RICE UNIVERSITY

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SONNETS OF
CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER

by

Wilkes Berry

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

Houston, Texas
May 1962
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter                                      Page

1. Introduction ...................................... 1
2. Versification ....................................... 4
3. Themes and Topics .................................... 7
   I. Poetry ........................................... 8
   II. Pessimism ........................................ 11
   III. Home and Patriotism ............................. 13
   IV. Technological Progress .......................... 17
   V. War .............................................. 19
   VI. Lovers ........................................... 23
   VII. Death ........................................... 27
   VIII. The Passing of Time .......................... 32
   IX. Birds, Beasts, and Insects ...................... 33
   X. Land, Sea, and Sky ................................ 45
   XI. History .......................................... 52
4. Religion .............................................. 58
5. Structure and Imagery ................................ 82
6. Conclusion .......................................... 106
7. Appendix ............................................ 110
8. Footnotes ............................................ 115
9. Bibliography ........................................ 118
INTRODUCTION
Charles Tennyson-Turner was born in 1808 at Somersby, Lincolnshire. He was the second of the two older brothers of Alfred Tennyson, with whom he matriculated at Cambridge in 1828. Charles was graduated in 1832, and after his ordination in 1835 he was appointed curate of Tealby. Later the same year he became vicar of Grasby; then in 1836 he married Louisa Sellwood, sister to Emily Sellwood, who later married Alfred Tennyson. The next year he inherited several hundred acres of land from his great-uncle Samuel Turner of Caistor. At this time he assumed the additional surname of Turner which he used the rest of his life.  

Shortly before his marriage Turner had overcome an addiction to opium which resulted from his using the drug to relieve neuralgic pain; however, he soon resumed the use of opium. His wife helped to free him of the habit once more, but, in so doing, she lost her own health and had to be placed under medical care. After a necessary separation of several years the couple were reunited in 1849.  

They lived the remaining thirty years of their lives in Grasby where they lavished charity on their needy and ignorant parishioners. Turner died in 1879 at Cheltenham where he had gone to be under care of a favorite physician.  

Hallam Tennyson, his nephew, writes that during the long residence at Grasby Turner was devoted to the children of the parish, although he and his wife were childless. He also loved animals and regretted all his life shooting a swallow.
Turner loved flowers and trees almost as keenly as he loved animals and children; indeed he was opposed even to pruning vegetation; consequently he deplored the idea of felling trees. His sympathies were rapid and extended even to inanimate objects such as abandoned rocking horses, buoy-bells, and scarecrows. This acute sympathy produces a pronounced sentimentalism in his poetry where he treats seriously and at length the feelings or emotions of trees, house-flies, and even hydraulic rams. Many of the poems which I shall examine in the chapter on themes and topics in Turner's poetry reveal him as a sentimentalist.

Turner and his brothers, Frederick and Alfred, were interested in poetry from their very early years, and in 1826 all three contributed to a volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*. It contained forty-eight poems by Alfred, forty-eight poems by Charles, and three by Frederick.

In March, 1830, Charles published a volume entitled *Sonnets and Fugitive Pieces* which was favorably received by Leigh Hunt, who devoted four successive reviews in *The Tatler* to an examination of Charles's sonnets and Alfred's lyrics which appeared in *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* (1830). Coleridge, too, was impressed and annotated his copy of Turner's sonnets, observing nevertheless that the work lacked compelling poetic force.

Not until 1864 did another volume of his poetry appear. A number of reasons have been suggested for this prolonged
silence; for instance some conjecture that ill-health or a desire to give place to his younger brother caused his lengthy retirement from the writing and publishing of poetry. The primary cause, however, seems to have been his obsession with the conviction that he possessed no original talent and that his sonnets were merely imitations and recollections of the work of others. These misgivings concerning his originality were overcome by his earnest desire to combat the growing disbelief in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; therefore, he used the only literary weapon he had—the sonnet—to protest critical inquiry into religious matters.

The volume of 1864 was followed by two other collections in 1868 and 1873. The year after his death all his sonnets were published under the title Collected Sonnets, Old and New with a biographical memoir by Hallam Tennyson and a critical appreciation by James Spedding. This essay by Spedding is the nearest thing to a critical analysis of Turner's sonnets which has ever been written, but it is short and does not purport to be a thorough study of the poetry. My intention in this paper is to supply a more complete analysis of Turner's 342 sonnets. I have studied them from the standpoint of versification, theme, and structure.
VERSIFICATION
All of Turner's sonnets are regular in that they are composed of fourteen lines written in iambic pentameter. In the matter of rhyming he allowed himself a great deal of liberty from the most common Italian schemes of abba abba in the octave and cde cde, cdc cdc, or cde dce in the sestet. This is not to say that Turner never divided his poems into octave and sestet—-he usually did—-but only three of his sonnets have a rhyme scheme closely resembling those prescribed for the Italian sonnet. Of course, this is not an infallible indication that his sonnets are not in the Italian tradition, for the rhyme scheme is often varied. However, 311 of the 342 sonnets contain six or more rhymes, and no Italian sonnet properly allows more than five rhymes.

The English (Shakespearean) sonnet, which is an outgrowth of the Italian form, is characterized by three quatrains and a concluding couplet. Turner wrote 143 sonnets which end with a couplet. The two schemes he used most often (twenty sonnets each) were abab cdcd efe efg and abba cdcd efe efg. He composed fourteen poems with the slightly different scheme of abab cdcd efe efg.

In all, Turner used 130 separate rhyme schemes. (See Appendix.) Six of the schemes (nine sonnets) have four rhymes; nineteen (twenty-two sonnets) have five rhymes; fifty-nine (148 sonnets) have six rhymes; forty-four (161
sonnets) have seven rhymes, and two schemes (two sonnets) have eight rhymes.

Turner concludes twenty of his sonnets with an Alexandrine (iambic hexameter). Although some poems published as late as 1868 and 1873 have the six-foot line, it is more characteristic of his early work, for eleven of the twenty sonnets ending with Alexandrines appeared first in 1830. The remaining nine sonnets were published in the three volumes prior to 1880.

The poet makes extremely limited use of feminine endings. Only eleven sonnets contain lines with the hypermetrical syllable. Some of these have only one or two lines with feminine endings, but Sonnet 1 has seven, and Sonnet 2 has five. The sense of movement and lightness derived from the irregularity of the meter is especially effective in Sonnet 1 where Turner is describing the gentle and erratic music of an aeolian harp. The three feminine endings in Sonnet 203 also contribute to the meaning of the poem by suggesting the fitfulness and speed of an autumn wind. The use of feminine endings was not confined to any one period of his writing, for the volume published in 1830 contained four sonnets with feminine endings, as did the volume of 1873. The other three sonnets were divided among the other three volumes.

His rhymes are usually correct. Occasionally the reader finds a true slant rhyme in the sonnets. In each case
found that consonance had been substituted for true rhyme; for example "creed-tread," "behind-Ind," "verities-cries," "death-faith," "warm-calm," "harm-palm," "mist-Christ," and "drawn-unsworn."

I discovered no instance in which Turner departs radically from the usual iambic pentameter, with the exception of the Alexandrines. In the last section of this paper I shall call attention to a few slight irregularities. Three minor variations may be noted here. In Sonnet 264 the poet obviously intends that "spirit" be read as one syllable:

Then fell his kinsman's axe, whose triple blow
Thy spirit still hears! sore penance for that tryst. . . .

In the fourth line of Sonnet 275 an anapest is substituted for the iambus: "Even Partlet hoised herself across the wall. . . ." At the beginning of the first line of Sonnet 276 a trochee occurs in place of an iambus: "Pardon me, all ye birds that float at ease. . . ." A collection of 342 sonnets with only these few deviations in meter must be termed remarkably regular.
THEMES AND TOPICS
Nothing is more remarkable about the Victorian sonnet than the extremely miscellaneous character of its themes. Poets did not hesitate to employ the sonnet to express their ideas on any subject, regardless of how unfit for sonnets these subjects might have been considered by earlier sonneteers. Dougald B. MacRachen makes this point in connection with the sonnets of Alfred Lord Tennyson by observing that his forty-six published sonnets are written on a wide variety of subjects, including the launching of a new periodical and a protest against overmuch literary scholarship.¹ The sonnets of Charles Tennyson Turner certainly conform to those of his contemporaries in this particular, for his 342 published sonnets treat many different subjects, and his sonnets on the same general subject usually approach that subject differently.

Sir Charles Tennyson suggested in 1950 that a new edition of 100 of Turner's sonnets be published and that they be grouped under four main headings: Parson Poet; Birds, Beasts, and Insects; Land, Sea, and Sky; and Men, Women, and Children.² Ten years later, Sir Charles Tennyson collaborated with John Betjeman to bring out the proposed volume. The grouping of the sonnets under four headings works fairly well in this instance, because the editors chose to include only 100 of the sonnets which they judged to be Turner's best works.

In making a critical analysis of all 342 of Turner's published sonnets, I believe that it is necessary to classify
them more specifically. Therefore, I have grouped the sonnets according to subject matter under the topics: poetry, pessimism, home and patriotism, technological progress, war, lovers, death, the passing of time, birds-beasts-insects, land-sea-sky, history, and religion.

I. POETRY

Under the topic of poetry I have placed nine sonnets which may be called reflexive poetry, or poetry about poetry. In these poems Turner indicates that he believes the poet is a natural genius whose gift cannot be acquired through effort. Sonnet 49 traces the emergence of a genius of lowly estate whose mind could not possibly have found "leisure to endow itself so well" in the midst of the poverty of his life. Turner accounts for his genius with the romantic theory:

Methinks, one summer's eve, he first did hear
The rise and fall of music in his heart;
Wild notes, a-dropping downward without art
To a sweet close, that fell upon his ear
Unutterably soft, and yet most clear,
And seeming from his bosom's depth to start.

Closely related to this idea of the poet's singing wild and artless notes is the idea that the poet cannot express himself poetically until he is inspired or taken hold of by a greater power than himself. Turner writes of this kind of experience in Sonnet 112 and compares it to the inspiration of the disciples on Pentecost when "cloven tongues as of fire" sat on each of them, enabling them to speak in unknown
languages.

Oft in our fancy an uncertain thought
Hangs colourless, like dew on bents of grass,
Before the morning o'er the field doth pass;
But soon it glows and brightens; all unsought
A sudden glory flashes thro' the dream,
Our purpose deepens and our wit grows brave,
The thronging hints a richer utterance crave,
And tongues of fire approach the new-won theme.

This "sudden glory" enables poets to see more than other men; the poet is more perceptive, more alert to beauty and grandeur which the ordinary man overlooks. In Sonnet 13 Turner states plainly that the vulgar mind is left untouched by shapes which form upon the poet's mind in instant symmetry. All eyes are blind except those of the poet who is able

... in lordly eminence to tower
Above the world on pinions swift and strong;
Confronting greatness in her every form.

Sonnet 31.

Another analogy used to describe the powers of the true poet is the familiar one of drawing "pure water from the fount of song."

Several of Turner's poems deal specifically with the sonnet and the limitations which he found inherent in that particular literary form. He observes that in attempting to describe an eagle in verse, the epic poets and Pindar were content to show that majestic bird as it brooded in repose "with drooping wings." The conclusion which Turner draws from this is that it would be presumptuous for him to describe the eagle in full flight.
How shall the sonnet, least of rhythmic things, 
Presume to take him flying? Will he brook 
To wheel and hover, while I hunt for rhymes? 
Sonnet 274.

In a similar vein, Turner laments in an apostrophe to a 
sea-shell that the poet's art is inadequate to capture all 
its rich variety. This inadequacy he blames largely on 
"the single-hearted sonnet" which is merely perplexed by 
the countless hues of the shell. The sonnet form is too 
restricted, too formal to lend itself well to the rapturous 
celebration of an object as beautiful as a sea-shell.

I give thee up to some gay lyric muse, 
As fitful as thyself, thy tale to tell: 
The quick-spent sonnet cannot do thee right 
Nor in one flash deliver all thy light. 
Sonnet 312.

Turner seems especially aware of the limitations of the 
sonnet in comparison to the ode with all its lofty dignity 
and extensive scope. Sonnet 50 purports to be the account 
of a dream in which "deep-mouth'd Pindar" and "laughing 
Horace" scoff at an ode written by Turner, with the result 
that he ashamedly returns to the humbler strain of the sonnet, 
"a hair amid the harpstrings." Sonnet 148 is the poet's answer 
to a friend who had requested that he write an ode. He declines 
because the ode is as different from the sonnet as a hawk from 
a sparrow, and Turner feels that his poetic gift is more 
suited to composing sonnets than "to mell with strophe and 
antistrophe."
II. PESSIMISM

Sir Charles Tennyson remarks in an article on his kinsman that a kind of nervous melancholy seemed to lie in wait for all the Tennyson brothers as they reached maturity. Perhaps this explains why some of Turner's sonnets are devoted to the theme of man's misery and defeat in the world. These are sad poems in which a man appraises the human condition for other men and finds little cause for optimism. The first sonnet in the collection is concerned with the sadness which human beings experience, for in it Turner says that the wind tells a tale of bygone bliss through the aeolian harp, suspended in a tree outside his bower. The music is "deep and tear-compelling," but the contemplation of "sorrow past the healing" is a valuable experience, even at the expense of joy. Sonnet 109 also speaks of a melancholic reverie which is painful, and yet beneficial. The deep thoughts pierce, but they also refine. The poet dreads the morning, because then he must meet his woes with no star to fill his cup of tears with silver light. "Morning Sorrows" also advances the idea that sad memory wakes anew with daybreak; nevertheless...

...we can seldom overrate our sighs
Nor prize our organs of regret too much;
Then welcome still these ever-new returns
of anguish!

The troubles which inspire these melancholic thoughts
come to every human being.

Who escapes or can escape
The burthen, while the great world sins and mourns?
Grief comes to all, whatever be her shape
To each . . . .

Sonnet 168.

The universality of hardship is further stressed in a sonnet entitled "Human Sorrows." While sporting on the beach, Turner sees a cattle train pass, prompting him to pity the doomed animals on their way to the slaughter house and to point out that even the bathers, apparently happy, are not free of sorrow.

Our happy bathers,—pardon my romance!
I thought of gladness only, for the tide
Ran sparkling to the land in merry dance;
But, oh! what sorrows haunt our sweet seaside!
Man, child, and woman mourn the wide world o'er;
Yon maiden's snowy foot, that meets the wave,
Has just come faltering from her lover's grave,
Just pass'd that orphan-group upon the shore;
The yacht glides gaily on, but as it nears
The beach, I see a night-black dress on board;
The lonely widow dreams of those three years
Of summer-voyaging with her lost lord:
Too oft, when human figures fill the scene,
We count from woe to woe with no glad hearts between!

In the midst of such widespread distress Joy sought an abiding place but eventually was forced to return to heaven, because men's brows were "close-gather'd to repel him," and their cheeks were too cold to afford him a resting place. Neither could Joy stay in men's eyes which were slippery with tears, nor on their lips, "shifting untenably from smile to sneer" (Sonnet 36). Turner consoles himself and
others in the face of this dismal news with the observation that wisdom and Providence supply man's moral needs, and that by bowing, man is better able to climb.

III. HOME AND PATRIOTISM

Although this note of melancholy is rather pronounced, I do not wish to imply that all of Turner's sonnets are gloomy. There is genuine exuberance in his descriptions of rural England in the early and middle nineteenth century, for he loved the familiar scenes and activities of his childhood. This strong sense of local loyalty encourages a more comprehensive patriotism which finds expression in devotion to England and Great Britain.

The haunts of childhood are immortalized in Sonnet 7 where Turner recalls the association he makes with each of them:

... I and yon sycamore have grown together, How on yon slope the shifting sunsets lie, None know like me and mine; and tending hither, Flows the strong current of my memory; From that same flower-bed, ever dear to me, I learn'd how marigolds do bloom and fade; And from the grove, which skirts this garden-glade, I had my earliest thoughts of Love and Spring. ...

The same passionate attachment to the simple scenes which he first learned to love is apparent in "Time and Twilight:"

In the dark twilight of an autumn morn, I stood within a little country-town, Wherefrom a long acquainted path went down To the dear village haunts where I was born. ...
Turner shows a remarkable talent for achieving realism by paying attention to concrete detail which he never considered too mean or ordinary to be discussed poetically. This practice may be observed in "Old Ruralities," a sonnet which mentions not only the natural charms of home but also the rustic objects with strong emotional appeal. These include the heath-bell, the flail, the threshing-floor, the thatch, and house-leek, the herbal, and the spinning-wheel. The reviewer for The Times Literary Supplement in the review of A Hundred Sonnets recognizes this emphasis on humble relics in the sonnets. It is a child-like delight in simple things which sometimes verges on slightness; however, Turner is evaluated as a poet with freshness and exactness of observation and one who is able to treat small themes with charming tenderness.  

Two childhood experiences are recalled in Sonnet 172 and Sonnet 116. The first concerns the schoolboy's delight in the traditional holidays. After the last day of classes, a festal one marked by light lessons and much outdoor activity, the schoolboy dreams that

Our hoops through gods and heroes ran a-much;  
Our kites o'erhung the fleet, a public gaze!  
And one wild ball the great Achilles struck—  
Oh! how he tower'd and lighten'd at the stroke!  
But, tho' his formal pardon I bespoke,  
I told him plainly 'twas our holidays.

Sonnet 116 is one of several poems by Turner which celebrate the harvest, revealing further the poet's interest in his rural English homeland. Bringing in the harvest of corn is
presented as a kind of folk ceremony in which everyone participates:

Late in September came our corn-crop home,
Late, but full-ear'd--by many a merry noise
Of matron and of maid, young girls and boys,
Preceded, flank'd and follow'd, did they come;
A general joy!

Turner's sonnets about what he called "old ruralities" are not exclusively concerned with scenes, places, objects, or events. He describes some of the ordinary people one might encounter in and around the villages of nineteenth century England. In a sonnet reminiscent of Wordsworth's "The Leech-Gatherer" Turner pictures an "old hills'-man" who gleans the refuse which he finds along the road and blesses his luck, despite the lowness of his station.

His long-plied shovel had its own romance
For him, and every varying circumstance
Of earth and sky forbade him to be dull . . . .
Sonnet 263.

This romantic treatment of the very poor may be observed in other sonnets in the collection; for instance "Old Stephen" tells of an aged family retainer who served well, retired to his own small plot of land which was given him through the generosity of his master, and died at peace with everyone.

"The Old Fox-Hunter" is a rather traditional description of the fox-hunting Tory squire, familiar in English literature
since the late seventeenth century. Like Squire Western, Turner's squire finds "this rich and multifarious world" void without the chase. This stock character is another indication of Turner's emotional involvement with the idealized English countryside, "the dear village haunts where I was born."

From this provincial, local loyalty Turner proceeds to a virile British patriotism which is decidedly imperialistic. The typical English church is called "the home of Prayer," and the poet asserts that prayer is lovelier there than "in all other fanes beneath the sun" (Sonnet 34). "Letty's Globe" begins as a delicate tribute to childhood and concludes with a veiled hint of imperialism. Letty is playing with a geographical globe, ignorant of its significance,

> But when we turned her sweet unlearned eye  
> On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,  
> 'Oh! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there!'  
> And, while she hid all England with a kiss,  
> Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

Another of these intensely patriotic sonnets is number 316 in which the poet pictures himself as living in the "icy times forlorn" but able to forecast even at that early date that England would be the island of hopes. All that was needed for the island to fulfill her destiny of greatness was the air of paradise to bring "our summer and our flowery springs."
IV. TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS

Closely associated with this imperialistic pride in England, indeed, another manifestation of it, is the emphasis on scientific and technological achievement which made the nation a leader in the conversion to mechanization. Turner was a child of his age when it came to appreciating this unprecedented mechanization. In a sonnet entitled "Greatness of England" he reveals an outspoken pride in England's mechanical superiority:

Full long ere Europe knew the iron road,
The 'Railway' thunder'd on our English soil . . . .

After boasting that the English "freed the slave to take the lightning captive," Turner exclaims, "The thought is rife with pride!", then he observes that any future change in England's glory must be an ebb, because she stands at full of tide. There is a sonnet about the telegraph cable which he anticipated would soon link England and India, carrying the "how" and "why" of English statesmen through the lawless regions of the Arab and the Turk. Even the South Foreland electric light inspired English pride and patriotism.

. . . on the verge of France
To come on England's brightness in advance!
There! on the waters! In those far-seen rays
I hail'd the symbol of her fame in fight . . . .
Sonnet 96.

In the next five lines Turner apparently decides that the
preceding statement is too bellicose, and so he suggests that the light symbolizes, instead of England's martial glory,

... all the good she did and taught,
Her shining honour and her moral might.

I have discussed above the interest which Turner had in recording the traditional life of the countryside. Because of this affection for rural England, he might have been expected to resent the radical changes wrought in that country world by mechanization; however, he was quite free from romantic or idyllic nostalgia. Consequently, he was able to accept, quite naturally, the changes which mechanization brought. This is apparent in the two following sonnets on the steam threshing-machine.

Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burn'd
At eve, while smoke and vapour fill'd the yard;
The gloomy winter sky was dimly starr'd,
The fly wheel with a mellow murmur turn'd;
While, ever rising on its mystic stair
In the dim light from secret chambers borne,
The straw of harvest, sever'd from the corn,
Climb'd, and fell over, in the murky air.
I thought of mind and matter, will and law,
And then of him, who set his stately seal
Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
Of old-world husbandry: I could but feel
With what a rich precision he would draw
The endless ladder, and the booming wheel!

Did any seer of ancient time forebode
This mighty engine, which we daily see
Accepting our full harvests, like a god,
With clouds about his shoulders,—it might be
Some poet-husbandman, some lord of verse,
Old Hesiod, or the wizard Mantuan
Who catalogued in rich hexameters
The Rake, the Roller, and the mystic Van:
Or else some priest of Ceres, it might seem,
Who witness'd, as he trod the silent fane,
The notes and auguries of coming change,
Of other ministrants in shrine and grange,—
The sweating statue, and her sacred wain
Low-booming with the prophecy of steam!

I think that the comment of John Heath-Stubbs on these sonnets
is accurate: "... Turner was more than just the recorder
of the life he saw around him, but possessed a real sense
of the organic continuity which is to be discerned, or should
be, in all man's activities."^6

V. WAR

The peace-loving vicar of Grasby devoted a number of
his sonnets to the subject of war, which he deplored. He
hoped that technological advances and increased commerce
among all nations and regions would eliminate war by offering
a vision of what could be attained if all men worked
earnestly for the general good. Turner was inspired by
the great exhibitions which were held after the middle of
the century for the purpose of demonstrating the achieve¬
ments of modern technology and displaying the enormous
variety of goods which could be brought to England by commerce.
The Great Exhibition of 1862 is the subject of a sonnet in
which Turner describes trade as "this kindly intercourse,
the best of boons" (Sonnet 90) and in which the paths of
commerce are equated with the paths of peace. The succeed¬
ing sonnet expands this theme of the triumph of commerce
over war and its attendant blessings for mankind.

O Art and Commerce, set the nations free,
And bid the rites of war's proud temples cease
O power of steam! for ever may'st thou be
A rolling incense in the house of peace!
And all these vast consignments but increase
Our sense of brotherhood and charity!

Sonnet 91.

Nine years after these optimistic sonnets were published, forecasting the abolition of war, Turner published "Arms Old and New" in which he laments the dedication of man's greater knowledge to the invention of more effective weapons, rather than to the fashioning of instruments for peace. He observes that shrapnel and torpedo arm the "depths above us and beneath," replacing the phalanx, the battering ram, the English bow and arrow.

Protests against war are frequently encountered through the volume. Like most Englishmen, Turner was in sympathy with the Confederate States of America; consequently he characterizes the Union as a condor which spreads its hideous wings and cries for blood. This criticism is found in Sonnet 87, and in the same sonnet the poet expresses his pity for the helpless victims of the fighting, the poor slaves, "cajoled by warring whites." Turner has nothing but praise for the pacifist Friends who undertook a mission to St. Petersburg to appeal to the Czar to use his influence in effecting a peaceable settlement of the strife between North and South.

Whatever be the meaning of that creed
Of the poke-bonnet and the ample brim,
Still in the shoes of truth the Quakers tread,
When they denounce our wars ....
Sonnet 88.

The discovery of an ancient Roman shield in the Thames provides an occasion for Turner to write about the endurance of war and to appeal that it be abolished. Armed men still oppose each other as they did ages before when the Roman shield first sank beneath the waters. The only difference is in the weapons which they use—not in the basic problems of human nature which cause men to quarrel (Sonnet 159). The following sonnet continues these observations and concludes with a distinct plea for an end to war.

Oh! when shall better thoughts be dear to man,
Than rapine and ambition, fraud and hate?
Oh! when shall War, like this old buckler, fall
Into disuse, drown'd by its own dead weight?
And Commerce, buoyant as the living swan,
Push boldly to the shore, the friend of all?
Sonnet 160.

Another imaginative protest against the horror and destruction of war comes in Sonnet 256 which is entitled "The Bomb and the Organ: An Incident of the Siege of Strasburg." Here Turner relates how a bomb shattered "the holy organ" in a church, and the organ becomes a symbol of all the noble and beautiful things which the blind violence of war destroys. The organ was not a fortress of the foe, neither was it a war-drum, nor an ammunition store, but rather an "ark of praise" whose only purpose was to affect the ear and heart of every listener.
Although Turner is outspoken in his opposition to war, he recognizes some situations in which war is not only permissible but absolutely imperative. When weak neighbors are threatened, England must subvert her mercenary interests to her moral obligations which demand that she take up arms to defend the innocent and the weak. The judgment of God awaits the nation which presumes to live for gain with no consideration of honor.

Her [England's] noble voice, once heard above the gales, Is lost among the stowage, while the prayer Of our weak neighbours finds us slow to dare.

Sonnet 252.

The two succeeding sonnets are even more insistent that England must wage righteous war against oppressors, regardless of the consequences for commerce.

What! shall the wharf and warehouse block our view Of truth and right? Shall we no help afford, When petty states in their affliction sue, Because our busy merchants flinch the sword?

Sonnet 253.

Turner points out that Englishmen are unmatched for courage when their own lives are in peril; for instance nothing prevented Nelson's scouring the ocean to hunt out the foe. Why, he asks, can England not act from altruistic motives in the same gallant manner?

Our own and Europe's safety met in one; And so we sent our warriors to the field, Or launch'd them on the deep, our arms to wield; But ah! when Christian honour pleads alone, When nought is lost by abstinence from war, And nought is urgent save a sister's prayer,
Loathing war, yet convinced that it was the sole alternative to dishonor in some cases—this was the position of Charles Tennyson-Turner. He was neither a pacifist, as some of his sonnets suggest, nor was he a jingoist, despite the influence of imperialism which appears in his poetry.

VI. LOVERS

Few of Turner's sonnets can be classified as love sonnets. There is certainly no suggestion of a sequence of sonnets addressed to a loved one in the manner of Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, or Michael Drayton. However, Turner did write several sonnets expressing love for a woman in the conventional manner that his love was not requited.

The conventional idea that the lover derives joy from gazing on some personal memento from the beloved is found in Sonnet 10. In this instance the speaker has a lock of his lady's hair, "a blessing to mine eyes,"

For gentle, happy, thoughts are sworn to rise
When'er I view it softly folded there. . . .

Even more familiar in the love sonnet is the melancholy which the lover feels because of his lack of assurance that his
lady reciprocates his love. Sonnet 23 purports to have been
written by "a perverse lover" who is constantly tormented by
doubts and fears that his Mary does not belong to him.

I trust thee, Mary, but till thou art mine
Up from thy foot unto thy golden hair,
Oh! let me still misgive thee and repine.

Another poem in which a mourning lover describes his depression
is Sonnet 35. While listening to the beloved's harping, he
grieves that her love must be denied him in favor of another
man:

Unhappy me! not for another's bliss,
But that thou art the blessing! soon to me
Though now thy song doth sound so dear and free,
Its spell shall vanish in another's kiss;
Unhappy me! my wounds must ever smart;
Alas! for fruitless love! Alas! for them,
Who pluck the flowers and press them to their heart,
Though other hands must claim the vital stem,
And all its future bloom; I know thou art
Powerless to save, though hating to condemn.

There are no more passionate, subjective love sonnets after
the first edition of poems in 1830.

More numerous are his sonnets about lovers in which he
assumes the point of view of the outside observer, commenting
on the happiness and grief of those in love. Sonnet 2 describes
a moment of joy in the lives of two lovers. The kiss of be-
trothal, "so fraught with breathless magical delight," is
their pledge of love to each other, and after that kiss,
"each true heart beats as the other wisheth." The reconcili-
ation of two estranged lovers provides the subject of another sonnet about happy love between the sexes. On a summer's day Annie and Ambrose resolved a misunderstanding which had lasted for ten years (Sonnet 177).

Most of the lovers whom Turner discusses are not so fortunate as the couples mentioned above. Separation and the heartbreak attendant upon love are the themes of his other love sonnets. Sonnet 4 introduces this note in the sestet after having described the song of a nightingale in the octave:

While, wandering for the dreams such seasons give
With lonely steps, and many a pause between,
The lover listens to thy songs unseen;
And if, at times, the pure notes seem to grieve,
Why lo! he weeps himself and must believe
That sorrow is a part of what they mean!

Of course, one of the classic stories of doomed love is that of Hero and Leander. Turner re-tells the tale, stressing his emotional involvement in the lovers' agony.

I broke my heart for both, without avail,
I wept with her! I sobb'd and sank with him!
Sonnet 182.

Two contemporary instances of separation are treated by Turner in Sonnets 308 and 342. In the first, two lovers part on a railway platform with neither's indicating his love for the other for fear that the love was not mutual, in which case an expression might be repulsed. As the train bears him farther from his beloved, the lover mourns:
Alas! . . . how mutely did we part!
I fear'd to test the truth I seem'd to see.
Oh! that the love dream in her timid heart
Had sigh'd itself awake, and called for me!

Sonnet 342 concerns the final parting of a pair of lovers who pass their last moments together laughing at their reflections in a window-pane, because the occasion is too important for solemnity.

But when she left the spot, his eyes grew dim;
She pass'd at once by sea and land from him:
She was no longer at his side, and he
Sat by his lonely lamp on land and sea.

Turner wrote several poems about the separation of lovers by death, and in every instance the woman dies, leaving her husband or sweetheart to mourn her. Sonnet 176 contrasts the summer of happiness when Ellen and Edwin enjoyed the beauties of nature together to the winter which he endures alone:

The wind blows cold; the corn has long been cut;
And, three moons since, his plighted Ellen died!

Substantially the same situation is recorded in Sonnet 181--after a walk the "last homeward gate" clangs shut behind a couple, and soon her funeral knell is tolled. The clanging gate's harshly signalling the end of their walk prefigures the funeral knell which ends their bliss.

The Gothic element appears in Sonnet 249 which recounts the story of a fateful game of hide-and-seek from which a
bride, still in her wedding dress, never returned.

Years pass'd, long years! when in an ancient chest,
Whose heavy lid had dropp'd upon its spring,
They found the object of a bygone quest,
A skeleton in bridal wreath and ring. . . .

Hardly less macabre is the account in Sonnet 250 of the death by lightning of a young woman at her lover's side. Later in the year, the clamor of hounds in that grove "seem'd like a drunken brawl crossing the silence of a funeral."

VII. DEATH

Lovers are not the only persons whose death concerned Turner. The death of young people is the theme of many of the sonnets. Meditating on a vessel found in a Roman tomb and believed by him to have contained the tears of the deceased person's friends, Turner's thoughts focus on "the souls of the early dead."

Two, most of all, my dreaming eyes did see;
The young Marcellus, young, but great and good,
And Tully's daughter, mourn'd so tenderly.

Sonnet 67.

Even younger than Marcellus and Tully's daughter at the time of their deaths were two sisters, daughters of the Hon. Gustavus and Lady Katharine Hamilton Russell, the elder of whom died by an accident during the mortal illness of her sister, who almost immediately followed her. They were both buried on the same day. Turner addressed the children in
In Sonnet 70:

Death drops his wing on younger heads than thine,
Though thine is of the youngest.

In Sonnet 174 Turner tells the sad tale of "Little Phoebe," who was crushed by a landslide after heavy rains. As in the other sonnets on the death of the young, the main emphasis is on the emotional and macabre elements involved. After they found Phoebe "bruised and dead," loving hands gathered the sea-shells which had been spilled from her basket. The pathetic picture of a young mother caring for her infant who she does not realize is dying is presented in Sonnet 328.

It was her first sweet child, her heart's delight:
And, though we all foresaw his early doom,
We kept the fearful secret out of sight;
We saw the canker, but she kiss'd the bloom.

An almost pagan attitude toward death may be observed in two of the early sonnets, published in 1830, for these poems dwell on the mystery and terror associated with death. The first, Sonnet 26, is entitled "On Seeing a Child Blush on His First View of a Corpse." As might be expected, it suggests that youth senses intuitively the enmity which exists between itself and death.

He fear'd the stranger, though he knew no more,
Surmising and surprised, but, most, afraid,
As Crusoe, wandering on the desert shore,
Saw but an alien footprint and was sad!
Turner calls death "the rueful king," and the imagery of royalty recurs through the sonnet, implying that death rules in the affairs of men.

A signal for the heart to beat less free
Are all imperial presences, and he
Was awed by death's consummate kingliness. . . .

Sonnet 33 is an apostrophe to an anonymous person, whom Turner praises for his active mind; then quite suddenly he remarks, ". . . when the mind o'er many themes keeps survey unconfined, death will be one." This mention of death results in the poet's devoting the remaining six and one-half lines of his sonnet to melancholic reflections on that subject. Death is once more described as a ruling force, the supreme authority "whose simple mandate binds the giant's hands," but the mystery and uncertainty connected with death is also emphasized in this poem. Turner calls death "the mute unquestionable shadow," and then in the closing couplet he repeats that men know nothing at all about this vague shadow, "placed at the limit of all mortal being":

We own his power, but know not whence he came;
We call him Death—he telleth not his name!

Naturally, sonnets containing the Christian consolation of the promise of immortality, or stressing that death is merely a transition, are much more common in Turner's sonnets than are those which end on a somber note. Sonnet 16 bears
the lengthy title, "Supposed to be Written by One on Whom the Death of an Excellent Woman Has Forced the Conviction of a Future State." The speaker in this piece surrenders his long-held opinion "that souls would fade like music on the air" when he is faced with the necessity of consigning the soul of a worthy woman of his acquaintance to such a fate. The death of the good and the beautiful, which often causes men to become skeptical and pessimistic, has precisely the opposite effect in this instance. The thought that her immaculate soul no longer existed is unbearable:

I do confess thou wert so good and fair
That such as thou were never born to die!

Sonnet 17 is a continuation of the same theme with the speaker describing all the peculiar celestial delights which the deceased was doubtlessly enjoying. Not the least of heavenly pleasures is the freedom from the pain and care of earthly life.

A sonnet on the death of Cowper also makes the point that eternity with God is certainly to be preferred to the sorrows of life in the flesh (Sonnet 76). Cowper's death-smile is "the symbol of long-desired release" from the wretchedness of his life. The same idea, that of death's providing a passage out of this world and into the next, may be observed in Sonnet 316:

When the sun rose he ceased to breathe and feel:
Day broke--his eyes were on a lovelier dawn...
The first eight lines of Sonnet 29 sound very much like those sonnets which present death as a fearsome thing:

The strongest hearts grow fearful at the name
Of him who gathers up the coil of things;

That worms shall revel in the heart of pride
And death-damps chill the brows of happy men,
Is truth avow'd and awful!

However, the tone is radically altered in the sestet to present the argument that hopes of immortality were entertained in ancient times:

Even then, when earth was powerless in the thrall
Of hateful rites, and mythologic ties. . . .

Of course, the point is that such hopes have solid foundation since Christ's confirmation of them.
VIII. THE PASSING OF TIME

Another recurring theme in Turner's sonnets is the relentless and rapid passing of time. This theme is closely associated with the subject of death, because the passing of time signifies, above all, that death is nearer. In Sonnet 38 Turner contemplates the frequency with which his birthdays return, and he regrets the drastic changes wrought in him through the years. Reminiscent of Wordsworth are the lines in which he traces the stages of his journey from innocence and sensitivity to the coarseness of age:

We leave the womb to slumber on the breast,
We leave the breast to climb upon the knee,
Soon beckon'd off by dolour and unrest,
Till our first sympathies are hard to see. . . .

The cutting of the ripe wheat suggests the transitory nature of life to the poet in Sonnet 201. He stresses that the year had rushed along and that harvest-time had arrived once more.

I grieved to think how fleet and fugitive
Are all our joys, how near to change or harm. . . .

In Sonnet 284 it is the tolling of the clock that impresses the poet with the passing of time. Although his personal time piece reports the measure of his life more tenderly, he admits that he derives pleasure from hearing "the booming hours"

. . . That fair and open reckoning, night and day,
Which tells us boldly how we pass away.
A deep realization of the truth of these lines is revealed in Sonnet 286 where Turner muses after the "school-feast" that he may be dead when the next feast is celebrated. In just one year--an extremely brief period when one considers how recent the last feast seems--another pastor may fill his place, and the next morning's dew may "gleam in every track but mine."

In view of the passing of time one must be careful that none of it is wasted. Turner hints at this idea in Sonnet 284 when he writes that time has a message for everyone, although it is misprized by some. A direct statement concerning the tragedy of squandered time is found in Sonnet 281. The clock is compared to a crier who stops and rings his bell to tell a loss and then hastens off to raise the cry elsewhere. The clock is also called "a mocking thief" who steals coins but audibly counts up the sum before escaping.

... our flying hours
We waste, and baulk them of their noblest use;
And so disable our best gifts and powers,
Or leave them open to the fiend's abuse...

IX. BIRDS, BEASTS, AND INSECTS

Turner wrote many sonnets about birds, beasts, and insects--as is not surprising in view of his wide range of interests. Nothing with which he was familiar was deemed to be too insignificant a subject for a sonnet. The great
majority of the poems in this general classification have to do with birds, but they are not all descriptions of the beauty, flight, or song of the birds. In addition to this expected material, there is a hardly less familiar emphasis on the capacity which birds have to bring gladness to grieving humanity; and the traditional observation that birds are immune to earthly cares appears. Several of the sonnets express Turner's profound sympathy for suffering birds or his unfeigned sorrow at the death of particular birds.

In Sonnet 61 he describes admiringly the eagle's majestic flight; apparently he had not yet decided in 1864 that the sonnet was an inadequate instrument for so awesome a subject, as he contends in Sonnet 274 (1873). Turner uses the metaphor of an arrow in picturing the eagle's performance which culminates in the bird's sudden and deadly descent on its prey.

An arrow feather'd with two mighty vans,
That soars and stoops at will, and broadly scans
The woods and waters with a living sight!
A wondrous arrow! wheeling round and round,
Before its prone descent upon the prey,
Descried far off upon the subject ground,
And with one stroke disabled for the fray. . . .

The flight of the lark is treated in an entirely different manner in Sonnet 113. There is a feeling of lightness, a sense of speed, and a playful note which suits well the movements of that bird as opposed to the eagle's lordly maneuverings. The lark is not like the "timid corn-craik"
which seems to be attempting to elude its own voice by its erratic darts, but instead, the lark takes its song heavenward:

. . . then, striking sideways, shoots along,
Happy as sailor boy that, from the mast,
Runs out upon the yard-arm, till at last
He sinks into his nest, those clover tufts among.

Still another mood must be created in Sonnet 193 where Turner is describing the graceful, teasing passes of swallows in the early evening when other creatures are quietly reclining or browsing:

. . . swallows flit among the restful cows,
Their gurgling dew-laps, and their harmless horns;
Or flirt the aged hunter, in his dose,
With passing wing. . . .

The beauty of the gold-crested wren is the theme of Sonnet 149, and Turner, always searching for sermons and lessons, compares the bird's delicate gold crest to the last, finishing touch required by his sonnets. The swan and the peacock are also praised for their beauty, especially the sedate elegance which has always made these birds seem vain and haughty:

Proud of his hundred eyes of glossy grain,
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
The Peacock walks beside his lowlier mate;
Or stands apart, unfolding all his state!
While on the surface of yon glassy lake,
A snow-white swan, with sinuous neck elate,
Ruffles his shifting plumes for beauty's sake. . . .

Sonnet 280.
Turner compares the swan to a barge which a maiden might choose for innocent pleasures in summer waters; the peacock, however, in his gaudy splendor suggests to the poet "that eastern bark... on Cydnus rigg'd to meet Mark Antony."

Another description of the swan occurs in Sonnet 325, a humorous picture of the proud bird's being carried by the neck to the squire's pond,

Where day by day he sees the postman come,
And linger near him with a fond delay,
While he moves proudly forward to receive
Such dole as royal mails can pause to give.

In Sonnet 277 Turner pays poetic tribute to the legendary beauty of the nightingale's singing. The first note of their "sudden music" when they return each summer is as sweet to the poet as the first organ-tone was o Holy Church "fresh from the Angel and St. Cecily." The joyous warbling is especially precious because it is inimitable—a tune which neither merle nor goldfinch can learn.

The sonnet just discussed implies that the sweet song of the nightingale is to be cherished not only for its beauty but also for the soothing and cheering effect it has on the human heart. Several of the sonnets treat this theme explicitly. Sonnet 42, for instance, pictures a despairing prisoner, confined to "a small unsightly cell," but the birds in the gardens below his prison provide some contact for him with the outside world. Their songs tell
of bowers and dewy lawns unseen,
Drench'd with the silver steam that night had shed;
Part blossom-white, part exquisitely green,
By little warblers roam'd and tenanted,
Blending their glad wild notes to greet the sheen
Of the May Dawn, that gleam'd upon his bed.

The poet himself testifies in Sonnet 313 that the returning nightingales are a perpetual source of delight to him. The tuneful birds not only lend warmth to a still cold May and cheer to "the thin leafage of this laggard spring" but they also lead his lonely steps nearer the place of their singing, all the while feeding his thoughts with love, and hope, and mystery.

How often hast thou made my weary head
A music chamber for my soul and thee!

Migrating larks are represented in Sonnet 333 as performing a similar service for an emigrant who is leaving England after having lost all his land. His sad departure is contrasted to that of a colony of larks whose journey to the south is not marked by distress at the thought of leaving "patrimonial fields."

The emigrant's fellow-travellers can make the voyage somewhat more cheerful, the human heart "with all its cares and ties" can never hope to enjoy the freedom from pain which the larks enjoy. The emigrant lands in his new country half hopeful, half forlorn, but

The larks, his fellow emigrants, will rise
At once and sing, on alien breezes borne,
Forget the transfer from their native skies,
And sing as bravely to the southern morn.

Turner apostrophizes the lark in Sonnet 5, observing that peace dwells always with the bird—not the peace which comes with quiet reflection—but a kind of exuberant and natural happiness which results from a total ignorance of hardship. The lark's rapturous singing is called its "vocal token of wild ease" which reveals a proud immunity to the troubles that haunt men, and for this reason men are pleased and fascinated by this blithe creature.

Sonnet 21 contains a similar apostrophe to a flock of pigeons which the poet had startled into flight. He admits that a "feeble fear" characterizes "the timid clan" causing them to flee human intruders; nevertheless, the poet enviously exclaims:

Yet are ye blest! with not a thought that brings Disquietude,—while proud and sorrowing man,
An eagle weary of his mighty wings,
With anxious inquest fills his little span!

Like Cowper, whom he admired, Turner was extremely humane and sensitive to the physical suffering of birds or animals. This humanitarianism also appears in Thomson's poetry; indeed Sonnet 27, which reveals Turner's concern for the robin, is similar to the famous passage in The Seasons in which Thomson describes the hungry redbreast's courageous venture into the company of men. Turner pities the robin who cannot find warm
shelter and food for the winter; therefore, he says to the bird,

Poor Robin: and severer days will fall.
Bothink thee well of all yon frosted sward,
The orchard-path, so desolate and hard,
And meadow-runnels, with no voice at all!
Then feed with me, poor warbler, household bird. . . .

Of course, the only compensation which the poet asks is that the robin will sing for his enjoyment.

A nest of unfledged birds, forsaken by their mother, claim Turner's pity in Sonnet 320. He insists that he never hears a lark singing its matins without remembering "that orphan nest" in which the doomed infants huddled silently.

. . . it was sad to mark
Those eyes, heaven-charter'd, now earth-bound and dark:
Beneath a morning sky they could not see.

Deeply affected by this scene which he merely stumbled on, the poet regretted all his life that he had shot a swallow in early youth. He reveals a passionate reverence for life in Sonnet 329 as he describes that "crime" which he had committed so many years before and for which he had always reserved a "little spring of secret tears."

No kindly voice within me took thy part,
Till I stood o'er thy last faint flutterings;
Since then, methinks, I have a gentler heart,
And gaze with pity on all wounded wings.

Nor would Turner be released from this sad memory, for he claims to love the little ghost he made.
In Sonnet 64 he mourns the death of a pet bird. The symptoms of the fatal illness are described in detail; then with obvious relief that the creature is no longer suffering, the poet writes, "But he has gone at last. . . ." The last lines inform the reader that the cage and its appointments have been left unchanged, and the reason for preserving these objects is revealed in the following sonnet (65). Unable to bear the thought of his pet's delicate remains being exposed to soaking rains and the corrosive earth, Turner has determined to have the bird stuffed and replaced in its cage.

The poetic treatment of beasts follows the same general pattern as that of birds; for the poet describes a favorite mare, suggests that animals can lighten men's sorrows, compassionates suffering brutes, and mourns the death of several animals. In Sonnet 194 Turner describes the movements of a mare by ostensibly tracing the movements of the white star on her forehead. It travels around the field at the same pace as Maggie's "wandering mouth and foot"; however, at noon the star is clearly visible while the old mare dreams "with heel a-tilt behind and pendent lip." When Maggie rolls, the star dips and vanishes but then reappears. Thus, Turner gives a full picture of an old mare, turned out to pasture, under the guise of describing the star on her forehead as if it were a celestial body.
In a sonnet entitled "Cowper's Three Hares" (340) the poet pretends to be observing Cowper's pet hares while they are still living as wild creatures. Their future significance as comforters of their disturbed master is foretold. In the same way that birds cheer human beings, these hares are to serve Cowper,

As friends of sorrow and allies of love,
To their wild haunts a friendly thief shall come,
And take them hence, no more to rove at will,
Till those three gentle hearts grow gentler still,
And ready for the mourning poet's home.
Hail, little triad, peeping from the fern,
Ye have a place to fill, a name to earn!
Far from the copse your tender mission lies,—
To soothe a soul, too sad for trust and prayer,
To gambol round a woe ye cannot share. . . .

Turner demonstrates his concern for suffering beasts in Sonnet 294, an invitation to a hare like the one extended to the robin to take refuge for the winter in his home. He disclaims any intention of harming the hungry rabbit who is less deserving of his displeasure than the pilfering squirrel whose "frisky brush and bushy jaw" were spared by him in spite of his autummal raid on nuts and cones.

And shall I wound the poor dishearten'd ones?
Come freely: in my heart thy charter lies;
Feed boldly. . . .

Sonnet 332 contains further evidence of Turner's pronounced humanitarianism, for in this poem he is touched by the broken heart of Cushie, a cow whose suckling calf has been taken to
the slaughter-house. Her sorrow is represented as feelingly as if it were that of a human mother for her child.

But nought her restless sorrow could abate,

For she had lost the love she least could spare.

Turner records in Sonnet 259 how a glimpse of a passing cattle-train spoiled a holiday at the beach for him. Out of harmony with the blue water and hills of blooming heather were the doomed beasts, still dazed by the suddenness of separation from "their lowing mates in Irish vales."

Close-pack'd and mute they stood, as close as bees,
Bewilder'd with their fright and narrow room;
'Twas sad to see that meek-eyed hecatomb,
So fiercely hurried past our summer seas.

Turner is grieved not only at the death of small and helpless birds or of gentle cattle, or pet dogs, as I shall show below, but also by the sad spectacle of a lion's skeleton in the desert. He is struck by the contrast between the magnificence of the living beast and the insignificance of the decaying remains. The fall of the mighty has been accomplished by such inferior creatures as worms and vultures. In an apostrophe to the dead lion Turner remarks,

... now thine ample front,
Whereon the great frowns gather'd, is laid bare;
The thunders of thy throat, which erst were wont
To scare the desert, are no longer there;
Thy claws remain, but worms, wind, rain, and heat
Have sifted out the substance of thy feet.

Sonnet 60.
Although he appreciates the lion's tragedy, the poet is far more emotionally involved in the death of a pet dog to whom he pays the tribute of honor and a tear, just as he would to a departed human friend. Sonnet 62 tells of his finding a tuft of primrose on which to lay the dog's body while he dug the grave. Even a strange dog, discovered drowned on the beach, wins a eulogy from the tender-hearted poet (Sonnet 314).

One of the recurring ideas in the relatively few sonnets on the subject of insects is that the tiny creatures are actually God's ministers, commissioned to teach men needed lessons. Sonnet 197 or "The Fly's Lecture" reveals the instance of a fly's assuaging Turner's grief and its attendant doubts.

My faith is lifted on two gauzy wings,
And served with light by two metallic eyes.

At another point in his life when he is stiff with gout and half envious of all creatures which can move easily and with grace, he spies an insect, "a little helpless minim, slight and slim," on his page. Thinking that surely he can be gracious and condescending to so tiny a thing with so little to envy, he is annoyed when the "atom" effortlessly rises in the air (Sonnet 275). The following sonnet is an apology for his fit of peevishness and a declaration that the insect was a "chiding angel of the smallest wing."
... commissioned to rebuke my pride, and spring
Thy tiny pennons on me unaware;
Thy smart and sudden lesson was the thing
I needed. ...  

Sonnet 276.

The poet's universal sympathy may be observed once again in three sonnets about insects trapped behind window-panes and seeking to escape. He tells in Sonnet 326 of being too absorbed in reading of Julius Caesar's death to open the window for a bee.

... And so he died for lack of human aid.
I could not change the Roman's destiny;
I might have set the honey-maker free.

Insects were not ordinarily left to die in their vain attempts to penetrate the glass, for Turner explains in Sonnet 196:

... when I see them pining, worn, and vext,
I brush them softly with a downward sweep
To the raised sash. ...

The poet laments in Sonnet 209 that the lives of the house-flies are so brief and that when they die, they must be swept out into the wind and rain. However, it is a consolation that it will be impossible for them to revive and be forced to "cast about for foothold in that roaring world without."

An entirely different tone prevails in Sonnet 339 where Turner humorously records his mock heroic speech to a fly which has settled on his bald head "when chairs and dusky wardrobes cease to shine." He realizes that the insect will
be attracted to the window when the sun rises, but until then,

... thou art on dangerous ground:
An angry sonnet, or a hasty hand,
May slander thee, or crush thee: thy shrill sound
And constant touch may shake my self-command:
And thou mayst perish in that moment's spite,
And die a martyr to thy love of light.

X. LAND, SEA, AND SKY

Inanimate nature is another subject frequently encountered in Turner's sonnets. Living in the remote village of Grasby, the poet had ample opportunity to observe closely the natural world and to record his impressions. Sonnet 189 serves well to illustrate his lively interest in the three major divisions of the visible world, for he describes the "keen pellucid air," flowers, "rain-plashes" shining in the sun, the long lake, and the sun's glorious beam. Turning to those poems which belong in the more restricted sub-groups, I shall consider first the ones describing the earth and its vegetation.

In sonnet 99 the poet writes of his impatience for spring after the snow has melted off "the earth's green face."

My full heart long'd for violets--the blue arch
Of heaven--the blackbird's song--but Nature kept
Her stately order--Vegetation slept--
Nor could I force the unborn sweets of March
Upon a winter's thaw.

The welcome thaw is the result of the south wind's gentle breathing, but this is not the only situation in which wind
affects the appearance of the land. Turner describes in Sonnet 115 how the sudden gale, like a growing smile that ends in laughter, tosses the ripening harvest. The barley's beard tilts, and the wild-rose "dips among the white-tops in the ditches rear'd."

And hedgerow's flowery breast of lacework stirs
Faintly in that full wind that rocks the outstanding firs.

The beauty of the forest at sunset is rhapsodically described in Sonnet 222. Rays of the sun flashing through thickets and pouring silently through fluttering loop-holes, which suggest to Turner blinking human eyes, defy his most eloquent attempts to tell of them. Finally, he calls them "wells of gold sprung in the glooming leafage," and once more he alludes to the influence of the wind by remarking that "the dance of wilding-boughs was pleasant to behold."

The glory of the earth at sunrise is the theme which Turner suggests to a fellow-poet in Sonnet 257.

'Tis morn--'tis May! arouse thy drooping powers,
Sing of the bright June-roses ere they come,
Anticipate the Summer's blowing flowers.

The more spectacular and majestic scenes in nature are described in Sonnet 258, for in this poem Mount Snowdon is celebrated. Those who climb the mountain are intent to breathe the exhilarating air at the summit; therefore, they push on past "dark-blue tarns, and silver mists and echoes." Nevertheless, the humbler aspects of nature are not dis-
paraged, for a weaker member of the party, who cannot continue the climb.

... Sat with the boulders, and the shining threads Of mountain-spiders, till his friends came back; And watch'd their light among the breezy ferns. Their shy escapes and beautiful returns, And caught and kiss'd the wandering thistle-seeds.

Turner seems to revere trees more than any other part of the natural world. His passion for trees is thoroughly romantic, for he believes that they have dignity, personality, and the capacity to teach human hearts while they please human eyes. The poet addresses Sonnet 219 to a tree which had been transplanted from the moors to his garden where it had grown "so beautiful and grand." He congratulates the tree and the family on their mutual good fortune—"Kind Heaven knew the boon we all received."

Turner's veneration for trees leads him to protest earnestly a wood-sale sponsored by a group of non-resident proprietors. Under a thin layer of humor, the reader detects the author's firm opposition to profaning the forest for mercenary ends.

Shall not the phantom-axe, with viewless strokes, The quiet purlieus of your traffic vex? And the grim voice of all these aged oaks Go storming o'er your ledgers, to perplex Your clerks with sylvan horror? This fair haunt Of light and shadow, and divine repose, Low-fallen at last beneath your ruthless blows, Waits its last shame, the hammer. Do not vaunt The pelf your ravage brings you; for the ban Of all the woods is on you! you have spared No shelter for the dreams of god or man.
Who stirr'd the wood-god's bile, what risks he ran
Of old! ay, even the heedless swain, who dared
To tune his pipe across the nose of Pan!

Sonnet 322 is another statement of the poet's deep interest in trees; however, in this instance the trees are afflicted, not by the woodman's axe, but by swarms of insects. After reading how the foresters stripped the bark off pines and attempted to burn the beetle pest away, Turner hears the agonized sighing of the Boehmer Wald as the ageless forest sings its own dirge.

. . . nor seem'd it strange
That I, so jealous of the woodman's stroke,
So chary of the lives of pine and oak,
Should catch the sound of sylvan grief and change,
The forest's dying voice across the seas.

Although the sea is mentioned briefly in many of Turner's sonnets, there are surprisingly few which may be classified as poems about the sea. Of course, he spent most of his life in the bleak, inland village of Grasby, which he left only for infrequent holidays in Scotland or North Wales. Sonnet 6 is thoroughly English in the attitude which it expresses toward the sea, for the sound of the waves is glorious, "a tutelar fond voice, a Savior-tone of love!" With its admiring description of the sea, whether it be serene or rough, Sonnet 330 reveals the same love for the sea.

In two poems Turner emphasizes the hazards of the sea, but there are indications that these only make her more
fascinating and a more worthy opponent for the English in a continuous matching of wits. Sonnet 225 pictures Danger as a grim figure inhabiting the narrow seas and seeking an opportunity to bring disaster, but

... while he rode the waves from place to place
Like Hermes, his rude eyes the lighthouse met;
And, as it seem'd to scan his heathen face
At leisure, he was dazzled and beset,
Morn dawn'd--in haste he bade the winds prepare
To wreck at eve the outgoing fisherman:
But Fitzroy heard--the storm-drum rose in air,
And not a coble but had changed its plan;
While in his ears the spit-buoys swung their bells.
He could not dodge our English sentinels.

The buoy-bell is praised in Sonnet 73 for faithfully performing its lonely task amid the boisterous waves, "sore-vext by ocean's power." Turner compares the buoy to a leper, enforcing its own solitude by warning men of the "place of jeopardy," "danger's realm."

In discussing the sonnets which Turner wrote about the sky, I shall consider first those which describe the ordinary scenes whose regularity and dependability the poet values. Then I shall mention those sonnets concerning unusual and spectacular celestial phenomena which excited Turner.

Sonnet 110 is a rather conventional aubade in which he credits the beauty of the morning with dispelling his depression. He wakes just as the east begins to blaze, and one late star looks on with him as "the morn breathed up in rosy clouds, divinely fair." A similar experience is recorded in
Sonnet 230 where Turner writes of lying awake for a long time in his berth on a Jersey steamer waiting to detect the first faint glimmer of light. When the summons appears, he goes out on the deck to witness the sunrise.

The brazen plates upon the steerage-wheel
Flash'd forth; the steersman's face came full in view;
Found at his post, he met the bright appeal
Of morning-tide, and answer'd 'I am true!'

The night sky also has beauties to offer the beholder, and, in an apostrophe to Orion (215), Turner expresses his appreciation of those beauties. He tells of having seen Orion soar from out some snowy cloud which strong winds eventually dispersed; then he observed that Orion's "frame of jewels" is not subject to earth-bound winds. In the next sonnet (216), he contrasts the calm majesty of the stars to the feverish rantings of men:

. . . Stars that gleam'd
Free-winds and fleecy drift, how pure they seem'd,
How alien from the hearts that grovel'd so!

The rainbow bursts "like magic" on the poet's eyes, although he sees in it God's ancient promise which is "frail in its date, eternal in its guise." The vision is so impressive that the poet feels his heart "imbued with beauty like its [the rainbow's] own." The last six lines are devoted to an enraptured description of its beauty, with the concluding couplet contrasting it to the drab, rain-drenched
earth:

It lies so soft on the full-breasted storm,
New-born o' the middle air, and dewy-pure,
And trick'd in Nature's choicest garniture;
What can be seen of lovelier dye or form?
While all the groves assume a ghastly stain,
Caught from the leaden rack and shining rain!

Sonnet 48.

More out of the ordinary than the rising sun, the stars, and the rainbow is the eclipse of the moon. Turner witnessed such an eclipse in October, 1865, and indicates in his sonnet on that occasion (212) that he was surprised to hear only the bustling of a distant train while the heavens "mutely went through that grand process." The poet missed seeing the meteors the next year (1866), a disappointment which resulted in his writing Sonnets 217 and 218 in which he expresses his regret at having missed the spectacular phenomenon.

... My soul was pain'ü,
My very soul, to have slept while others woke,
While little children their delight outspoke,
And in their eyes' small chambers entertain'd
Far motions of the Kosmos!

In the second poem Turner humorously observes that he must wait thirty years "ere such bright vision reappears," and by then he will either be dead or dying. If he should still be alive, he hopes that some "good youth, or maid, or rosy elf" will set his face heavenward.
The sonnets which reveal an interest in the past are, for the most part, concerned with individuals drawn from history or legend; however, the poet also writes of ancient localities. The first category contains sonnets such as 157 and 158, both of which are entitled simply "Philoctetes," and both take up the story of King Poeas' son after his being summoned from Lemnos to assault the walls of Troy with his charmed arrows. Sonnet 157 tells of the Trojans' dismay at the return of Philoctetes, the friend of Hercules.

Silent they gaze from Iliom's battlements--
Yon sail today has brought her latest foe;
Silent they gaze upon the plain below,
And hear glad voices from the Grecian tents. . . .

Troy's helplessness before the onslaught of Philoctetes' arrows and the revenge of Menelaus and Oenone are predicted in Sonnet 158, whose sestet presents a still-life of the mighty weapons which will accomplish this on board the Grecian ship:

. . . The mighty bow lies still on board,
And dips and rises with the heaving wave:
The ship-light flickers on that thirsty hoard
Of arrows, which the twelve-fold labourer gave;
The night-watch halts beside it, pondering all
The dreadful purport of his chief's recall.

Alexander the Great, who symbolizes better than any other the ruthless warrior, flushed with success and pride, is the subject of Sonnet 123. Turner pictures the conqueror
as he expounds his ambitious schemes at Babylon which were frustrated.

He thought to build and drain with busy power--
But could not pass beyond the appointed goal;
... .............................
... evening's beam,
And morn's, look'd down upon a realm of fear,
With pools and mounds and marshes far and near.

Sonnet 300 develops further the theme of Alexander's ultimate weakness and of the brevity of earthly glory, for this poem describes a little child's spinning a coin which bears Alexander's image.

His dust is lost among the ancient dead,
A coin his only presence: he is gone:
And all but this half mythic image fled--
A simple child may do him shame and slight;
'Twixt thumb and finger take the golden head,
And spin the horns of Ammon out of sight.

Henry VIII is the object of Turner's derision in Sonnet 296 because of his brutal nonchalance in saying, "Let us go a-hunting," when he learned that Queen Anna's execution had been accomplished. The poet asserts that those "brief words" will live always, condemning the cruel king who spoke them.

Sonnet 31 is an apostrophe to Mary Queen of Scots, for whom Turner expresses sympathy because of the harsh opinion generally held of her by the public. He assures her that he is convinced of her innocence and that all good spirits are working to "move the lost truth to the light." The next sonnet seeks to explain how she was the victim of "a jealous brain beneath a southern crown," and how
... from afar she felt
The waxen image of her fortunes melt
Beneath the Tudor's eye, while the grim frown
Of her own lords o'ermaster'd her sweet smiles--
And nipt her growing gladness, till she mourn'd
And sank, at last, beneath their cruel wiles. ... 

Since that time, the poet maintains, all generous hearts have earnestly desired to clear her fame.

After these two poems in defense of Mary, Turner states his admiration for Elizabeth, "though tarnished thus with crime" (Sonnet 83). He praises her for her efforts to maintain England's national sovereignty and particularly for her leadership when the nation was threatened by the Armada:

When any darkness fell upon the time,
She heard the Jesuit's foot steal near the throne;
When man and nature felt the advancing stress
Of that great armament, her mighty soul
Took heart--right-royal was her self-control;
Thames held his state. ... 

Sonnet 52 shows Turner to be fascinated by ancient places, the scenes of historic events. Of course, his religious fervor prompts him to include Jerusalem and Bethlehem among those "great localities" which he would like to transport to England where he could visit them and yet not neglect his duties which compel him to remain at home. However, the other areas listed are associated with secular history:

Then would I summon here old Cheops' tomb,

... next, with change of mood,
Fair Athens should be welcomed, and the rest
Of those immortal cities, one by one;
And, for my latest atmospheric guest,
I'd bid that crumbled mound from Babylon
Come looming up at sundown... 

The poet is struck by the contrast between the appearance of the site of Constantine's amphitheater at Treves (Sonnet 59) in the nineteenth century and the way it must have looked when the barbarous contests were held there. Joined to the arena where the captives fought were baths and a palace--"This is the spot"--and now, "where the crowd, 'mid plaudits and alarms... seal'd the will of Rome," grapevines stand.

While visiting the ruins of an ancient Roman bath in England, Turner thinks of the early Roman inhabitants of the island and marvels that before the later invaders arrived,

. . . Ofttimes here
A home and grave the peaceful Roman found
And little Caius coo'd on British ground.

Sonnet 319.

Sonnet 159 was inspired by the discovery of an old Roman shield in the Thames. This object fires the poet's imagination, because he realizes that it has been "lost to human reach" since some soldier lost it in the river centuries before. It seems to speak of the world and the age to which it belonged:

At last the Roman buckler reappears,
And makes an old-world clang upon the beach,
Its first faint voice for many a hundred years...
After musing on the sights and sounds which the shield must have witnessed, Turner makes his protest against war which I have mentioned above.

Current politics, as well as personalities and places from the past, receive Turner's attention; for instance, Sonnets 121 and 238 concern contemporary events in Greece. After King Otho was deposed by a provisional government in 1862, the protecting powers of Greece—Great Britain, Russia, and France—set about the search for a successor. William, the second son of the heir to the throne of Denmark, was selected. Arriving in Athens in October, 1863, he took the title "George I of the Hellenes." Sonnet 121 celebrates the new king's coming to power, "this purer second birth of royalty" after the autocratic rule of Otho, former prince of Bavaria. The closing lines exhort the Ionian Islands to

Remember England, ruling but to save,
And how she listen'd to your earnest vows;
Remember England. . .
For what her mighty hand, unfolding, gave.

This refers to the decision of the British cabinet in December, 1862, to renounce the protectorate of the Ionian Islands in favor of Greece.²

Sonnet 238, published ten years after George's accession, records the poet's delight at the freedom which non-Greeks enjoy once more of ranging the country without restriction.

What joy thy pupils of the West shall feel
To dream the old war-notes, or the softer peal
Of pastoral sound from folds of Arcady!

²
Turner, in an apostrophe to Greece, suggests that the Grecophil is free to roam the country because George's enlightened rule has brought freedom to Greece herself.
A large part of Turner's writing on religious subjects is devoted to theological controversy. At a time when many Christians were becoming weak in the faith, or defecting altogether, Turner wrote sonnets attacking the agnosticism and liberalism which fostered doubts concerning the divinity of Christ and the authenticity of the Biblical record. I should like to examine the theological trends of the nineteenth century more in detail in order to ascertain the specific issues with which the orthodox Turner was concerned.

If the Jews are left out of account, the English Deists of the eighteenth century were probably the first men in England since the conversion of the Danes openly to reject Christianity, and yet live. In that intellectual battle the church held her own, but it was never again to be the case that England was a country in which every man was professedly Christian. As the nineteenth century progressed, the Enlightenment or Aufklärung, marked by rationalism and free-thought, gained momentum until the onset of the body of intelligent attack on Christian faith became quite formidable indeed. Of course, it must be realized that the criticism of Christianity was only part of a wider critical movement that is only one of the most remarkable products of that very remarkable century. All through the century men had been learning to try everything, till by the end all accepted institutions and ideas had been brought to the crucible: the
old ideas of patriotism, the old ideas about marriage, the institution of private property, accepted forms in poetry, in art and in music. All had been tried, and in most men had felt that they had detected false metal.  

Kenneth Scott Latourette suggests that the primary threat to traditional Christian faith in the nineteenth century was the increased knowledge by man of his physical environment. So rapidly did this knowledge broaden man's horizons that many had difficulty in reconciling the new perspectives with their understanding of the Christian faith. Although the increase of knowledge had begun well before 1815, it was confined to small circles; however, from this point forward the range and amount of knowledge not only rapidly grew, but much of it also became the common property of the educated and in more or less garbled form was familiar to the majority of the population.

A brief outline of the significant advances in knowledge which raised doubts concerning Christianity is all that is necessary for my purpose. Some inquiry into the age of the planet had been made in the eighteenth century through the study of geology. This study was intensified in the course of the nineteenth century, and in 1830 Charles Lyell (1797-1875) assembled and interpreted the early discoveries in his *Principles of Geology*. On the Continent as well as in England scientists were studying the history of the earth and greatly
augmenting the fund of knowledge on this subject.\(^4\)

Of course, the most controversial scientific work of the century was Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*, which was published in 1859. In 1871 Darwin published *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. He was not entirely original, for he had borrowed from Lamarck the theory of the transmission of acquired characteristics, and he was familiar with Lyell's works on geology and Thomas Robert Malthus's *Essay on Population* (1798).\(^5\)

"Darwinism" was popularized by Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), who coined the term "agnostic" to describe the position of one who believed the evidence insufficient to affirm or deny religious convictions. Ernst Heinrich Haeckel (1834-1919), a noted German biologist, did much to publicize Darwinism on the Continent.

Latourette gives a concise appraisal of the influence of Darwin's work on Christianity:

By professing to trace the descent of man from lower forms of life Darwinism seemed not only to render untenable the Biblical account of the creation of all life and of man in particular but also to deprive man of a soul and of immortality. Earnest Christians rose to the defence of the faith, sometimes with heat and little intelligence. Others endeavoured to show that whatever of fact was disclosed by "evolutionists" was not incompatible with Christian faith, but rather, enriched it.\(^6\)

Many people, Darwin himself among them, felt themselves
compelled after much pain and in all honesty to renounce their erstwhile orthodoxy and to describe themselves as agnostic.

Scientific discovery was not the only cause of a general surrender of Christian faith. The challenge of philosophers and men of letters was also a decisive factor in creating serious doubts in the minds of the public. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), himself an admirer of Christianity, formulated a pantheistic philosophy which holds that the Absolute Idea operates through a dialectic of many triads. Hegel employed Christian terms in such fashion that he seemed to endorse them; consequently, many people held that they could accept the Hegelian philosophy and remain orthodox Christians. 7

Younger contemporaries of Hegel, Comte and Schopenhauer, attacked Christianity directly. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) devised a religion known as Positivism in which the Great Being, namely, all who have labored in the past for the improvement of mankind, is substituted for God. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was a thoroughgoing pessimist who taught that evil is inescapable and the idea of personal immortality nonsense. 8

Philosophical trends similar to these which emerged on the Continent were observable in Great Britain at approximately the same time. Although the denial of Christianity was not
always as emphatic there as on the Continent, the effect of
those who did not denounce it so strongly may have been more
extensive and more penetrating than was that of its more
enthusiastic detractors.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) records in *Sartor Resartus*
the inner struggle which he experienced before deciding to
abandon his ministerial studies and his Christian faith.
Jeremy Bentham (1738-1832), who founded the Utilitarians,
did not attack Christianity unreservedly, but he was anti¬
clerical and opposed to dogmatic Christianity. His close
friend, James Mill (1773-1836), left the ministry of the
Church of Scotland and contended that some of the basic
Christian doctrines were contrary to sound morals. His
famous son, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), explains that his
father found it impossible to believe that a world so full
of evil could have been the work of an Author combining
infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness. John
Mill regarded religion as a great moral evil rather than as
a mere mental delusion, because he felt that it set up
fictitious excellences--belief in creeds, devotional feelings,
and ceremonies, not connected with the good of human-kind--
and that it caused these to be accepted as substitutes for
genuine virtues. James Mill also abhorred religion because
he believed that it radically vitiated the standard of morals
by making it consist in doing the will of a being, on whom
it lavished all the phrases of adulation, but whom in sober truth it depicted as eminently hateful. 9

Two Englishmen who vigorously denounced orthodox Christianity were Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891) and George Jacob Holyoake. The latter adopted the term "secularist" to describe himself and others who held similar views. Bradlaugh became president of the National Secular Society, founded by Holyoake. This and many similar societies attracted thousands of converts with their denunciations of Christianity.

In view of the developments which have been mentioned, it is easy to understand what took place in the study of religion and the study of the Bible.

Many sought to apply scientific methods to the study of religion in general and of Christianity in particular. As they did so, would faith in Christianity be weakened or even dissolved? As time-distances shrank and as he came more and more into contact with other cultures, Western European man compared religions, including Christianity, with one another and developed histories of religion. In his study of man he created a branch of science which he called anthropology and related it closely with what he described as the science of society or sociology. He found religion to be an integral phase of these sciences. As scholars applied to Christianity the principles and tests which they employed with other religions and religion in general, to many of them and those who read their findings it seemed to lose its distinctiveness as expressing the unique and final revelation of God. Its development and the Bible, as a collection of documents associated with it, were subjected to the methods of study that were used with other religions and with writings esteemed sacred by their adherents. All religions came to be regarded by many as man's search for meaning and for the unknown. Beginning
on a primitive level with early man, religion was seen, in the course of its history, to take many forms. In spite of differences, they had common patterns, some of which were shared by Christianity.  

The revolution which took place in the study of the Bible was the result of applying the critical methods of dealing with historical records developed by scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the Bible. Two main types of criticism emerged. Textual criticism was concerned solely with the recovery from extant manuscripts and other evidence of the texts of the Books as they left their authors' hands. The second type of Biblical criticism was interested in ascertaining the authorship and accuracy of the narratives by studying the literary methods and sources used by the authors of the Books of the Old and the New Testaments.  

Much of this criticism was done reverently and brought about an increased understanding of the Jewish background and the origins of Christianity and a deepened appreciation of the faith. "For many, however, its impact was so revolutionary that it weakened or destroyed confidence in the inspiration of the Scriptures and in Christ and the Gospel."  

Turner, with his strongly evangelical bent, was shocked and appalled by the rather massive defection of his contemporaries from the traditional tenets of Christianity. He attempts no systematic refutation of the neologists but in dozens of sonnets published after the middle of the century he warns against those
who doubted the divinity of Christ and the historicity of the Biblical account, whether they were avowed agnostics or Christians who had become liberal and rationalistic in order to harmonize their faith with the new knowledge. In Sonnet 233 Turner gives his formula for remaining strong in the Faith when it is criticized by those who "plead or sneer." He clearly states his disapproval of both the outspoken critic and the false friend:

Be proof against the sweet word or the scoff:
A light-laid faith will soon be lifted off
Into some scorner's nostrils, when his pride
Smells at your simple creed in free disdain;
Nor let the smile of gentler critics fix
Their spells upon you--they who deftly mix
Some Christian truth with errors black as Styx;
Charming to sleep the conscience and the brain,
Without the spleen of coarser heretics.

In my discussion of Turner's sonnets on the subject of theological controversy I have divided the sonnets about which I shall comment according to whether they are directed against the admitted agnostic or against the Christian of liberal theology.

With pronounced irony Turner heaps scorn upon a proposal by the secularists that churches be converted into museums and exhibitions. He pretends to praise the change from false to true, from idle mystery to sense and fact; however, it is clear that Turner is contemptuous of those who would scatter apes, mummies, and minerals over the nave and hide the altar with an exhibition of butterflies. Even these brightly colored
insects are a rebuke to the ungodly, because if they were still alive, they would pay tribute to their Creator by floating and trembling silently around the holy place. The concluding couplet expresses the poet's conviction that nothing should be allowed to usurp religion's proper place.

Alas! our science is but shame and loss,
When pack'd and pinn'd to overlay the cross!

Sonnet 295.

After a sonnet in which he triumphantly points out the futility of the ancient decree that the feast of the Roman god Terminus, who presided over boundaries, should be the day beyond which Christianity should be unknown, Turner attacks the "Modern Termini." These are the unbelievers who expect the final discrediting of Christianity at any time and who constantly formulate new theories for that purpose. Optimistically, Turner predicts that their efforts will be no more successful than were those of the Romans, for history and reason militate against these heirs of Terminus.

The charge most often brought against the agnostics in these sonnets is that of attempting to strip Christ of His unique power and to substitute an ineffectual, shadowy figure quite different from the Jesus of Biblical record. After his return from the Mediterranean Turner himself feared that he was not maintaining a clear enough distinction between Christ and the figures in classical art. He prays guiltily in Sonnet
164 that he may not

... merge in Art my Christian fealty!
Through all the winsome sculptures of old Greece
Keep Thou an open walk for Thee and me!
No whiteness is like Thine, All-pure and good!
No marble weighs against Thy precious Blood.

Apparently incensed by someone's placing the name Orpheus beneath a picture of the crucifixion, Turner lashes out against this linking of Christ with the "mythic harper" (Sonnet 127). He despises such efforts to deny the factuality of the meaningful life, death, and resurrection of Christ by indicating that His name is interchangeable with that of a mythological figure. This kind of understatement is only a means of invalidating faith and supplanting the Redeemer with "this sweet-toned mythus" who meets no sinner's need (Sonnet 128). The same subject is continued in Sonnet 129 where Turner stresses that mythology has a legitimate place to fill but that it must not be placed on an equality with Christianity.

O friend, it is a deep religious loss
To palter with our Master's pure renown;
To lose the sad precision of the Cross
In Fancy's lights, and melt away His crown;
Gazing on truth, why should our vision swim?
Let Calvary stand clear of fabulous mist,
Keep all the paths of Olivet for Christ,
And let no Orphic phantom walk with Him!
Then, and then only, welcome! what they tell
Of that magic harp, which came full-strung
Among the woes of Hades, to compel
A pause in all her penance--of the spell
Marr'd by a look--and of that faithful tongue,
Which Death and Hebrus strove in vain to quell.
Turner found the writings of German and French scholars particularly objectionable because of their tendency to rob Christianity of its distinctiveness by attempting to explain it and its founder in natural terms. He protests in Sonnet 144 that all their theories are merely "cruel daydreams" which deprive men of hope, and he brands their faithlessness a "worse apostacy than Rome's." The abuses and excesses which Turner believed to be characteristic of Catholicism were almost insignificant when compared to a skepticism which was threatening to reduce the traditional faith and "full-orb'd creeds" to "merest nuclei."

Sonnet 132 is directed against the neologists and their fruitless philosophy which sought to explain Christ without supernaturalism. This sonnet purports to be an account of a dream in which Turner saw "Bleak-faced Neology" anxiously watching the flood of new theories and explanations in hopes that the Body of the Christ would soon be visible and, therefore completely explained and accounted for to the satisfaction of the rationalists. Turner reports that as the academically garbed Neology waited,

He came—not It, but He! no rolling waif
Tost by the waves—no drown'd and helpless form—
But with unlapsing step, serene and safe,
As once He trod the waters in the storm;
The gownsman trembled as his God went by—.

The same idea of a personal, living Christ's refuting all the empty speculations of the unbelieving is found in Sonnet 133.
Turner maintains that neither Christ nor the gospels have anything to fear from their detractors, for they have answered the needs of men for centuries.

Turner was disturbed by the work of two men in particular. David Friedrich Strauss published his *Leben Jesu* in 1835, and Joseph Ernest Renan brought out his *Vie de Jesus* in 1863. Strauss was still in his twenties when he wrote his book, pointing out what seemed to him contradictions in the Biblical narratives, denying the virgin birth of Jesus, and casting doubt on the accuracy of the records of the sayings and deeds of Jesus. Renan was originally a Roman Catholic, but through extensive reading he became convinced that he could not conscientiously remain in the church of his youth. *Vie de Jesus* is a readable book, but it is certainly not so substantial a work of scholarship as *Leben Jesu*. In it Renan pictures Jesus as a gentle Galilean who is attractive, but on the whole, an impractical and futile figure.\(^1^4\)

These two books are condemned by Turner in several sonnets, the most obvious one being Sonnet 145 which is entitled "'Leben Jesu and 'Vie de Jesus.'" These modern skeptical works are contrasted to "ancient creeds" which speak of an authentic Savior. While these unholy books encourage doubt in those whose faith is weak, and while the rebellious are made glad, the faithful are horrified at such blasphemy.
what honest soul can wish to see
These churches of the "Leben" or the "Vie"
Get themselves towers in Christendom? how sad
Is this wild masque of Christ that flits athwart
The world, 'Io here! Io there!' from all the schools,
While the true Lord of glory stands apart,
And bides His welcome, as the madness cools,
When they shall greet Him with fond looks and heart,
And test His slighted word by holier rules.

This sonnet was published in 1864, one year after Renan's book. Among the sonnets published in 1868 Turner has another denunciation of Vie de Jesus which was written on hearing of a forthcoming cheap edition. He admits that it is a book of "pleasant phrase," but he charges it with having a narrow span of thought. Of course, the deep tragedy in Turner's opinion is that the cheap edition will be available to simple working people whose abiding faith in a divine Christ will be destroyed, leaving them with a mere "Parisian Christ" who lacks the strength to lift their horny hands. The last lines contain a plea:

... Shall it live
This pleasant book? Oh! join with one accord!
Reject the lore, which--void of spleen or joke,
And in wild earnest--cuts down at one stroke
The measure of the stature of our Lord,
To this unscriptural pigmy! nor invoke
A frail young saint, in lieu of God the Word!

Sonnet 231.

Two sonnets entitled "On Certain Books" also stress the threat which books like those of Strauss and Renan offer to the tender faith of the young and the weak. Although they
are unsuccessful in shaking the faith of mature Christians, these books must be prevented from coming into contact with "all unstable minds" and the "foolish grasping hands of youth." To this end, the earnest vicar appeals to the winds to "blow them far off" and to the dews of heaven to "rot them where they fall." To Turner's mind, this was not "book-burning" or an attempt to suppress ideas and knowledge—it was a holy war to protect unguarded souls from an external pollution which they had not the judgment to avoid.

The second of these sonnets (131) contains Turner's appraisal of what is wrong with the religious theories expounded in the works of the Continental theologians.

Alas! my friend, 'tis motive power one needs
And not these idle fancies ill-advised;
Mere harness will not pull us up to Christ,
Without the strength of full and living creeds;
These shiny morals are no match for sin,
These empty trappings are not force nor speed;
What! shall we hope the chariot race to win
With straps and head-stalls only? To succeed
In that great race, to Faith alone is given--
On-looking faith, whose object fires the will;
And, as the distance shrinks 'twixt earth and heaven,
Glow with its motion, and bears forward still,
Because it marks the goal with steadfast eye,
While smart theosophies lose heart and die.

The tenor of his argument is that there is no redemption without a redeemer. The only hope for men is that the divine power which Christ claimed to possess and to be able to share is now available to them.

Sonnet 135 attacks the old Paulus theory that the Trans-
figuration never actually occurred but that it was rather just an hallucination of the disciples. Turner seeks to refute the theory that Christ would not have lived in such humble circumstances and would not have died such a degrading death if he were really the object of divine interest.

When will the impugners of the Gospel claims
The deep consistent likeness recognize
Between His woes and glories? Living ties
That bind in one His honours and His shames?
For all coheres; His pangs and triumphs touch
Each other, like the wings of Cherubim:
Strange was His Birth--His death and rising, such
As to bear out that strangeness--and as much
May well be said of dark Gethsemane,
That sternest link in the great unity.

The Transfiguration was not the only event in the life of Christ which had been challenged by the critics. Their light treatment of the agony at Gethsemane caused Turner to write Sonnet 137 in which he protests the way they had toned down "in their unhappy way" all the majestic grief which belongs to that experience. He is disgusted with their patronizing talk of "the sweet young Syrian." In marked contrast to this attitude, the church,

... When she would paint her Master's darkest day,
... takes the full-hued life-drop on her brush,
And works in simple faith, as best she may.

The Higher Criticism, which Turner held responsible for all these attacks on the truthfulness of the Gospel stories, receives his full attention in Sonnet 138. Here he follows
his usual practice of defining the issue as one between "our sound faith in Christ" and "a dreamy, hollow, unsubstantiated creed." He accuses this criticism of actually being Sophistry in modern dress and of destroying faith without replacing it with anything; however, he predicts that this Sophistry will see

... these blurr'd and shredded Gospels mount
Beyond the knives and ink-horns!—buoyant yet
With native strength, of which thou madest no count,
And, as heaven's lively oracles, confest
By all, disprove, perforce, each lying test.

The optimism of the preceding lines is carried over into Sonnet 139 in which Turner describes St. John's gospel as a soaring eagle whose flight is not subject to the commands of the "learned critics." The eagle flies freely and refuses to be lured to the critics' "fancy-perch" upon the lower rounds of time.

... bound by no Greek rules,
Nor held in leash by Alexandrian schools—
The mind of Christ, not Plato's, he explores;
Sunward he hies.

Before I proceed to examine the sonnets directed against the liberal clergymen who professed faith in Christ but actually entertained serious doubts, I should like to treat Sonnet 134. In this poem Turner briefly takes up the subject of the sincere agnostic whose attitude is not one of arrogance and pride but who feels that honesty forbids his holding reli-
gious convictions. This type of person is contrasted to those discussed above, for in Turner's opinion, the latter were insolent enemies of God who not only rejoiced in their own infidelity but also bent every effort to undermine the faith of others. He speaks of the former as being free of "this unmanly hate of truth;" they are "purer spirits," "meek men of reverent purpose" who "gaze in sorrow from the land of doubt." Turner states his firm belief that these men who yearn to see the "Healer's face" will, like those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, someday be satisfied.

To all who dare not with their conscience strive,
To all who burn for this most dear success,
Faith shall be born! and, by her natural stress,
Push through these dark philosophies and live!

Less hopeful is the situation in which false divines find themselves. These are apparently the spokesmen for God; however, the external trappings of priesthood cloak deep-seated doubts about Biblical truth and the divinity of Christ. In a series of three sonnets Turner examines the tragedy of these hypocrites on three Christian holidays--Christmas, Easter, and Ascension and Whit-Sunday. The dominant theme of these sonnets is the inability of the doubting priest to enter wholeheartedly into the celebration of the three central events in Christ's life. The announcement of Christ's birth is a "word of joy to thousands, but to some a fable among fables." Turner thinks it a dark hour
... When priesthood in his own white robe shall stand
Forsworn amid the faithful evergreens!
A thief--a traitor to his own right hand!

Sonnet 141.

Easter presents the same difficulty to the priest "who
blinks the faith," for the gleaming chalice, the great east
window ablaze, and the snow-white board mock the doubts he
has about the literal resurrection. "How false he feels when
our high feast returns" (Sonnet 142). His reservations, of
course, exclude him from the joyous observance of the Lord's
ascension.

O! let us follow Him with hymns and prayers
Up to the skirts of that receiving cloud;
But lo! the preacher hath no hope, no trust,
Nor can he, 'mid our coming Whitsun songs,
Make common cause with all those fiery tongues
That hail the glories of the Pentecost.

Sonnet 143.

Sonnet 232 is a more caustic denunciation of the hypo-
critical clergyman who sets himself up as the spiritual
shepherd of humble people whose simple faith contrasts sharp-
ly with his lack of faith. Entitled "Poor Hodge and the Rev.
Sans Foy," this sonnet accuses such a priest of treachery
tantamount to that of Judas.

Poor Hodge prays hard--the wise man smiles embower'd;
The priest-philosopher, who lurks within
That screen of Christmas hollies, though empower'd
For other ends, takes pay for conscious sin:
What does the white-robed hireling, simpering thus
At his poor neighbour's spiritual desire?
Of all that honest faith incredulous,
The tainted vestal mocks the holy fire!
He lives beneath that little twinkling creed
Which counts for light at Tubingen; his list
Of Christian sympathies is brief indeed:
And yet he speaks right loyally for Christ!
Ah! traitorous lips! so Judas falsely kiss'd
The Truth, with thirty pieces for his meed.

There is no hint of pity here for the unbelieving priest as
there was in the three earlier sonnets discussed above.

Not all of Turner's religious sonnets are on the subject
of theological controversy. I have termed those sonnets
devotional which discuss the relationship of the individual
soul to its God, whether it be seeking guidance, offering
praise, or expressing love.

Most of the devotional sonnets discuss the problem of
human frailty and the way in which that frailty is overcome
by divine intervention. Sonnet 30 is the cry of an anguished
human being who feels keenly his own helplessness in facing
temptations. He sees hope as contingent upon Christ's returning
to minister to "all our faded race." This sonnet was
published in 1830, but in Sonnet 54, published in 1864,
Turner says that Christians need no "palpable approach of
fire," no "visual intimation";

Nor do we with our natural eyes require
To test our Guardian-God's protecting aid;
From holier heavens our token-lights descend
Upon our Christian weapons, zeal and love,
To embolden and support us to the end
Of that great war thro' which we daily move,
To raise our drooping hearts and give us sight
Of our great Master's presence in the fight.
This consciousness of unseen but effective assistance is stressed in the other devotional sonnets which show man at the extremities of life.

Sonnet 72 compares the plight of a man in spiritual distress to that of a man at the bottom of the ocean. To the question, "Can Christian hope survive so far below the level of the happiness of man?" comes the answer that

... many a ray
Comes gleaming downward from the source of day,
To guide us reascending from our fall. . . .

A variation on this theme occurs in Sonnet 111. Here God is shown encouraging and sustaining a depressed man by sending a ray of sunshine through the forest. The idea that heavenly guidance was responsible for the man's entering the forest "just when His morning light came down the path" is explicit in the poem.

To remind man of his lost purity and to encourage him to seek moral improvement God commanded the evening star to "shine on thy sister planet at thy side;" at least that is the way some "fond muse" might tell it (Sonnet 107). Turner maintains that not only Hesperus but "all things near and far were made for eyes to see and hearts to read." Thus, God has furnished innumerable "books" for man's enlightenment.

Continuing the use of astronomical images Turner writes in Sonnet 214 that the waning moon is an apt illustration of
the way sin usurps the souls of men.

When the moon's edge grows dim, then blurr'd and rough,
And darkness quarries in her lessening orb,
She yields an image, true and stern enough,
Of all those crimes and sorrows, which absorb
Our hope and life!

However, this dismal picture does not accurately portray the entire situation, for

... the moon expands
Once more, and brightens to a perfect sphere,
A blessed restoration, full and clear;
So Christ refills our waning world, and stands
For her lost light... .

Another figure which the poet employs to suggest the support afforded feeble men in life's crises is that of a lighthouse (Sonnet 224). In darkness "the downs and tender-tinted cliffs are lost," but the beacon keeps burning to guide seafarers. Some holy, ardent thought provides the same security for the man in sorrow.

A sonnet about the erection of a new church building restates the theme of man's need and God's assistance by emphasizing that the worship soon to be conducted in the building is designed for man's edification; therefore,

As to these stone-heaped graves the spring shall give,
Once more, their common bond of daisies sweet,
So may all crush'd and barren souls revive,
In one white field of common graces meet...

Sonnet 282.
Sonnets 77 and 78 are unlike the ones mentioned above in that they represent Christ as aiding the physically handicapped rather than the spiritually disturbed. In the former of these poems Turner relates the desperation he experienced when he thought that he was becoming blind and how he found comfort in Christ, who helped not only in restoring his sight but in teaching him to face blindness courageously if it should come.

This web that falls and rises—Heaven be praised! Thro' its dark meshes I can read Thy Word: Dim holy hopes have dawn'd where sunshine blazed Unheeded; O sweet twilight undeepred! O floating veil! full gently dropped and raised By the good hand of Jesus Christ my Lord.

Also confronted with the loss of one of his senses, the speaker in Sonnet 78 testifies that he besought the All-Giver to restore his blunted sense of smell,

... and breath of roses brought The answer. O! it was a joy intense, After that dreary interval of loss.

Although the devotional sonnets already treated certainly imply praise of God for His ability and willingness to supply the strength needed by frail men, I have chosen to mention separately several sonnets which are explicit songs of praise. The first of these, Sonnet 40, praises God for His might and majesty as they are revealed in an earthquake. Turner observes that most other change is wrought gradually,
but when God wills to remove the landmarks of the earth,

The work is done with noises harsh and loud,
And lightning speed; such ministry fulfills
The 'hest of Him by whom the heavens are bow'd;
Whose throne is compass'd with a mystic cloud,
Who touches into smoke th'eternal hills.

Not only is God supreme in His wielding of the great forces
in nature but He is also powerful in the spiritual realm
where He owns sovereignty over the hearts of men in all areas
of the world (Sonnet 98).

Turner catalogs some of the sources of God's praise
in Sonnet 221. Singing birds, worshipping men, whose praise
is more valuable than "sylvan rapture," poets, and painters--
all are praisers of God. "What a world is Thine, O Lord!--
skies, earth, men, beasts, and birds!" In the closing lines
the poet remarks that although vocal and visible praise is
appropriate, "all self-conscious blazonry" is inferior in
God's eyes to the silent praise which men feel before they
are moved to express it.

Three sonnets concerned with the last days of Christ's
life and with His impending death clearly belong in the group
of devotional sonnets. In these poems there are simple and
sincere expressions of love addressed to Christ. After read-
ing of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the poet
dreams of reversing the subsequent events in the Master's
life:
... I seem'd to line the coming crown
Of thorns with cushions of the silver down
From those cool sallows, cut beside the brook...
Sonnet 290.

His firm belief in the necessity of Christ's atoning death for the sins of men, however, makes him attribute such a dream to "a fond presumptuous pity," and Christ rebukes him for wishing to prevent His efficacious death. In the next sonnet the poet acknowledges his folly and resolves not to attempt to relieve Christ's grief over Jerusalem but vows to imitate the foal "that stands and waits where Thou would'st wait and weep."

"Gethsemane" (Sonnet 136) is an emotional re-telling of Christ's arrest, which is pictured as a cruel hunt. The Lamb is set upon by "harsh official men" and His treacherous apostle; then the arrest is called a slave-auction:

O cruel conclave! where those murderers met;
O vile night-market! where our Lord was sold...

With deep reverence the poet concludes with the thought that God used this means to secure redemption for men and that although He employed hate and guile in accomplishing His will, He left His will still holy.
STRUCTURE AND IMAGERY
An analysis of Turner's sonnets would be incomplete if it were concerned solely with the subject matter of the poems. Certainly it is necessary to know what themes and topics the poet treats, but it is also important to consider how he expresses himself poetically. This chapter is a study of the structure, imagery, and other poetic devices used by Turner in his sonnets.

I have selected for analysis several of the poems which illustrate well the general characteristics of the entire collection. The sonnets were not chosen at random; instead, they were chosen because they are representative of Turner's work as a whole and because they lend themselves well to the kind of careful study intended in this section.

It is not surprising that frequent Biblical allusions occur in Turner's sonnets, for his thoroughly conservative religious convictions were the chief influence on his writing. By understanding these references to Biblical persons and events the reader gains an interesting insight into the way Turner solved some of the problems of composition.

Turner is fond of extended and elaborate comparisons or conceits, and he makes a practice of personifying abstract concepts such as Jealousy, Joy, and Danger. Another characteristic of his poetry is the sensuousness achieved through color and auditory effect, especially the creation of a certain mood or atmosphere by means of silence.

Occasionally he uses recurring vowel sounds or alliter-
ation to create a certain mood. Since all of the sonnets are written in iambic pentameter, I have paid little attention to meter except in those scattered lines where the poet seems intentionally to have employed metrical irregularity.

I.

Quick gleam! that ridest on the gossamer!
How oft I see thee, with thy wavering lance,
Tilt at the midges in their evening dance,
A gentle joust set on by summer air!
How oft I watch thee from my garden-chair!
And, failing that, I search the lawns and bowers,
To find thee floating o'er the fruits and flowers,
And doing thy sweet work in silence there:
Thou art the poet's darling, ever sought
In the fair garden or the breezy mead;
The wind dismounts thee not; thy buoyant thread
Is as the sonnet, poising one bright thought,
That moves but does not vanish! borne along
Like light,—a golden drift through all the song!

Turner begins this sonnet with an apostrophe to the light which plays along the gossamer thread, but in the course of the poem he addresses the gossamer itself. Halfway through the sonnet he is saying,

How oft I watch thee from my garden-chair!
And, failing that, I search the lawns and bowers,
To find thee floating o'er the fruits and flowers... .

These lines are obviously addressed to the film of cobwebs rather than to the gleam it reflects.

This light which the gossamer thread catches is compared to a knight on horseback, for the gleam rides on the gossamer, and reminds the poet of a "wavering lance" tilting at the
gnats while they hover, constantly moving as if engaged in a
dance. Unlike a violent chivalric contest, however, this is
a "gentle joust" fought not because of some implacable rage
but "set on by summer air." Later it is termed a "sweet work"
done in silence amid fruits and flowers. After this contrast
has been pointed out, there is a final equestrian allusion
in the line, "The wind dismounts thee not. . . ." Once again
the poet seems to be speaking to the gleam of light; then he
turns immediately to the gossamer with the words, "thy buoyant
thread. . . ."

The filmy substance is described as being always in motion
because of the wind. The words "wavering," "summer air,"
"floating," "breezy," "buoyant," "moves, "borne along," "drift,"
"wind," and the emphasis placed on searching for the gossamer--
all suggest its gentle yet incessant motion as it responds to
even the slightest air currents. Turner develops the same
impression with the fluid and alliterative line, "... To
find thee floating o'er the fruits and flowers. . . ."

In the last four lines of the poem he sets up a comparison
between the gossamer and the gossamer-light and the sonnet
and its single thought according to the scheme: gossamer is
to gossamer-light as a sonnet is to its thought. Just as the
thread conducts the flashing gleam of light, the sonnet carries
"one bright thought" which shifts and develops without vanish-
ing. This thought gives glory to the sonnet in the same way
that light enhances the gossamer.
II.

Oft in our fancy an uncertain thought
Hangs colourless, like dew on bents of grass,
Before the morning o'er the field doth pass;
But soon it glows and brightens; all unsought
A sudden glory flashes thro' the dream,
Our purpose deepens and our wit grows brave,
The thronging hints a richer utterance crave,
And tongues of fire approach the new-won theme;
A subtler process now begins—a claim
Is urged for order, a well-balanced scheme
Of words and numbers, a consistent aim;
The dew dissolves before the warming beam;
But that fair thought consolidates its flame,
And keeps its colours, hardening to a gem.

In this sonnet Turner explains the method by which poets compose their poetry. The illustration is drawn from the world of nature with the poet's first vague thought's being compared to the colorless dew before sunrise. The sun is equated with poetic inspiration, the insight necessary to transform the bare thought into a poetic theme. The uncertain thought glows and brightens with the endowment of this inspiration in the same way that the clear dew-drop becomes prismatic in the sun's rays. Turner states that the quickening of the poet's imagination is "all unsought," derived from an external source over which the poet has no more control than does the dew over the sun. This suggestion of supernatural intervention is further developed by the allusion to "tongues of fire" approaching the theme, for this is an obvious reference to the Holy Spirit which descended upon the disciples on Pentecost and which sat on each of them in the
form of "cloven tongues as of fire."

After the exciting comprehension of the theme with all its "thronging hints" a subtler process—the search for order and form—begins. The highly irregular, thrilling thought must be wedded to the regularity of "words and numbers."

Although the sun's warmth destroys the dew-drop, a thought elevated to the status of poetry becomes indestructible. Clothed in a "well-balanced scheme," it hardens to a gem.

III.

Poor malkin, why hast thou been left behind?
The wains long since have carted off the sheaves,
And keen October, with his whistling wind,
Snaps all the footstalks of the crisping leaves;
Methinks thou art not wholly make-believe;
Thy posture, hat, and coat, are human still;
Could'st thou but push a hand from out thy sleeve!
Or smile on me! but ah! thy face is nil!
The stubbles darken round thee, lonely one!
And man has left thee, all this dreary term,
No mate beside thee—far from social joy;
As some poor clerk survives his ruin'd firm,
And, in a napless hat, without employ,
Stands, in the autumn of his life, alone.

This sonnet is a study of bleakness and lifelessness.

The scarecrow is addressed by the poet as "Poor malkin," an obsolete term meaning "slattern" or "drab" as well as scarecrow, and the tone is established in the question which follows: ". . . why hast thou been left behind?" Harvest has passed; in fact the heavy farm wagons (wains) "long since have carted off the sheaves." October, a month of decay, is
personified as a spoiler whose "whistling wind" breaks the footstalks. Turner chooses words like "snaps" and "crisping" to indicate the absence of life in the stubble.

Even the scarecrow which appears to be "not wholly make-believe" is actually devoid of life and personality. It is ironic that a figure clothed in hat and coat and standing in the posture of a human being should not be partially human; however, it does not have even the simple physical ability to push a hand out of its sleeve, and a smile is impossible because its face is nil. The dismal picture is further set forth by the poet's mentioning the darkening stubbles which surround the lonely counterfeit.

And man has left thee, all this dreary term,
    No mate beside thee--far from social joy. . . .

These two lines emphasize the utter loneliness of the scarecrow--a pathetic situation since Turner still has not fully surrendered the idea that the figure possesses some humanity which would enable it to appreciate a mate and social joy. He may give mental assent to the scarecrow's lifelessness, but he still suspects that it is capable of feeling. The silent, barren field where it once performed a valuable service is compared to a "ruin'd firm," and the scarecrow is likened to the poor clerk who survives the firm only to find himself alone and old, poverty stricken and jobless.
IV.

The Ocean, at the bidding of the Moon,
For ever changes with his restless tide;
Flung shoreward now, to be regather'd soon
With kingly pauses of reluctant pride,
And semblance of return. Anon from home
He issues forth again, high ridged and free;
The gentlest murmur of his seething foam,
Like armies whispering where great echoes be!
Oh! leave me here upon this beach to rove,
Mute listener to that sound so grand and lone—
A glorious sound, deep-drawn and strongly thrown,
And reaches those on mountain-heights above,
To British ears, as who shall scorn to own,
A tutelar fond voice, a Saviour-tone of love!

The ocean is spoken of as "he" in this sonnet. It is represented as constantly changing with restless tide which flings the water shoreward, then regathers it only to repeat the process. This sense of unceasing motion does not hasten the tempo of the poem as one might expect it to; instead it is characterized by majesty and deliberateness. The ocean moves "with kingly pauses of reluctant pride," and "he issues forth... high ridged and free." These descriptions stress the regalness of the ocean with its formal and ritualistic movements.

Turner's description of the sound made by the ocean also develops the idea of its dignity, for the "gentlest murmur of his seething foam" reminds the listener of the sound which the echoing whispers of thousands of soldiers would produce—not loud but deep and haunting. He states explicitly that it is "grand and lone," "glorious," "deep-drawn and strongly
thrown." There is also the implication that the sea has something to teach him who will receive its message. The poet pleads emotionally in the closing lines that he be left alone on the beach where he intends to be a "mute listener," eager to hear the voice of the sea. Despite its solemnity, it is not a fearful sound but rather like the Saviour's voice, sober yet loving.

Another factor which contributes to the sense of majesty in this poem is the extensive use of words with the long o sound: "ocean," "shoreward," "home," "forth," "foam," "echoes," "Oh," "rovet," "so," "lone," "glorious," "thrown," "those," "own," "tone." These words lend assonance while giving the sonnet an air of dignity and formality.

VI.
The Murder of Bishop Patteson

When far from home some noble martyr dies,
We read his sacred story o'er and o'er;
Like incense drifting from a sacrifice,
His name blows sweet from that disastrous shore,
O'er the broad waters to his native land;
But, though our martyr'd saint has fallen asleep,
And closed his ardent eyes, we need not weep;
Unfoil'd the purpose of the Lord shall stand!
His world-wide Church out-grows the powers of Hell,
His holy Ark expands! O'er lands and seas
The golden wings of Cherubim shall meet,
Till all the tribes shall own one Mercy-seat:
The school of faithful prophets shall not cease
With him, who loved his hundred isles so well!

John Coleridge Patteson founded the Melanesian Mission in 1855. Six years later he was consecrated the first Bishop
of Melanesia; then in 1871 he was murdered on the island of Nukapu in revenge for the kidnapping of some of the inhabitants by white men, a few months earlier. His fate made a deep impression in England and aroused much interest in mission work. Turner's sonnet reveals this interest in its emphasis on the good which may be expected to result from Patteson's death. The first five lines concern the "noble martyr" and the reception of the news of his martyrdom. In the following three lines the poet announced the consolation, shifting his attention from the martyr to the "purpose of the Lord." The concluding lines enlarge upon the idea of the Lord's using this tragic incident to extend the boundaries of His influence.

Turner employs much Old Testament imagery in this poem. The mention of incense and sacrifice first suggests early Hebrew worship, and by juxtaposing incense and sacrifice, the martyr's name and "that disastrous shore," he develops the idea of good coming from evil, the central theme of the work. The unpleasant odor of burning flesh is sweet-smelling to God, because it indicates that His people are performing their religious obligations. The name of Bishop Patteson is thrilling to his countrymen even though it comes to them in a message announcing his murder on "that disastrous shore." His death reminds them of his devotion and courage as well as of the need for more work like his. Since all things work together for good, this martyrdom will contribute to the triumph of
Christianity.

After echoing Christ's claim that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church (Matthew 16:18)—"His world-wide Church out-grows the powers of Hell"—Turner resumes his use of Old Testament imagery. Following this statement about the Church, the "holy Ark" probably refers to the Ark of Noah, which St. Peter and the Christian Fathers interpreted symbolically as the Church, because it was the only means of salvation; it contained pure and impure animals (typifying saints and sinners); it was tossed about by tempests but never submerged. This is the more logical explanation, although the "holy Ark" might be explained as referring to the Ark of the Covenant, which was the most sacred religious symbol of the Hebrew people. It was believed to represent the presence of God, and Church Fathers wrote that it was a type of Christ. In this sense Turner may be saying the presence of God or the knowledge of Christ is spreading—"His holy Ark expands." This would account for the subsequent emphasis on Cherubim and the Mercy-seat, which are closely associated with the Ark of the Covenant. I believe that the poet was thinking of the Ark of Noah as a symbol of the Church; then his mention of the Ark reminded him of the later Ark with its Cherubim and Mercy-seat.

The Cherubim were placed at either end of the Ark with their wings extended to cover the Mercy-seat, which was the
solid gold covering of the Ark. Turner presents the picture of the wings of the Cherubim meeting "o'er lands and seas"; therefore the entire world becomes a kind of Mercy-seat where God meets with "all the tribes" as opposed to the original Mercy-seat where He met only with the twelve tribes of Israel.

The poet predicts that "the school of faithful prophets shall not cease" with Patteson's death. Just as God spoke to Israel through prophets who were often killed by the people, He speaks to all nations in these later centuries through men like Patteson who sometimes meet the same fate as did their Hebrew predecessors. There will be faithful prophets to succeed those who are killed; consequently there is no cause to suppose that God's purpose will be foiled rather than aided by the apparent tragedy.

The sestet rhymes efggfe, a scheme which focuses attention and emphasis on the third and fourth lines which form a couplet in which the central thought may be stated with all the force of an epigram. Turner accomplishes this in his couplet,

.... The golden wings of Cherubim shall meet,  
Till all the tribes shall own one Mercy-seat....

This is the "purpose of the Lord" which the Bishop's death has not frustrated but served--this will be the final proof of God's ability to bring good out of evil.

Turner achieves a tone of reverence and solemnity once
again by his frequent use of words with the broad vowel. "Home," "noble," "o'er and o'er," "blows," "shore," "O'er," "Though," "closed," "out-grows," "o'er," "golden," "own," and "so" contribute to the grandeur of this poem which is at once an elegy and a hymn of praise.

VI.

The Harvest Moon

How peacefully the broad and golden moon
Comes up to gaze upon the reaper's toil!
That they who own the land for many a mile,
May bless her beams, and they who take the boon
Of scatter'd ears; Oh! beautiful! how soon
The dusk is turned to silver without soil,
Which makes the fair sheaves fairer than at noon,
And guides the gleaner to his slender spoil;
So, to our souls, the Lord of love and might
Sends harvest-hours, when daylight disappears;
When age and sorrow, like a coming night,
Darken our field of work with doubts and fears,
He times the presence of His heavenly light
To rise up softly o'er our silver hairs.

This is a fairly regular sonnet in that it is divided into an octave in which Turner describes a natural phenomenon and a sestet in which he parallels the moon's rising to the Lord's care for His people. In the octave the poet writes of the "broad and golden moon" which rises over a cornfield which had recently been harvested; hence the moon gazes upon the reaper's toil. Two classes of people witness the moon's rising: they who own the land "for many a mile" and "they who take the boon of scatter'd ears." The former are clearly the prosperous planters of the region, and although they "bless
her beams" or appreciate the beauty of the moon, the latter who are poor gleaners are thankful for the light because it guides them to their "slender spoil." Nevertheless, both rich and poor are blessed by the harvest moon.

In the middle of the fifth line the poet is almost overcome by emotion as he observes the change in the color of the moon from gold to silver and the rapidity with which the dusk is dispelled and the sheaves bathed in light which disguises their imperfections rather than utterly revealing them as does the noon sun. His interjection, "Oh! beautiful!" produces slight metrical irregularity which provides emphasis and contrast.

In the sestet Turner remarks that man's life is similar to the cornfield pictured in the octave. God sends hours of darkness,

When age and sorrow, like a coming night,
Darken our field of work with doubts and fears...

However, He brightens this dismal period of life with "the presence of His heavenly light." Apparently, Turner has in mind the serenity and increased faith which are usually thought to be characteristic of elderly people. He represents this resignation to God's will as a Providential gift which is imparted gradually as the recipient needs it:

He times the presence of His heavenly light
To rise up softly o'er our silver hairs.
By mentioning the rich and the poor in the octave, Turner suggests that every human being must experience nightfall. The inference is that age and sorrow, or spiritual nightfall, also comes to every man, regardless of station. Of course, the corollary to this is that God's "heavenly light"—faith and courage—is available to every person, whether landlord or gleaner, just as the moon shone on both classes.

The mention of gleaners and gleaning in the octave functions in yet another way to heighten the meaning of the poem. It reminds the reader of God's enduring concern for His people, because in Leviticus 19:9-10 He commands the Israelites to leave part of their crops in the fields for the benefit of the poor and the sojourner. By recalling God's care in supplying the material needs of His people, Turner prepares his readers for the point he makes in the sestet: God sustains men through life's dark hours.

VII.

Nehemiah's Night Ride

When Nehemiah rode into the dark, And stones of ruin cumber'd his advance, And old localities were hard to mark, Methinks he spent some moments in a trance Of sounds from past and future—Abraham's foot With Isaac's on Moriah; then the sign Of Moses, beyond Jordan doom'd to die, So near the soil wherein his heart had root: 'Ay!' thought he, 'and my own fond suit was met By earthly and by heavenly sympathy!' Then came sweet tones from far Gennesaret, A plash, as from the casting of a net, The noise as of a Cross grounded and set Hard by him, and a loud and lonely cry!
The opening lines of this poem stress the theme of disorder and confusion. First, Turner tells of Nehemiah's riding into the dark; then he intensifies this sense of uncertainty by speaking of "stones of ruin" among which Nehemiah had to thread his way. These ruins bear witness to the chaos of war and bring to mind the nation's seventy-year captivity. The poet continues to deepen the feeling of confusion by observing that Nehemiah had difficulty in identifying the old localities. In this situation he falls into a trance during which he hears a chorus of sounds from past and future. These do not form a cacophony, as one might expect, but, instead, they succeed in establishing order and harmony. One reason for this is that each sound represents an event in Hebrew history, and Nehemiah hears each sound in chronological order. Another way in which these sounds bring order is by suggesting events which illustrate one central theme.

Turner is concerned in this poem with showing that God requires His people to suffer. Nehemiah, the Jewish leader of the post-exilic period, was one of those who suffered through the most distressing period of Jewish history. The poet reveals him as he surveys the rubble which was once Jerusalem, just prior to his beginning the agonizing task of rebuilding the wall of the Holy City. During several moments as he remembers the suffering of his people and the trials still awaiting them, he hears a succession of sounds which remind him of instances in which God imposed hardships on His servants.
The first sound is the footsteps of Abraham and Isaac on Moriah. This is clearly a reference to Abraham's faithful compliance with God's commandment to sacrifice Isaac on one of the mountains in the land of Moriah. Of course, God revoked the commandment before Isaac had been killed, but Abraham was subjected to this severe anguish so that his faith might be proved.

The second sound heard by Nehemiah is "the sign of Moses." His grief was the result of Jehovah's denying him the privilege of crossing the Jordan and entering the Promised Land of Canaan, because of his disobedience in the wilderness. The implication here is that Moses experienced God's chastening not only on the specific occasion mentioned in the poem but also in being forced to wander for forty years. Thus, the career of Moses provides two instances of God's causing His creatures to suffer.

Nehemiah now considers the present state of the Hebrews, and he realizes that only by God's grace and the cooperation of the Persian king, Artaxerxes, was he permitted to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. Turner presents Nehemiah's thought in quotation marks, and it suggests the spoken word by its metrical irregularity:

"Ay! thought he, 'and my own fond suit was met By earthly and by heavenly sympathy!"

This supplies a change of pace and serves to separate the recollections of the past from the hint of the future afforded
Nehemiah by the last sounds he hears.

These are associated with Christ, and it seems at first that there will be no more allusions to pain and suffering. He hears first "sweet tones from far Gennesaret," a district on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, which is hence also called the Lake of Gennesaret. "Sweet tones" refers to the words of Christ spoken either in Gennesaret or on the lake. He comforted His disciples when He walked to them on the water during the storm with the words, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." After they had moored the boat, the news of Christ's arrival spread through the district, and He healed all the sick who were brought to Him. Perhaps these are the "sweet tones" Nehemiah heard or, possibly Turner had in mind another occasion when the multitude pressed upon Him while He was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. Seeing two boats, Christ entered one of them and taught the people.

Immediately after finishing His teaching Christ commanded Simon to let down his nets for a draught, which he did with miraculous results. Turner onomatopoetically describes the next sound Nehemiah hears as "a plash, as from the casting of a net." Then he hears the harsh noise of a cross's being grounded and set and "a loud and lonely cry." The "sweet tones" and the plashing of a net not only function as contrast to the more ominous sounds but they also suggest the explanation for the cross's ever appearing. Christ's
teaching and the miracles which confirmed His teaching caused His enemies to crucify Him. The crucifixion provides a grand climax to this poem about God's imposition of suffering on His creatures.

VIII.

O God, Impart.

O God, impart Thy blessing to my cries, Though I trust deeply, yet I daily err; The waters of my heart are oft astir, An Angel's there! and yet I cannot rise! I wish that Christ were here among us still, Proffering His bosom to His servant's brow, But oh! that holy voice comes o'er us now Like twilight echoes from a distant hill: No mountain-sermons, and no ruthless gaze! No voice sweet-toned and blessing all the time! No cheerly credence gather'd from His face! No path thro' hamlets in the eve or prime! No gentle prayers for all our faded race! And those whose hearts are half-unstrung with crime.

This sonnet is a passionate prayer for more holiness. Turner compares his frustrated heart which knows and desires to do better but cannot succeed to the pool of Bethesda mentioned in John 5:2-9. The "sick, blind, halt, and withered" waited by this pool hoping to be the first to step into it after the Angel had troubled the water. A man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years complained to Christ that he could never get into the pool soon enough after it was disturbed, whereupon Christ healed him.

Turner wishes that Christ were still living on the earth so that He could aid him in living a more holy life just as
He healed the cripple at Bethseda. However, that "holy voice" seems rather faint now, and Turner catalogues seven blessings which the world lacks because Christ no longer dwells among men.

This sonnet was first published in 1830 as it appears above; however, when it was republished in 1868, some significant changes had been made. Turner substituted in the second line, "I trust but faintly" for "Tho' I trust deeply." The later reading reveals a more restrained attitude and a deeper realization of spiritual need. He no longer claims to be impervious to the normal doubts which all men experience. The note of almost arrogant self-confidence seems not to have satisfied the author's feelings in later life.

In the fifth line he substituted "I would my Lord" for "I wish that Christ," achieving not only a warmer and more submissive tone but also a softer, more indirect approach. By changing "holy voice" in the seventh line to "holy life" he indicates his awareness of the exemplary quality of the Lord's life as well as of His words. It also is more appropriate in view of his including actions of Christ in addition to utterances in the lines which follow.

For the last six lines Turner substituted the following in 1868:

We long for His pure looks and words sublime;
His lowly-lofty innocence and grace;
The talk sweet-toned and blessing all the time;
The mountain sermon and the ruthful gaze;
The cheerly credence gather'd from His face;
His voice in village-groups at eve or prime!

The poet has abandoned the rapid, staccato style which is brash and bare in favor of the more humble version just quoted. The succession of phrases beginning with the word "No" sounds rather too like an indictment and not enough like a prayer. It is perhaps significant that when he reworked the poem, Turner completely omitted the final two lines of the earlier version, for they imply not only the Lord's physical absence but His carelessness and neglect "for all our faded race" as well.

IX.
The Buoy-Bell

How like the leper, with his own sad cry
Enforcing his own solitude, it tolls!
That lonely bell set in the rushing shoals,
To warn us from the place of jeopardy!
O friend of man! sore-vext by ocean's power,
The changing tides wash o'er thee day by day;
Thy trembling mouth is fill'd with bitter spray,
Yet still thou ringest on from hour to hour;
High is thy mission, though thy lot is wild--
To be in danger's realm a guardian sound;
In seamen's dreams a pleasant part to bear,
And earn their blessing as the year goes round;
And strike the key-note of each grateful prayer,
Breathed in their distant homes by wife or child!

This sonnet illustrates Turner's practice of expressing an ingenious and fanciful conception through an elaborate analogy. In this instance the conceit points out the similarity between a leper who warns others not to approach
too near him and the buoy-bell which also "enforces its own solitude." From the idea of loneliness endured for the benefit of others the poet proceeds to praise the bell as the friend of man, emphasizing the difficulties experienced by the buoy-bell as it performs its sacred task. It is "sore-vext by ocean's power," slapped by changing tides; even the spray which it tastes is bitter.

Turner creates the sense of a long duration of time, implying that the world demands perseverance of its servants. The tides wash over the bell "day by day," yet it continues to ring "from hour to hour." Seamen appreciate the bell "as the year goes round."

A device similar to the conceit just observed is Turner's personification of abstract concepts. For instance, in Sonnet 14 he pictures Autumn as a man holding a curved sickle and plodding on until the crush of leaves beneath his feet is replaced by a softer sound, "As tho' his heel were sinking into snows." Another sonnet speaks of Joy as a visitor from heaven who could find no permanent home among men (Sonnet 36). Sonnet 179 describes Jealousy as a wandering, weeping woman who cannot meet love's gaze but must clasp his feet and shed her sorrows there.

... Or like some aged lazar must she lie, Some palsied crone, who hath no voice but tears--
Danger is personified in Sonnet 225 and represented as haunting England's narrow seas. However, his eyes are offended by the lighthouse, and his ears find the buoy-bell an unwelcome sound.

Turner makes rather extensive use of color in his poems. Sonnet 261 is a sensuous description of a summer's day at the seashore where a brilliant sun creates a study in blue and white. The sky is blue, and "these fair seas" are blue, but these shades are different from the girls' "dark blue bathing-gowns." The white arms of the girls, the snowy gulls, and the ocean spray provide contrast. This attention to color help to develop a sense of gaiety and youthfulness which fades away as darkness obscures the cheerful colors of the day. The "jarring trains" passing all day serve as constant reminders that the world is not wholly carefree and beautiful, for the trains are "smutch'd with the cruel fires of Abergele."

Then fell the dark o'er the great crags and downs,
And all the night-struck mountain seem'd to say,
'Farewell! these happy skies, this peerless day!

In Sonnet 206 bright colors are stressed to suggest the happiness and richness associated with harvest. During the bleak winter the poet remembers the merry harvesters "among the red wheat stemm'd with amber straw" or how the landscape stretched to the far hills "through green and azure grades" on a "golden morn." Turner achieves the same effect in Sonnet
where he appeals to the "rich red wheat" to fulfil its promise of "golden laughter." He tells of having seen the wheat field

... when the wind clove and the sunset warm'd
Thine amber-shafted depths and russet ears;
O! all ye cool green stems!

In much the same way that he employs color to create a festive mood he uses silence when he desires to heighten the sense of restfulness. For example in Sonnet 11, which is intended to produce the atmosphere of a summer twilight in rural England, Turner mentions several sounds, but each merely emphasizes the quietness of the scene.

The lonely garden echoes to my feet,
And hark! O' hear I not the gentle dews,
Pretting the silent forest in his sleep?
Or does the stir of housing insects creep
Thus faintly on my ear? ...

... And none but drowsy pinions beat the air:
The bat is hunting softly by my door,
And, noiseless as the snow-flake, leaves his lair. ...

Drowsiness is not the only effect the poet can achieve by stressing silence, however. In Sonnet 19 the silence is too absolute, too unusual to be calming. The trees are utterly still, and some "deep tranquillity" has hushed the voice of the wind. This silence is an appropriate preamble to some momentous event.

... Methinks so calm should fall
The eve before the great millennial morn ...
The silence of Sonnet 330 is also majestic, creating a sense of limitless power, for in this poem Turner describes the high tide. The quiet waters creep onto the beach with no tidal murmur until the reefs are drowned,

... And an imperial whisper told the might Of the outer floods that pass'd into the bay, Though all besides was silent. I delight In the rough billows, and the foam-ball's flight: I love the shore upon a stormy day; But yet more stately were the power and ease That with a whisper deepen'd all the seas.

Turner's sonnets are marked, not by frequently recurring images, but by an extensive use of apostrophe, simile, and a careful choice of words to create the desired mood. Conceits are not uncommon—as when he compares the bright feathers on the head of the gold-crested wren to the final touch of beauty which adds perfection to the sonnet. Of course, religious imagery, drawn from both the Old and New Testaments, was always at Turner's command, and he used it generously. Another characteristic of the sonnets is the emphasis on sensuousness, especially on sound and silence, vivid color and darkness. His practice of personifying abstract qualities is yet another device which Turner employs successfully to express himself poetically.
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

It would be absurd to maintain that Charles Tennyson-Turner was a truly great poet, a neglected genius who has been shamefully underrated. No one would make that claim; however, it does not follow that his poetry is unworthy of critical attention. He is thoroughly representative of the Victorian period as is seen, for instance, in his somewhat provincial attitude toward England and in his passionate determination to preserve his religious faith while appreciating the amazing progress of science.

In his conception of the nature and purpose of poetry Turner was also a child of his time. Alba Warren in his discussion of English poetic theory from 1825 to 1865 has expanded the key terms applied to poetry during the period into a "creed" which is useful for the student who realizes that the formulation of articles in such a manner must not suggest a unanimity of critical opinion.¹ It is fascinating to observe how accurately most of the articles in this manifesto describe Turner's sonnets. The emphasis on the necessity of insight, on the poet as a natural genius--born, not made--on the necessity of poetry's having a practical end, preferably moral, and the view that any subject is fit for poetry, the greatest of all arts, if it is treated imaginatively--all these show that Turner was in very substantial agreement with the general Victorian critical opinion.
Turner is usually alluded to only briefly in discussions devoted to Alfred Tennyson, but occasionally he is treated by literary historians as a poet in his own right, and it is not uncommon even now to find two or three of his more familiar sonnets in anthologies of Victorian poetry. The most popular are "Little Phoebe," "The Artist on Penmaenmawr," "The Steam Threshing-Machine," "On the Eclipse of the Moon of October, 1865," and "The Seaside." Those who attempt any critical evaluation of the sonnets discover the same strengths and weaknesses. Heath-Stubbs points out that Turner lacks his younger brother's suavity, and that scarcely one of his sonnets has escaped the charge of having some technical flaw; yet they live by their sincerity, and a certain sweetness and delicacy of mind which shines through them. Some of his elaborate conceits strike out flashes of genuine imagination which go beyond anything his more famous brother could achieve. Heath-Stubbs remarks that the author is by turns innocent, learned, almost naively pious, scholarly, a close and accurate observer of nature, and a recorder of the life of the countryside. This last characteristic prompts the critic to imply some tenuous connection between Turner and the early nineteenth century regionalists whose work contained something of the essential qualities of the folk-tradition. The influence was slight, and it cannot be claimed that Turner's work represents a continuation of the folk-tradition. 2
Fairchild, in his study of religious trends in English poetry, is primarily concerned with Turner as an Evangelical poet whose work stresses the authority of God and the utter helplessness of man, making absolutely no concession to subjectivism in religion. However, Fairchild admits that if Turner's sonnets had only this pronounced Evangelicalism to recommend them, they would be remembered only by professional students of nineteenth century poetry. It is generally agreed that Turner had a real, though limited, poetic gift. 3

Harold Nicolson believes that Turner's sonnets live because their freshness conquers an almost unparalleled technical casualness. He admires the poet's original, delicate, sincere, and "refreshingly spontaneous" talents, which are best revealed in the restricted and sensitive rendering of small observed instances. In addition to the technical irregularities of the sonnets, Nicolson criticizes what he calls "a curious clumsiness of diction" and ascribes it to Turner's lack of sensitiveness to sounds. 4

In their introduction to the recent edition of one hundred of Turner's sonnets John Betjeman and Sir Charles Tennyson recognize virtually the same salient features in the poems, for they emphasize Turner's success in picturing rural English life at mid-century and suggest that the work is not seriously marred by undeniable departures from accepted sonnet practices. 5 The reviewer for The Times Literary Supplement
concurs by describing Turner as "modest, simple, devout, and sensitive." He is called "a perfect miniaturist" and credited with having freshness and exactness of observation as well as a genuine talent for treating small themes with charming tenderness. 6

These opinions seem to define accurately the significance in English literature of the Victorian parson and sonneteer, Charles Tennyson-Turner. I have no quarrel with the view that in spite of his gentleness and a certain skill he was too limited and too evanescent to approach the rank of a major poet.
Appendix: Rhyme Schemes

abba cdcd efef gg--twenty sonnets
abab cdcd efef gg--twenty sonnets
abab cdcd efefef--seventeen sonnets
abab cddc efef gg--fourteen sonnets
abba cddc efef gg--twelve sonnets
abba cddc effe gg--twelve sonnets
abab cdce efef--eleven sonnets
abab cddc effe gg--eleven sonnets
abba cddc efefef--ten sonnets
abab cddc efef gg--eight sonnets
abab cdce efeffe--seven sonnets
abba cddc efefef--seven sonnets
abba cddc efefef--seven sonnets
abab cddc efefef--seven sonnets
abab cddc efefef--five sonnets
abba acca dedede--four sonnets
abab cddc efefef--four sonnets
abba cdce efefef--four sonnets
abab cddc efefef--four sonnets
abab cddc efefef--four sonnets
abba cdce efefef--four sonnets
abba cdce eefggf--three sonnets
abab cddc eefggf--three sonnets
abba abba cdcddcd--three sonnets
abab cddc efefef--three sonnets
abba cddc effefe--three sonnets
abab cddc efeefe--three sonnets
abba cddc dede ff--three sonnets
abba cddc efeffe--two sonnets
abab cddc effeef--two sonnets
abba cddc efggefe--two sonnets
abba cddc effge--two sonnets
abab cddc efe ee ff--two sonnets
abab cddc efgfge--two sonnets
abab cddc efgfge--two sonnets
abab cddc eeff gg--two sonnets
abab cddc efffffff--two sonnets
abab cddc efeeeef--two sonnets
abab cddc efeef--two sonnets
abab cddc eeff gg--two sonnets
abab cddc effgf--two sonnets
abab cddc efgffg--two sonnets
abab cddc eeecc ff--two sonnets
abab cddc efefef--two sonnets
abba abab cddcdcd--two sonnets
abab cddc efeef--two sonnets
abab cddc eefefe--two sonnets
abab cddc efggefe--two sonnets
abba cddcd efggfe--two sonnets
abba cddcd efggfg--two sonnets
abba cddcd ececf--two sonnets
abba cddc efefef--two sonnets
abba cddc efefef--two sonnets
abab cddc efggge--two sonnets
abab cddc efegf--two sonnets
abba cddc efeggs--one sonnet
abba ccdcd eecf--one sonnet
abba cddc dededede--one sonnet
abab cdcd efeggf--one sonnet
abab cddc efiffe--one sonnet
abba cddc cefefe--one sonnet
abba acca deed ff--one sonnet
abba cddc eefefe--one sonnet
abab caca dedeed--one sonnet
abab cddc effgge--one sonnet
abab cddc eefgff--one sonnet
abab bcbc dede ee--one sonnet
abba cddc efggfe--one sonnet
abab cddc eefg g--one sonnet
abab cddc eefg e--one sonnet
abab cddc efgefg--one sonnet
abab cddc ccefef--one sonnet
abba cddc efgefg--one sonnet
abab cddc ecefe--one sonnet
abab cddc efgefg--one sonnet
abab cddc eefgfe--one sonnet
abba cbbc dedede--one sonnet
abab baab cdcddc--one sonnet
abab bccb dbdbdb--one sonnet
abab cddc cdefef--one sonnet
abba cddc effe ff--one sonnet
abab cddc efggef--one sonnet
abab caac dede ff--one sonnet
abab cbcb deedde--one sonnet
abab bccb dedede--one sonnet
abab bccb dedede--one sonnet
abba caac deedde--one sonnet
abab cbbc dede ff--one sonnet
abba cdcd efeff--one sonnet
abab cdcd dedededeeded--one sonnet
abab ccdd effe gg--one sonnet
abab bcbc dedededeeded--one sonnet
abba acac dedededeeded--one sonnet
abab cdcd ceeec eded--one sonnet
abab ccdd efefef--one sonnet
abab cdde cfeggfeff--one sonnet
abab cdcd efgfeg--one sonnet
abab cdcd efggeff--one sonnet
abab cdcd efffeff--one sonnet
abab bccbd dedeedee--one sonnet
abba cdcc efgghff--one sonnet
abba cdcc eefehff--one sonnet
abba cdcd efggeff--one sonnet
abba cdcd efffe eff--one sonnet
abba caac deed eed--one sonnet
abba acca deede de--one sonnet
abab baab cdcc eed--one sonnet
abab cdcd efggfe--one sonnet
abba cdcc effe--one sonnet
abba cdcd efggfe--one sonnet
abba cdcd efggfe--one sonnet
abbc dede fgff hgh--one sonnet
abba cdcc efecfe--one sonnet
abab cdcd efegfe--one sonnet
abab cdcd efegfe--one sonnet
abab acca deed eed--one sonnet
abba cdcd eded eed--one sonnet
abab cdcd efggfg--one sonnet
abba cddc efee gg--one sonnet
abab cdcd dede ff--one sonnet
abab cdcd cecece--one sonnet
abab cddc efef ee--one sonnet
abba cddc ecce ff--one sonnet
abba cddc efgfge--one sonnet
abab cddc effcef--one sonnet
abab acca dbdb ee--one sonnet
abba cbbc deede--one sonnet
abba cdcd dccecd--one sonnet
abab cbcb dede ff--one sonnet
abab cddc ababa--one sonnet
abab cdcd eded ff--one sonnet
abba bcbc dede ff--one sonnet
abab ba cdcd efef--one sonnet
abab cdcd ee bfbf--one sonnet
abab cdcd effe--one sonnet
abba cddc eeffef--one sonnet
abab cddc efef--one sonnet
abab cddc eefggf--one sonnet
abba caac dedede--one sonnet
abab cdcd efef dd--one sonnet
abab cdcd eeef ff--one sonnet
abab ccdd eeff gg--one sonnet
FOOTNOTES

Chapter I


3. Ibid.


6. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

7. Ibid., p. 31.


Chapter II

1. Of course, there are scattered instances throughout the collection in which one of the other common poetic feet is occasionally substituted for an iamb.

Chapter III


3. Ibid., 117-118.

Chapter IV


2. Ibid., p. 165.


4. Ibid., p. 218.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 219.

7. Ibid., pp. 222-223.

8. Ibid., p. 223.


12. Latourette, p. 228.


Chapter V


2. Ibid., p. 85.

3. Ibid.


Chapter VI


2. Heath-Stubbs, p. 89.


5. One Hundred Sonnets, p. xiii.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


This discussion is limited almost entirely to biographical material.


Spedding has only praise for the sonnets. He defends the irregularity of the rhyme schemes and makes a few general, brief comments on the subject matter of the poems.


The introduction contains a rather complete biographical note in addition to a short statement concerning what the editors consider Turner's four general themes.
Periodicals

Mac Eachen, Dougald B. "Tennyson and the Sonnet," The Victorian Newsletter, XIV (Fall, 1958), 1-8.


Encyclopedia Article

"Greece," Encyclopedia Britannica (1957), X, 753-792.