Arthurian cycle of romances. Queen Guinevere was, as far as I can discover, not often depicted in art. In 1871 Woolner had completed a statue of the Queen, intended as a companion to Elaine. This statue was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1872. Guinevere is standing erect and is about to step forward. She has abundant dignity and grace; but, it is said, she lacks the severity and grandeur which would become the majesty of Arthur’s wife. She is beautiful but deficient in the “potentialities of passion.” The drapery of her robe is exquisitely wrought. This is the opinion of one critic. It is, however, worth remembering that Tennyson “was so deeply in love with Woolner’s marble statue of Guinevere—a simple and elegant figure... standing coroneted, holding a rose, and to her feet draped in a simple robe, through which the stately fulness of her form is seen—that he caused the statue to be engraved for ‘The Idylls of the King’.”

It is a curious fact that some of the minor characters of Arthur’s court were painted more often than the Queen. J. Hayllar’s picture at the Academy in 1860 was introduced by these lines:

And as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is.

The subject is Geraint listening to the voice of Enid, an episode from Tennyson’s Idylls of the King. The features and the attitude indicate pleasure. But why, the critic asks, why does Geraint have the “pert, angular face of a shrewish waiting-woman?” Another critic is even more outspoken: “If a blunt nose, a wide mouth, and disproportioned eyes, with an extremely vulgar servant-girlish appearance throughout, gave Mr. Hayllar the right to call his showy study of a head by the name of ‘Enid,’ we can only say the Laureate has been mistaken,—for the young woman is, indeed, to repeat the criticism of an old lady we overheard, ‘Very plain—very plain indeed!’” Such comments as these help us to realize that the public
and the critics demanded in painting beauty and charm to match the poetic vision.

At the Academy two years later, J. D. Bedford's *Enid Hears of Geraint's Love* interpreted the following lines:

She found
Half disarrayed as to her rest, the girl
Whom first she kissed on either cheek, and then
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off, and gazed upon her face,
And told her all their converse in the hall,
Proving her heart.

The critic explains that the girl is painted under the dominion of love and that she is visibly subdued by a strong passion, but the old woman is not a successful study.

E. H. Corbould's *Enid's Dream*, at the Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1873, selected a difficult scene to paint, because, though a vision, it is "yet the most life-like episode the painter could have selected from the poem." It is the painter's conception of the scene in the presence of Queen Guinevere and her court and the mother of Enid waking her from her unquiet sleep in which she fancied herself the carp "all blurred and lustreless":

And while she thought 'they will not see me,' came
A stately queen, whose name was Guinevere;
And all their children, in their cloth of gold,
Ran to her crying, 'If we have fish at all
Let them be gold; and charge the gardener now
To pick the faded creature from the pool,
And cast it in the mixen that it die.'
And therewithal one came and seized on her;
And Enid started, waking, with her heart
All overshadow'd by the foolish dream.
And lo! it was her mother grasping her,
To get her well awake; and in her hand
A suit of bright apparel.

At the Academy in 1879, H. M. Paget's *Enid and Geraint* was said to be a technically excellent and forcible representation of the scene in which Geraint in his dreams has moved

And bared the knotted column of his throat,
The massive square of his heroic breast.

Watching and admiring him is Enid, auburn-haired and gray-robed. She
sits at the open casement, which commands a cheerful prospect closed in by purple hills.8

With the next group we definitely enter the realm of magic. Burne-Jones’s Merlin and Nimue, a work of 1861, said to be the first of his paintings from the Arthurian cycle of legends, probably owes nothing to Tennyson’s Idylls.9

In a painting entitled The Beguiling of Merlin, dated 1877, the “snake-like grace and evil beauty of the witch” are fascinating, and Merlin’s look of death is intensely dramatic.10 The witch resembles the wily Vivien, the snake-like harlot and “lovely baleful star” of Tennyson’s “Merlin and Vivien.” But the picture was not taken from this idyll. We are told that the painter here goes back “to his old favourite, the ‘Morte d’Arthur’.”11 However, the critic closes her review with a line from Tennyson’s idyll.

Less important are two other paintings inspired by “Merlin and Vivien.” That of Arthur Hughes, at the Academy in 1862, was suggested by Vivien’s song in “Merlin and Vivien.” There is one principal figure, a love-lorn girl, lying by a pool and meditating suicide. The painting is a “translation” from Tennyson:

It is the little rift within the lute
That by-and-by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

The critic thinks that nothing could be more simple and circumstantial than this story of a broken heart.12 Another reporter supplies definite details: the lady wears a dress of purple velvet; she is lying in a wood with her lute beside her; the strings of the lute are strewn with uprooted violets. Although the face lacks beauty and is weak, the expression of loss and grief is admirable.13

F. Sandys’s Vivien, at the Academy in 1863, is a life-size head of the enchantress, “entrancing in haughty beauty and crowned with gold-lighted hair.”14 Behind her is a screen of eyes from a peacock’s tail.

From the treacherous Vivien, and from Merlin, we pass now to Sir Galahad, the perfect knight:

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 joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel’s hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
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
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.’

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.

Of the paintings of this noble knight, I call attention to two especially, by Arthur Hughes and George Frederic Watts (the latter painted more than one picture of this knight). The preliminary notice of Hughes’s *The Meeting of Sir Galahad with the Holy Grail* is found in the column entitled “Fine-Art Gossip” of *The Athenaeum*:

The time, according to the poem, is dark night. The pure-hearted champion rides across a desolate country, among verduous mountains that embosom lakes and streams of water. The darkened landscape just reveals its dusky ridges; a far-off tarn reflects what light there is, defines the bases of the hills whose summits come only “differently dark” against the sky, and is formed in the foreground by a rude bridge that aids the knight’s path. As he ascends this, the white-robed angels are revealed to him by the golden-hued light which streams from the censers that are swinging in their hands, and by the radiance of the Presence, which they precede.15

When exhibited at the Academy in 1870, this painting attracted a glowing and vivid tribute:

The angels of the Holy Grail, swinging censers, approach the knight, their garments streaming, their faces irradiated by pure passion; with an intensely pathetic and elevated action the rider salutes the appearances, presses his hands upon his armed breast, bends forward in his saddle—an attitude which is deeply expressive of reverence and joy. This figure is one of the best illustrations of the spirit of its subject which we know; it is graceful and noble; those of the angels are still more so; the horse is capitally designed and admirably executed. Nor is the charm of the background inferior to that which is so finely given to the figures; it is perfectly suited to the subject, a rocky dell, with many windings, slopes that are clad in wind-oppressed pines, the rocky bed of the stream; far off, the mountain tops catch a mysterious light and palely shine.16
Sir Galahad's vision is inspired by these lines:

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!
My spirit beats her mortal bars
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

An early version of Watts's *Sir Galahad* was shown at the Academy in 1862. This depicts a young knight in armor, standing by the head of his white horse. The armor is said to be "most nobly painted in the true warm fashion of the early Venetian school." Bernard Schumacher's etching of Watts's *Sir Galahad*, from the original in Eton College Chapel, was published in *The Art Journal* in 1899. There it is said that Sir Galahad had been a favorite theme with Mr. Watts, "as it was with Burne-Jones." Both "painted the ideal knight as if his aspirations and struggles were part of their own individual experiences." The painting or the etching of the painting is accompanied by the following explanation:

Sir Galahad is the personification of the knight who was everything that is pure and good and holy—who fought a spirited fight against the forces of evil, and, in several respects, was the embodiment of the Christian virtue. In Mr. Watts' picture Sir Galahad stands beside his horse, looking, with absorbed attention, on the bright vision which the denseness of the forest has hitherto hid from his eyes.

Watts, it is said, painted two versions of this picture. This version, "differing in several minor points from the other," was presented as a gift to Eton College with the thought that it is "specially suitable for the youth of England to study." Watts concentrated upon the knight. He did not paint the vision of the angels and the Holy Grail but he suggested it by Galahad's expression.

It might be added that C. E. Johnson's *Sir Galahad*, 1888, is called "a capital romantic landscape." The figure of the knight is inadequate, but the trees "in their rich autumnal foliage and the sunlight" are excellent. In Sir Noel Paton's *The Vision of the Holy Grail* Galahad on horseback and with bowed head encounters the vision: three angels pass, the one in the middle bearing the Grail. The knight is in full armor and mounted on a splendid steed.

Although Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and not Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, was, as it is said, the text-book, Dyce's frescoes in the Queen's Robing Room of the Palace at Westminster were designed to illustrate one
or more of the virtues characteristic of chivalry. After "The Admission of Sir Tristram to the Fellowship of the Round Table," which represented Hospitality and occupied the largest apartment, the painting on the west wall represented the romance of the Saint Greal. It was intended to show the importance of pursuing spiritual aims rather than chivalric renown. The title is "The Vision of Sir Galahad and his Company." It is intended to exemplify Piety or Faith. In this fresco the three "virgin" or "maiden" knights, Sir Galahad, Sir Perceval, and Sir Bors, with the virgin sister of Sir Perceval, see at a mass in a hermitage chapel a vision of Christ attended by the four Evangelists. In the center of the composition Christ appears seated on a rich throne. At his back there is a large golden aureola against the azure sky. The Evangelists are to the left and right in mid-air, with their symbols.

In the lower half of the picture are the three knights, Sir Perceval's sister, the hermit priest, holding before him the sacramental chalice while gazing with awe at the heavenly vision, and a novice, with head reverentially bowed, bearing a censer. The youthful Sir Galahad is represented, to the left, rushing in fearless ecstasy toward the beatific manifestation of our Lord. This action is very significant, and perfectly appropriate if we recollect that this famous son of Sir Lancelot du Lac is described as the most saintly of all knights, as ordained by ancient prophecy to "achieve" the St. Greal, and as having been actually translated to heaven when his quest was ended. He wears a sword and a scabbard—the same, of course, which miraculously descended to him from David, and he holds with one hand the no less miraculous white shield with the red cross made thereon by "that good knight, Joseph of Arimathy," with his own blood. . . . 22

Sir Galahad is clearly a most attractive figure in this frescoe. This series of frescoes, which at Dyce's death was unfinished (five of a projected seven were painted), is further evidence of the importance of the Arthurian material.

NOTES

1. The Athenaeum, October 28, 1871, p. 537.
9. The Athenaeum, January 14, 1893, p. 58. In this year a remarkable exhibition of Burne-Jones's works was held at the New Gallery.
19-20. The painting is illustrated on p. 15. This picture was painted for Mr. Leyland, at whose death it was sold for 3,780 guineas.

15. The Athenaeum, March 9, 1867, p. 327.
19. It was published as a large plate by Caswall Smith, The Gainsborough Studio, Oxford Street.
ARTHUR AND HIS PASSING

Arthur, the founder of the Round Table, the blameless king, who banished anarchy and for a time established order and justice, does not appear in art as frequently as one would expect. The painters seem to have been interested in three sensational aspects or phases of his career. One of these was his obtaining the sword Excalibur. At the Academy in 1862, James Archer had a painting entitled How King Arthur, by Means of Merlin, gat his Sword Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake. It is explained by a quotation from Malory: "So they rode til they came to a lake, which was a faire water and a broade, and in the middes of the lake King Arthur was ware of an arme clothed in white samite, that held a faire sword in the hand. 'What damoseell is that?' said the King. 'That is the lady of the lake,' said Merlin. . . . 'Well,' said the damoseell, 'goe ye into yonder barge, and serve yourself unto the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you, and I will aske my gift when I see my time.'"

In 1897 John Duncan's The Taking of Excalibur was described in an article entitled “Mural Decoration in Scotland.” This painting was part of the decoration of the Common-Room of Ramsay Lodge, Edinburgh, and it is described as follows:

The third is The Taking of Excalibur. This is one of the finest of the set, and is reproduced here. The picture tells Tennyson's story, translating the poetry of words into the poetry of paint. The colour-scheme is violet, pale green, lemon, yellow and red.

A beautiful Lady in the lake holds aloft the magic sword in her right hand. In the boat Merlin is rowing; in the stern, with folded hands, sits Arthur watching intently the Lady with the sword. Partly in the background are grouped three beautiful ladies, with a fourth somewhat apart. The strand is decorated with highly conventional bushes and flowers. A serpent with open mouth seems about to attack the boat. The passage in "The Coming of Arthur" is as follows:

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row’d across and took it—rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it—on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
“Take me,” but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
“Cast me away!” And sad was Arthur’s face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell’d him,
“Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far-off.” So this great brand the king
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.’

It is clear that Duncan’s painting does not quite correspond with the poem. For one thing, in the poem Arthur rows, in the painting it is Merlin who rows. For another, in the painting the sword does not appear to be cross-hilted. There may be other differences.

Exhibited at the Liverpool Society of Water-Colour Painters in 1874 was R. Norbury’s King Arthur and the Diamond Crown. Here the King is depicted in

A glen, grey boulder and black tarn,
where he finds the crown, which was on the head of one of two kingly brothers, who having fought in the glen, killed each other with one blow. King Arthur

Had trodden that crowned skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown,
and he is holding it in his hands wonderingly.*

The incident that inspired the painter occurs in “Lancelot and Elaine.”

For Arthur, long before they crown’d him king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists about the mountain side;
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together, but their 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 color with the crags.
And he that once was king had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown’d skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll’d into light, and turning on its rims
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
Heard murmurs, ‘Lo, thou likewise shalt be king.’

It is a gruesome scene, vividly and beautifully described.

To this meager showing may be added several paintings depicting
Arthur’s passing—the incident narrated in “Morte d’Arthur.”

E. H. Corbould’s Morte d’Arthur, at the Institute of Painters in Water Colours in 1864, was, as the critic explains, from “the well-known poem
by Mr. Tennyson.”

The noise of battle had rolled all day among the mountains by the winter sea,
when the brave King Arthur, stricken by the foe, lay wounded nigh to death.

Then drew near a dusky barge, “dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern”—

And all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream of those
Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver’d to the singing stars,
And, as it were, one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the waking [sic] of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, ‘Place me in the barge.’

And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.

So like a shatter’d column lay the king.

King Arthur lies stretched upon the barge, attended by the knights and the
three queens. “The colour and texture of the robes and other accessories, and also the lustre of the jewels in the crowns, are realised with infinite care.” But there are too many black shadows. Another observer adds the information that the painter secured “a tremendous effect by introducing a blazing pitch-pot, or lampion, swinging from the tackle overhead, and which, firing with partial glare the lamenting Queens and the pallid King lying at full length bleeding upon the deck, makes by the violence of the contrast, the further forms haunting the barge more like shapes of Erebus, the midnight sky more ebony black.” This device affords scope for a display of technical power; but, the critic thinks, it is less appropriate than the effect, suggested by the poet, of the “long glories of the winter moon”
on the level lake. The painter's scenic contrasts do not have that mysterious and indefinite quality that awakens the imagination.

Noel Paton's *The Death Barge of King Arthur* was one of the three principal pictures distributed as prizes by the Glasgow Art Union in 1863. This painting is described and illustrated in a later number of *The Art Journal*, where it is said that the painter treated the grand theme with a feeling akin to that of the poet's conception.

Frank Dicksee's *Passing of Arthur*, at the Academy in 1889, was, in the opinion of one critic, a transcription, "in the truest spirit of reverence and poetry," of the launching of the dead King on the Sea of the Great Unknown. Fully armed, Arthur lies prone in the "dusky barge, dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern," with the wailing queens around him and his pale face illuminated by "the long glories of the winter moon." The picture is mysterious in its stealthy light and prismatic shadows. Although the work is most impressive, its weak point, according to another critic, was the face of the principal figure, which was too effeminate and young for an ideal Arthur and too orderly for "one whose curls were parched with dust" and clotted with blood. Another critic agrees: King Arthur is feebly designed and is surrounded by queens "of still weaker invention." The only really excellent part is the figure of the weeping Queen, who, "placed against the sheeny space of the moon's light upon the water, is half lost to sight amid the splendour which dazzles our eyes." Unfortunately, the face of Arthur "bears no trace of the romance and poetry which belong to him." The queens "are but genteelly sorrowful." The work is characterized by a pretentious, easy-going pathos.

A number of painters depicted the places, the rocks and crags, associated with the name of the great King. In Inchbold's *King Arthur's Island*, at the Academy in 1862, there is fine expression of a Cornish rock in the sea, with "the surging in-roll of the sea upon the upright dark cliffs."

Tennyson writes that when "Uther in Tintagil past away," Merlin and Bleys left the king and descended from the castle gateway by the chasm through the dismal night, a night

```
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost.

High upon the dreary deep they beheld a ship, dragon-winged and

Bright with a shining people on the deck.
```

Reaching the cove they watched the great sea fall,

```
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame;
```
And down the wave and in the flame was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet.
Who stoop'd and caught the babe, and cried,
"The King!"

Tintagel was often depicted and described. Stamfield's *Tintagel Castle*, 1866, shows a craft ashore and going to pieces under the cliffs. Here "the yeasty sea that breaks with such tremendous force . . . is one of the greatest successes in its way by the father of modern marine painting." The sky and its torn clouds are admirable in form and motion. In the mid-distance is "the now almost isolated point where King Arthur's Castle stands, now softened to the eye by sea-spray and storm-mist. . . ."13 John Mogford's *King Arthur's Castle, Tintagel*, 1871, shows the scarped face of the cliff, with its many weather-stains and metallic impregnations, below the walls of the medieval castle. The drawing and modelling reveal much taste and tact.14 C. Munger exhibited a painting with the same title in 1880.15

Further evidence of interest in the scenes associated with Tennyson's poem is to be found in two photographs published in 1865. One of these applies to "A day as still as Heaven," and represents the sea and coast near Bocastle, Cornwall. It is said to be as perfect a study of the effect and as apt an illustration of the text as can be conceived. "A silent sea hardly heaves between headlands; a soft light, broadly diffused, seems absorbed where summer vapour half conceals the distant points, whilst, near at hand, all is clear and rich in shadows." The other photograph, "Wild Dundagil by the Cornish Sea," shows King Arthur's Castle, Tintagel, "with dark chasms, vast sloping tables of rock and ragged edges of enormous cliffs that are lifted against the sky."16 The passage referred to is, of course, found in "Guinevere":

But after tempest, when the long wave broke
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,
There came a day as still as heaven, and then
They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea,
And that was Arthur . . . .

NOTES

8. The Art Journal, 1869, p. 3.
13. The Athenaeum, May 5, 1866, p. 603. In 1877 this picture was sold for 913 pounds (The Athenaeum, June 16, 1877, p. 776).
16. The Athenaeum, July 15, 1865, p. 89.
CHAPTER IX
THE FINAL SCENE

The final scene of the poet's life, which occurred at his Aldworth home on October 5-6, 1892, was, Sir Andrew Clark said, "most glorious." It is, remarked The Spectator, "strangely characteristic of the age" that this scene was glorious, not for anything that the poet said or did or felt, but because of "the exquisite picture" it afforded. Here are Sir Andrew's words: "There were no artificial lights in the chamber, and all was in darkness save for the silvery light of the moon at its full. The soft beams of light fell upon the bed and played upon the features of the dying poet like a halo of Rembrant." A more detailed account is poetic and picturesque:

The morning yesterday rose in almost unearthly splendour over the hills and valleys on which the windows of Aldworth House, where Lord Tennyson was dying, look out. From the mullioned window of the room where the poet lay he could look down upon the peaceful fields, the silent hills beyond them, and the sky above, which was of a blue so deep and pure as is rarely seen in this country.

Lord Tennyson woke ever and again out of the painless, dreamy state into which he had fallen, and looked out into the silence and the sunlight.

In the afternoon, in one of his waking moments, during which he was always perfectly conscious, he asked for his Shakspere, and with his own hands turned the leaves till he had found "Cymbeline." His eyes were fixed on the pages, but whether and how much he read no one will ever know, for again he lay in dream or slumber, or let his eyes rest on the scene outside.

As the day advanced a change came over the scene, a change almost awful to those who watched the death-bed. Slowly the sun went down, the blue died out of the sky, and upon the valley below there fell a perfectly white mist. The hills... put on their purple garments to watch this strange, white stillness; there was not a sound in the air, and, high above, the clear, cloudless sky shone like a glittering dome. All nature seemed to be watching, waiting.

Then the stars came out and looked in at the big mullioned window, and those within saw them grow brighter and brighter, till at last the moon—a harvest moon for splendour, though it was an October moon—sailed slowly up, and flooded the room with golden light. The bed on which Tennyson lay, now very near the gate of death, and with his left hand still resting on his Shakspere, was in deep darkness; the rest of the room lit up with the glory of the night, which poured in through the uncurtained window. And thus, without a struggle, the great English poet passed away.2

(76)
In its serene natural beauty the setting of the poet’s passing was perfect. More personal details are found in Hallam Tennyson’s *Memoir*:

He had been talking to Dr. Dabbs about death, and about “What a shadow this life is, and how men cling to what is after all but a small part of the great world’s life.” Then Dr. Dabbs told him . . . of an incident that had lately happened. “A villager, ninety years old, was dying, and had so much pined to see his old bedridden wife once more that they had carried her to where he lay. He pressed his shrunken hand upon her hand, and in a husky voice said to her, ‘Come soon,’ and soon after passed away himself.” My father murmured “True Faith”; and there were tears in his voice. Suddenly he gathered himself together and spoke one word about himself to the doctor, “Death?” Dr. Dabbs bowed his head, and he said, “That’s well.” . . . He then spoke his last words, a farewell blessing, to my mother and myself.

For the next hours the full moon flooded the room and the great landscape outside with light; and we watched in solemn stillness. His patience and quiet strength had power upon those who were nearest and dearest to him; we felt thankful for the love and the utter peace of it all; and his own lines of comfort from “In Memoriam” were strongly borne in upon us. He was quite restful, holding my wife’s hand, and, as he was passing away, I spoke over him his own prayer, “God accept him! Christ receive him!” because I knew that he would have wished it.³ 

And finally this excerpt from Dr. Dabbs’ last medical bulletin:

Nothing could have been more striking than the scene during the last few hours. 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.”⁴ 

Although there is, especially in Hallam’s account, a sense of genuine sorrow and pathos, of grief restrained but profound, the effect of the scene is that of a picture, unposed, impressive, sombre, and beautiful.

Finally, Hallam says, “We placed *Cymbeline* with him, and a laurel wreath from Virgil’s tomb, and wreaths of roses, the flower which he loved above all flowers, and some of his Alexandrian laurel, the poet’s laurel.”

On the morning of October 10th the lid of the “shell” in which the poet’s body had been placed was closed for the last time. “The face wore a look of calm majesty, the hands were crossed upon the breast, flowers lay beside the body, laurel-leaves at the head and feet.” The remains were then placed in a “heart-of-oak” coffin, which was lifted into a car, an ordinary “country gentleman’s shooting car,” where it was covered by a pall of hand-woven Ruskin linen, made at the Keswick School of Industrial Art, and then smothered in wreaths. The procession then started. The rustic car was led by Lord Tennyson’s old coachman. Behind came the chief mourners: the Honorable Hallam Tennyson, Mrs. Tennyson, Miss Maud Tennyson, and Mr. Hitchens, a very old friend of the family. Next came a
little pony-carriage drawn by a black pony and heavily laden with wreaths and like tributes. Then followed a long train of household servants and humble neighbors headed by the nurses.

The final services within the gray walls of Westminster Abbey were attended by representatives of all types and conditions of men and women of England. As The Times wrote:

In the burial of Lord Tennyson all was present that could heighten and intensify to the utmost the austere beauty of the most impressive of English functions. All sorts and conditions of the people that he loved gathered to do reverence to the poet and teacher to whom they owe so great a debt. All that is most illustrious in our land by birth and rank and position, by natural gifts and by acquired learning, in war and in the arts of peace, in statesmanship and diplomacy, in literature and in science, assembled within the walls of the most venerable of English shrines to honour the last great master of their time.°

The mourning for Tennyson was not confined to any class or group of classes amongst his countrymen. "He loved all England, and all England returned this love."

Promptly some journals issued special sections or studies in honor of the late Laureate. The Illustrated London News published the following illustrations: the Late Lord Tennyson, in his Velvet Skull-Cap, from a hitherto unpublished portrait; a sketch of Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire, the birthplace of Tennyson; the room in which the poet was born; the interior of Somersby Church; an exterior view of Somersby Church; a sketch of the Manor House, Somersby, "the Moated Grange"; the parish church, Louth, Lincolnshire; the grammar school at Louth, which Tennyson attended; Trinity College, Cambridge; the Lime Walk, Cambridge; the house at Twickenham where Tennyson lived after marriage; Shiplake Church, where Tennyson was married in 1850; Tennyson as a young man; the poet's favorite arbor at Farringford; a view of Haslemere, Surrey; Haslemere church and Lych gate; the meeting of Tennyson and Garibaldi in 1864; Farringford House, Freshwater, Isle of Wight; the bust of Tennyson by T. Woolner; the late Lord Tennyson from the painting of G. F. Watts; Tennyson's study at Freshwater; Lord Tennyson, Lady Tennyson, and the Hon. Hallam Tennyson; Lady Tennyson from the painting by G. F. Watts; the last portrait of Lord Tennyson, taken at Aldworth; a view of Aldworth House, Sussex, where the Poet Laureate died; and so on.

With special urgency, Tennyson's friends seemed to feel a pressing obligation: they must take advantage of the occasion and render "a service to posterity" by preserving the illustrations and faithfully depicting in words their memories of the beloved and admired poet. Of the likenesses just mentioned the most memorable are the portrait of the aged poet in his velvet skull-cap, the painting by G. F. Watts, the bust by Woolner, and the last portrait taken at Aldworth. To these must be added the extremely valuable
collection of portraits published in *The Magazine of Art* in 1893. These include the frontispiece of the poet, “the favourite portrait,” based upon a photograph by Mayall and painted by M. Giradot. This is really a noble, an ideal portrait. Other portraits, in an article by Theodore Watts, are the following: Tennyson, 1844, from the painting by Samuel Laurence; the medallion of Tennyson by Thomas Woolner; the bust of Tennyson by Thomas Woolner; Tennyson, about 1850, from the sketch by Richard Doyle; Tennyson and his family at Farringford, about 1857, from a daguerreotype by Rejlander; Tennyson, 1859, from the painting by G. F. Watts; Tennyson, about 1871, from the photograph by Mrs. Cameron. Watts also mentions other portraits by Sir John Millais, Professor Herkomer, F. K. Sandys. He says that he has selected as the frontispiece to his article, “not the lovely painting by George Frederic Watts,” but a painting based entirely on a photograph. He declares that the picture of the poet is built up from the suggestions of the poetry and that Tennyson’s physique could always successfully compete with the image raised by his own artistic genius. The portrait that Watts preferred presents a quality “which may be called the mystical muse of thought,” the poet of the Lotos-Eaters. But Watts insists that it is not as a lotos-eater that he thinks of him. He sees Tennyson as “the most variously endowed English poet that has appeared since Shakespeare.”

Theodore Watts declares that there is too much “of the painter’s style” in G. F. Watts’s portrait of the poet and that the same must be said “with still more emphasis” of “the splendid large water-colour and etched portrait” by Professor Herkomer and “with more emphasis still” of the portrait by Sir John Millais, which a writer in the *Times* preferred as rendering his own mental picture of Tennyson. Watts admits that in every portrait which is a work of art there must be “the splendid egoism of style” of the artist; the main point then is that this egoism must be balanced with dramatic truth. Watts then reveals the core of his criticism:

> While most faces gain by the artistic halo which a painter of genius sheds over his work, there are some few, some very few faces that do not, and of these Lord Tennyson’s is the most notable that I have ever seen among men of great renown. . . . ?

His conclusion is that the simple greatness of character which the face of “the greatest poet of the nineteenth century” expressed “could never be rendered by any portrait.” Tennyson’s face suggested to Watts Bragi the “song-smith” of the Elder Edda:

＞Whose eyes, where past and future both are gleaming  
With lore beyond all youthful poets’ dreaming,  
Seem lit from shores of some far-glittering day!

It is this impression which was caught by Giradot in his portrait based on
the Mayall photograph. This portrait is “a miracle of truthful representation before which the highest exemplars of artistic style must bow.”

In G. F. Watt's portraits of the poet there is the quality of strangeness. As Theodore Watt says, there is

a mystery about them, a certain dreaminess which suggests the poetic glamour of moonlight rather than the more prosaic radiance of “the gaudy, babbling and remorseful day”; as though the painter, between whom and the poet there was the bond of such a deep affection, had unconsciously recalled those delightful strolls he had with his friend in the walks he loved and in the moonlight he loved.

And Watts recalls the fact that it was in the light of the moon the great poet died.

Sir John Millais's portrait of Tennyson, in 1893 at Queen Anne's Lodge, was, Watts thinks, splendidly painted, with great executive power. But he declares that no portrait “displaying the pointed beard and the formal wings of hair” that one sees here can have any element of strangeness.

Sculpture works under very heavy conditions in trying to render this quality of strangeness. Woolner's bust is an excellent piece of work; “but the sculptor seems to be haunted by a reminiscence of Dante when he deals with Tennyson.” With a few remarks about Mrs. Cameron's photograph and Rejlander's group in the glade at Farringford Theodore Watts's invaluable survey of the photographs of Tennyson is concluded.

Another bust of Tennyson by Thomas Woolner, a "superb bearded bust," was executed in 1876. It is described as "the last portrait of the Laureate taken while all his vigour was intact." The modelling is said to be exquisitely fine and to give every element of the flesh: the elastic skin, the subtly molded veins, the underlying structure of bone. In short, it is called a masterpiece.

In 1895 a memorial bust of Tennyson was placed in Westminster Abbey. This was the work of Woolner, the poet's intimate friend for many years, who had previously carved his friend's likeness. This bust is a replica, by Woolner, of the bust without a beard which he had previously executed and which, shortly after its being completed, was placed in Trinity College, Cambridge.

Two portraits should be emphasized. The first, published for the first time on October 15, 1892, was that by H. H. Hay Cameron. In this portrait the poet wears a soft cap or beret; the left arm, across the chest, holds in place his ample cape; his beard is grizzled; his expression is serious; his eyes are clear and direct. It is a strong face. Although obviously much older than in the Giradot portrait, the poet shows no signs of failing vigor. The other portrait is that taken from a photograph by W. Jeffrey. This was published February 13, 1864, and it accompanied a survey of the Idylls of the King, which the writer had heard stigmatized
as impure—"unfit for ladies to read." On the contrary, says the writer, it contains "deep lessons of holiness" for the wisest of us. It contains also Tennyson's directions for painting or drawing a portrait:

As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely through all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at his best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark—splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things.13

It is precisely this that some of the painters have done for Tennyson himself.

Doubtless there are other portraits—but none so important as those that have been mentioned. It is time to turn, finally, to the last picture, The Last Idyll, a drawing by A. Forestier, which brings us back to the last moments of the poet's life. In this drawing Tennyson lies peacefully on his bed, with his arms resting on the coverlet and his eyes closed. He is obviously dreaming. At his feet watch the relatives. In the bright moonlight which pours through the window and lights up the poet's face there appears a vision: a host of characters from the Idylls of the King. In their midst is King Arthur, and he is surrounded by a fair company of ladies and knights, with helmet, shield, and banner. Nearest to the dying poet, almost bending over him, and bearing in her left hand a lily is the maid of Astolat, who when she came to Camelot

did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled,

and who now comes to bid her poet the last farewell. She is obviously his dearest character in this his last vision on earth.

A few days after his burial in Westminster Abbey there appeared in an essay entitled "The Genius of Tennyson" this tribute:

We should say that the most distinctive . . . characteristic of Tennyson's genius was the definitely artistic character of his poetry. . . . He is as much artist as poet. . . .

Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy dark,
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine;
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat, white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois, all alone.

What a richly painted picture is there, and that is Tennyson's usual style. Every verse of "The Palace of Art," every verse of "The Dream of Fair Women," is a separate work of art, a separate compartment of a great whole.
Great as he was as an artist, Tennyson sometimes erred on the side of redundancy in the use of light and color. “His richly jewelled speech,—as in ‘Enoch Arden,’—sometimes distracted attention from the substance of his thought. He occasionally filled his canvas too full of glowing and enamelled fancy.” In this critic’s view Tennyson is the poet-painter, whose color and detail are sometimes excessive, whose canvas is too crowded. This is his chief defect, the critic thinks. But this fault is wholly absent from those studies in which he practiced the self-restraint and even something of “the severity of the classical models.” In such work his art rises to the highest perfection.14

In this survey of art related to Tennyson’s poetry, there has of course been no consistent attempt to criticize or evaluate his thought and art. He had his share of the faults and the virtues of his age. He touched on many of its ethical and philosophical problems but he solved none of them. “As he grew older, Conservatism acquired a greater hold over him, and his hermit-like existence prevented him from appreciating the ceaseless onward march of progress”15—or what was then fondly called progress. To him, whose mind was, as it has been said, “saturated with the spirit of decaying feudalism,” revolutionary ideas were immoral if not devilish. By nature he was ill-fitted to embody in poetic form “the darker and deadlier passions of men.” He faithfully represented his age in its mood “of waning faith and sentimental scepticism.” It is charged that he persistently clung to religious forms after they had ceased to appeal to his reason. But if he had faults, he also as a man and an artist had preeminent virtues. He was loyal, loving, and true to his highest ideals. “Believing in the creed of Christian chivalry, and practicing it to the end, he was a man of whom England had just reason to be proud.” Above all this truth must be proclaimed: “Nature made him a poet; culture and a life’s devotion made him a consummate artist.”

One aspect of his reputation in the nineteenth century is the number and variety of works of art inspired by or indebted to his poetry—though sometimes, as was the case with Rizpah and some of the Arthurian material, Tennyson and the artists worked independently on the same subjects. Frequently, however, the works of art were directly related to his poems. This is important evidence as to the character and purpose of some of the art in that period.

Art as a whole in the Victorian age was diverse in subject and form, but the art related to Tennyson’s poetry seems to have been stamped by a fairly definite quality, which E. F. Benson has characterized in his comment on the art of Burne-Jones:

Art was to him a secret garden peopled with figures in whom the pulses of life were quite arrested, and a picture was to him as he fashioned it, the pre-
sentiment of some dream of romance seen in a light that never shone on sea
or land and wholly visionary.

His weakness was that he cut himself off from humanity; his strength was
"that he pursued with the unswerving purpose of the true artist and with
unerring hand his own vision of the beautiful."

Always he sought the stillness of the Valley of Avilion, unvexed by the loud
winds of life and its snow and hail, and basking in a sunshine so subdued that
it never casts any sharpness of shadow, while those who dwell therein are more
remote than the moon from all the frets and the glories of living folk.16

This excerpt, with its unmistakable echoes from "The Passing of Arthur,"
clearly indicates the purpose of those artists who founded an aesthetic cult
or school, which for a time eclipsed Victorian convention and established
new models: maidens wearing an air of unrelieved melancholy and dwelling
forever in their own world of romance and beauty. Some of these artists
drew their subjects from Tennyson’s poetry. The pictures so inspired were
not as popular as the respectable, reasonably competent, conventional Vic-
torian art. Painted poetry or poetry in pictures could not compete with
Sir Edwin Landseer’s stags and dogs, Davis’s Highland cattle standing
knee-deep in heather, Alma Tadema’s Greek youths and maidens reclining
on marble benches and reading from rolls of manuscripts, "with glimpses
of a blue, blue sea seen through pink flowering almond trees,” innumerable
landscapes, “with the same predominance of browns and mustards, most
of them soberly autumnal,” Moore’s interminable surfaces of the English
Channel, Long’s Slave Market, Frith’s Derby Day—to mention only a few,
most of which are now as dead as anything can possibly be. On the other
hand, although some of the art depicting Tennyson’s characters and scenes
may have little intrinsic merit, it has a very special interest because of the
poetry. And there can be little doubt that in some of the sculpture and
painting here described there is genuine artistic merit—but here we must
appeal to the judgment of fair-minded and competent connoisseurs.

NOTES

1. The Spectator, October 8, 1892, p. 481.
2. From the Pall Mall Gazette, quoted in The Illustrated London News, October 15,
1892, p. 476.
3. Alfred Lord Tennyson A Memoir, in The Life and Works of Alfred Lord Tenny-
4. Ibid., p. 220.
5. The Times, October 14, 1892, p. 10.
8. Ibid., p. 42. There are five portraits of Tennyson painted by G. F. Watts, from
1856 to 1891 (Memoir, IV, 224).
9. There is a fine reproduction of Millais's painting of Tennyson in *The Burlington Magazine*, Number LXIII, Vol. XIII (June, 1908), opposite p. 127, with an article by D. S. MacColl, who says that this painting was first shown in 1881 at the Gallery of the Fine Art Society; at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1886; and at the Academy in 1898. It was purchased by Sir James Knowles, at whose death his executors offered it for sale for 3,000 pounds with the hope that it would be purchased by the nation.


11. *The Athenaeum*, June 8, 1895, p. 746. The bust now at Westminster was produced by Woolner for C. Jenner, of East Duddington Lodge, Portobello, Scotland, who in 1893 offered it to the Abbey.

12. This portrait was published in *The Illustrated London News*, October 15, 1892, in the edition honoring Tennyson.


16. *As We Were*, p. 271.