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**In memoriam**

**Tennyson, Alfred**

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*Arthur H. Hallam  
as the bust by Lord Albemarle St. et*



# IN MEMORIAM

*By*

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

*WITH AN ANALYSIS AND NOTES*

BY

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*WITH A PORTRAIT OF A. H. HALLAM*

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*The text has been reprinted from the fourth edition, 1851.*

BEATAE MATRI

HAEC STUDIA

PIETAS FILII INTERPRETIS



## INTRODUCTION

THE poem of *In Memoriam* was written to commemorate Arthur Henry Hallam, the eldest son of the historian, whose friendship Tennyson had made when he went up to Trinity in 1828, and who until his premature death in 1833 remained the poet's constant companion. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that the fact of his friend's early death furnished the occasion of the poem, by directing the poet's thoughts to the subject of bereavement. The poet indeed speaks in his own person, and reference is made to various incidents in the short career of their friendship—such as the debates of the “Apostles’” Club at Trinity (lxxxvi.), the journey to the Pyrenees (lxx.), the engagement to Emily Tennyson (lxxxiii.); and the events concerning the bringing home of the body and its burial at Clevedon happened as they are described. But still these more personal matters are subordinated to such as are more broadly human and general; and so there is reason in the impersonalness of the poem's title. It is less a monody upon the death of Hallam than

a monody upon the fact of death. As Tennyson himself put it, “‘I’ is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him.”<sup>1</sup> This being so, it would seem beside the point to enter here into particulars concerning Arthur Hallam’s short life. It may suffice to say that he made upon many others among his contemporaries the same impression of commanding genius that the poet here records.

The Prologue is dated 1849, and the constituent sections of the poem may belong to any date in the preceding sixteen years. We are informed in Tennyson’s *Life* that the idea of weaving the various elegies into one connected whole did not come to him until many had been written; and he told a friend<sup>2</sup> “that the general way of its being written was so queer that if there were a blank space [in the MS. book] he would put in a poem.” These facts will help to account for the agreeable variety of the whole, and also for the occasional lapses of continuity. There is nevertheless a clearly recognisable progress in thought and feeling, perhaps most clearly marked to the casual reader by the three poems upon Christmas (xxx., lxxvii., civ.), but of which more careful notice must be taken if the poem is to be understood as a whole. The divisions marked in this edition were furnished by the author to the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, i. 305.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, i. 304.

<sup>3</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1893.

The poem opens with the question, How may grief for the dead be so borne as to secure that spiritual profit which such teachers as Goethe ascribe to it? and it is the slow working out of the answer to this question that constitutes the unity of the poem. The opening sections paint the mourner's grief, which is at first a mere stupefaction of thought and feeling, broken by moments of vague appreciation or by flights of fancy that ignore altogether the grim reality; then as this reality of loss is borne in upon him by the circumstances of the burial, the sorrow deepens. Presently thought awakens again, and looking before and after contrasts the dreariness of the solitary life to come with the pleasant years of companionship that are past, and this prompts the resolution that at any rate the lost friend shall never be forgotten. The third section of the poem closes with the recognition—which is the first article of the poet's creed—that the highest function of human life is love, and that therefore for any individual

“ 'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.”

The approaching festival of Christmas brings forcibly before the poet's mind the great Christian doctrine of the life beyond death; and the doctrine, now become of pressing interest, is examined. *How* can it be? Revelation—for which we cannot but be grateful (xxxvi.)—states nothing but the bare fact;

yet this revelation is found to be in harmony with man's deepest hopes, and, still more, it seems to be postulated by the very fact of man's existence as a spiritual being with spiritual activities. How, for instance, would love be possible at all unless it could regard itself as eternal? (xxxv.). On this thought the poet's mind pauses, and his imagination speculates upon the possible relations of the dead with the living (xxxix.-xli.), deepening at last into a longing for communion as the facts that make belief in any life after death difficult press upon him. These facts—truths laid bare by natural science—are now stated in all their force, and in face of them the poet reiterates his passionate conviction that the human race is immortal (liv.)

Here the poem, as at first designed, seems to have ended. The 57th elegy represents the Muse as urging the poet to a new beginning; and the 58th was added in the fourth edition, as though to account for the difference in tone between the earlier and later elegies. The first elegies of this second part, those comprised in section six, correspond to the early elegies of the first part in being poems rather of fancy than thought. The seventh section handles various disconnected topics, such as the perishableness of earthly fame, the relation of new to old friendship, and narrates past happy experiences, but reverts presently to the longing for communion with the dead, which is treated in six admirable poems, concluding with the

description of a trance in which communion was at last realised (lxxxix.—xciv.). The eighth section opens with the poet's leaving his old home; the first Christmas and New Year in the new home suggest the Christian thought of the "new life"—constantly renewed—both for the individual and for the race as it advances in civilisation; and so the appeal is made to all to "move upward, working out the beast." Finally, the poet once more rehearses his belief in the existence of God, and in the free will of man which springs from Him, can hold communion with Him, and like Him must be immortal.

Tennyson has himself summed up the drift of his poem in the line, "A grief, then changed to something else" (lxxvi.). What is this "something else"? The first part of the poem is, as we have seen, lucid enough. It clearly expresses that the poet holds firmly to the Christian faith in immortality, notwithstanding all the recently discovered facts that make the faith difficult; he believes that his friend, though his life here was cut short, is living it with applause in some other world. Grief, then, we may say, has been exchanged for the hope of immortality. At the end, however, of this first part of the poem we are promised a nobler leave-taking (lvii.). In what does this consist? In what qualities does the later part differ from the first? It shows a decrease in the poignancy of sorrow, but this



is as much the fruit of time as of reflection ; it spends a good deal of fancy on the possible relations of the dead with the living, but such speculation the poet himself admits to be idle (cvii.) ; for the rest it is taken up with various reminiscences obviously rather accessory than integral to the main purpose of the poem. But besides these, there are a few scattered poems, such as the Vision (cii.), the Song of the New Year (cv.), the appeal to "move upward" in civilisation (cxvii.), and the assertion that there is some end to which the world is moving (cxxvii.), which connect with the main thought of the first part of the poem, and it is these which must constitute the "nobler leave-taking" of which the poet speaks. We may sum them in a word and say that regret for his friend has become hope not only for his friend but for the whole race ; and although, of course, this hope is really implicit in the simple assertion of immortality with which the first part closes, no one can blame the poet for having decided to draw it out into clearer emphasis. It must at the same time be admitted that with the exception of the series of poems upon the Communion of Spirits (lxxxix.-xciv.) and one or two single elegies like lxxiii., lxxx., and cv., and a few passages of inimitable description such as lxix., lxxi., lxxxv., cxiv., and cxx., the later sections fall below the earlier in interest and poetic force ; and it must be a grief to all lovers of poetry that,

for the sake of a happy ending, the poet should have added the Epilogue, which falls far below what many lesser men have achieved in the way of epithalamium.

It has been said, and it is often repeated, that style is the great antiseptic of letters. If that were true, the *In Memoriam* should be, for the most part, imperishable, since Tennyson in the decade preceding 1850 had brought his style to its perfection. But style is an untrustworthy antiseptic apart from passion; and so we find that the passages of the poem which, after the lapse of half a century, still live on the lips of this generation are those in which some fundamental truth of human nature finds perfect and passionate utterance. Probably most people, when the *In Memoriam* is mentioned, think at once of those wonderful stanzas in which the poet expresses man's conviction that he is immortal. Into a discussion of the thesis of immortality this is no place to enter. The belief has certainly its philosophical justification, to which Tennyson has not been blind. He replies in cxix. to the scientific materialist with the argument that except to a spiritual principle science itself would be useless. Also, while acknowledging all the facts collected by natural science which make the belief in immortality difficult to hold, he points to the equally plain fact that the belief is necessary to make life worth living (xxxiv.). That is to say, he shows that the

hypothesis works. But happily he has rested his case neither upon philosophy nor upon science, but upon the profound conviction of the unsophisticated human heart. In other words, he has been content to speak as a poet. Matthew Arnold was fond of urging that poetry was the soundest philosophy; and we may allow his dictum to be true, for a poet. In the same way, just as Tennyson has left on one side formal philosophy, so he has left Christian dogmatics; and perhaps for the same reason, that their appeal is less than universal. He has, however, made very beautiful use of one of the Gospel stories, to show that the power of loving, which represents in his eyes the highest function of human nature, necessarily implies not only this and that individual object, but one supreme object as well, "the Life indeed," in whom they all have their being, and who is in His nature, as they are in their degree, "immortal Love."

But apart from the great deliverances upon Immortality there are others equally splendid, where the heart of some simple human emotion is plucked out and presented in impassioned phrases, which we at present cannot but think imperishable. The supreme example I take to be the concluding lines of lxxxii. :

“ For this alone on Death I wreak  
The wrath that garners in my heart :  
*He put our lives so far apart,*  
*We cannot hear each other speak ;”*

but hardly less poignant are the concluding lines of lxxxix. :

“ Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
    Whatever change the years have wrought,  
    I find not yet one lonely thought  
    That cries against my wish for thee.”

And there are still others which those who have “loved and lost” have deep in memory, and which after many years they cannot trust themselves to read aloud.

There are other passages, again, and these by some may be considered more poetical, in which the passion is translated through some sensuous image. As a rule these are successful in proportion to their simplicity ; and the *In Memoriam* presents some very happy examples of Tennyson’s use of such simple figures. Thus we have in lxxii. :

“ We pass : the path that each man trod  
    Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds ; ”

in lxxiv. :

“ I care not in these fading days  
    To raise a cry that lasts not long ;  
    *And round thee with the breeze of song*  
    *To stir a little dust of praise.* ”

But where to such simplicity passion is added, we have the highest power of lyrical poetry. As examples I would instance the 19th poem, perfect from the first line to the last, which

has given the Wye a place and character among poetic rivers; the picture of the blind man in lxxv.; cxx., a descant on the old theme of Hesper-Phosphor, as simple and beautiful as Plato's, but inspired also with Christian hope; and not least the last quatrain of xlvi.: :

“ Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
*Whose muffled motions blindly drown*  
*The bases of my life in tears.”*

Verses like these must be held supreme successes in the use of imagery. There are some, however, which, although brilliant, may be thought not simple enough for success, such as the famous chemical metaphor in iv., and perhaps the agricultural metaphor in lxxx. Again, there are not a few metaphors which seem used merely as a piece of style, or to heighten a commonplace, such as the odd phrase “chains regret to his decease” in xxix., and the “kiss of toothed wheels” in cxvi., which is disagreeable if dwelt upon, and there are some that, on the other hand, fall below the dignity of the subject, like the “current coin” of xxxvi., and the “broken lights” of the Prologue, which occurs in a verse so often quoted that a critic hesitates to ask in what its merit is supposed to consist.

Another group of beauties will be found in the passages of natural description. Perhaps quite enough praise has been lavished upon Tennyson's

accurate study of detail since the day when Mr. Holbrook was astonished by the revelation that ash buds are black. For though accuracy is well, it is not in itself poetry ; and—to keep to the instance quoted—ash buds are so small in size, and in shape so little suggestive of a girl's hair, that the line in *The Gardener's Daughter* which roused his enthusiasm, might just as well have been marked for censure. But *In Memoriam* is rich in passages of the most admirable landscape painting, where not only are the details accurately studied, but the whole is suffused with the light of a definite mood. There is a spring picture in cxiv., full of joy and sunlight, that a single reading fixes in the memory for ever ; and there is another (lxxxv.) of an April evening with a west wind blowing after rain, which is as excellent. There are several autumn landscapes, too ; one calm (xi.), one wild (xv.), and one wet (lxxi.) ; there is a winter landscape (cvi.), and one of a still summer night with the wind rising at dawn (xciv.). But the pictures are not limited to landscape. The vision of the ship in the third verse of ix. and the first of x. is surely a masterpiece ; so are the dream pictures of lxix. ; and again there is that miracle of organ music, the audible vision of Nature's secret processes, in xxxv. :

“ But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or slow

Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be."

Besides these, again, the reader will not omit to remark the two sketches of daybreak in London (vii., cxviii.), and such single imaginative phrases as that of Autumn in xcvi. :

"Laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves."

A word may be added about the metre. Tennyson has told us that he believed himself to have invented it. It was, of course, a fairly common form in Elizabethan times, being of obvious rhetorical value; a good proof of which is the fact that Whewell once fell into it, when he believed himself to be writing a very emphatic and balanced sentence in prose.

"And so no force, however great,  
Can strain a cord, however fine.  
Into a horizontal line  
That shall be absolutely straight."

It is more interesting to notice that while Tennyson now and then puts the metre to do this, its most obvious, work,—as in the last quatrain of vi., in lxxv., c., cv., cxxvii.,—he also succeeds in constructing out of it an instrument of considerable variety. Take, for example, such a poem as xiv. Here there is no emphasis; eleven lines out of the

twenty begin with *and* ; the last line is, if anything, the least weighty of the whole poem. The same device of emptying the most emphatic line of its emphasis is seen in the conclusion of xiii., xix., liv., lxviii. Or again, look at such a descriptive poem as cvi. Here the rhymes, instead of beating the measure, are almost unnoticed because the pause is skilfully shifted from the ends of the lines. Or again, consider how in the 15th poem the rhythm all through sings an accompaniment to the sense. And that leads one to notice the marvellous skill of Tennyson in suggesting sound and motion, of which the *In Memoriam* affords many fine instances, the most famous being the description of the Christmas bells in xxviii. I will quote but one example, and that shall be of his skill in reproducing the effect of wind. The two following passages, though they both describe wind, give quite distinct impressions ; we know in each case what the wind is, and what it is doing. Here is one picture :

“ To-night the winds began to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day ;  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

“ The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world.” (xv.)



And here is the other :

“ O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears ! ”  
(lxxxviii.)

But an end must be made of this showman's task. It is hoped that the analyses prefixed to the several elegies may be of use. They have been written without reference to any of the handbooks already before the public ; but I have read the few remarks contributed by the poet himself to Dr. Gatty's *Key*, and those published in the *Nineteenth Century* (Jan. 1893) by Mr. Knowles.

H. C. BEECHING.

YATTENDON RECTORY,  
*Michaelmas* 1899.

The Prologue, an address to "immortal Love," resumes some of the chief points insisted on in the concluding poems, such as the necessity of faith, the freedom and spiritual nature of the will, the superiority of wisdom to knowledge; and concludes with a prayer for forgiveness.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,<sup>1</sup>  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;<sup>2</sup>

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;<sup>3</sup>  
Thou madest Life in man and brute;  
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:<sup>4</sup>  
Thou madest man, he knows not why;  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

<sup>1</sup> *Immortal Love.*] See 1 John iv. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> See the passage in *The Ancient Sage*, beginning:

"Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son."

<sup>3</sup> Planets which move round the sun, and so are part in light and part in shade.

<sup>4</sup> This is, after the existence of God, the main article of the poet's creed.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
 Our wills are ours, we know not how ;<sup>1</sup>  
 Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;<sup>2</sup>  
 They have their day and cease to be :  
 They are but broken lights of thee,  
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
 For knowledge is of things we see ;  
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
 A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
 But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
 That mind and soul, according well,  
 May make one music as before,<sup>3</sup>

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
 We mock thee when we do not fear :  
 But help thy foolish ones to bear ;<sup>4</sup>  
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin<sup>5</sup> in me ;  
 What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
 For merit lives from man to man,  
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

<sup>1</sup> See cxxx.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Two Voices* : "The dust of systems and of creeds."

<sup>3</sup> *As before.*] The constant growth of knowledge will always destroy the harmony unless reverence grows along with it.

<sup>4</sup> Help us, foolish as we are, to bear the light of knowledge which streams from thee, without in consequence becoming vain of our new knowledge, and losing our reverence.

<sup>5</sup> *My sin.*] Explained by l. 37 and l. 41. See v. 1 ; lxxxiv. 61.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
 I trust he lives in thee, and there  
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering<sup>1</sup> cries,  
 Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

<sup>1</sup> *Wild and wandering.*] A combination of epithets found in Shakespeare, *Troilus*, 1. 1. 105.

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

*Obiit* MDCCCXXXIII

The first poem puts into words the fight that goes on within when a great grief comes upon us ; on the one side is the natural sorrow, on the other the desire to be brave. " I used to hold with the poet that the wise man could turn all the troubles of life to spiritual profit. Can I so treat my grief ? Spiritual profit cannot be anticipated. I must at any rate first feel my grief. The alternative is forgetfulness. Come sorrow, then, even the excess of sorrow."

I HELD it truth, with him who sings<sup>1</sup>  
     To one clear harp in divers tones,  
     That men may rise on stepping-stones<sup>2</sup>  
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
     And find in loss a gain to match ?  
     Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
 The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
     Let darkness keep her raven gloss :<sup>3</sup>  
     Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
 To dance with death, to beat the ground,

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson used to say that he meant Goethe (*Life*, ii. 391).

<sup>2</sup> *Stepping-stones*.] A curiously inaccurate use of the word.

<sup>3</sup> *Darkness . . . raven gloss*.] "Raven down of darkness,"  
*Comus*, 251.

Than that the victor Hours<sup>1</sup> should scorn  
 The long result of love, and boast :  
 " Behold the man that loved and lost,  
 But all he was is overworn."

## II

In II. and III. the alternatives are presented. In the yew-tree the poet sees an image of stoicism. As he looks at it in horror it seems to cast a spell.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
 That name the under-lying dead,  
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head ;  
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
 And bring the firstling to the flock ;  
 And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,<sup>2</sup>  
 Who changest not in any gale,  
 Nor branding summer suns avail  
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
 I seem to fail from out my blood,  
 And grow incorporate into thee.

<sup>1</sup> *Victor Hours.*] *I.e.*, Time gaining the victory over Love.

<sup>2</sup> Prosaic critics found fault with this verse as though the poet had not known that the yew bore a blossom. But see the passage on the accuracy of Tennyson's observation in Lowe's *Yew-trees of Great Britain*, quoted in Gwynn's *Tennyson*, p. 124.

## III

On the other hand, sorrow is not wholly to be trusted. It suggests to the poet a dreadful doubt, which he yet believes to be a lie, that the universe is without a mind, and all things happen by chance. Should not sorrow therefore be crushed? There is another address to sorrow in LVIII.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,<sup>1</sup>  
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;  
 A web is wov'n across the sky;<sup>2</sup>  
 From out waste places<sup>3</sup> comes a cry,  
 And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
 With all her music in her tone,  
 A hollow echo of my own,<sup>4</sup>—  
 A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
 Embrace her as my natural good;  
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

<sup>1</sup> *Cruel fellowship.*] Abstract for concrete.

<sup>2</sup> The idea seems to be that we are confined to earth, so that our prayers do not pass the sky. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Omar Khayyam*:

"And that inverted bowl we call the sky."

<sup>3</sup> *Waste places.*] Cf. Pascal: "Abîmé dans l'infinie immensité des espaces que j'ignore et qui m'ignorent."

<sup>4</sup> A reminiscence of Coleridge, in his *Ode to Dejection*:

"I may not hope from outward forms to win  
 The passion and the life whose fountains are within.  
 O Lady, we receive but what we give,  
 And in our life alone does Nature live;  
 Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!"



## IV

At night, when the will quits the helm, sorrow asserts her sway, and the trouble, though vague, is so awful that life seems no longer worth living. But with morning the will revives, and refuses to give in to sorrow.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
 My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
 I sit within a helmless bark,  
 And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
 That thou should'st fail from thy desire,<sup>1</sup>  
 Who scarcely darest to inquire  
 "What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
 Some pleasure from thine early years.  
 Break,<sup>2</sup> thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
 That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
 All night below<sup>3</sup> the darken'd eyes ;  
 With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
 "Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

<sup>1</sup> *Fail from thy desire.*] Lose vitality, desire being the natural activity of the heart.

<sup>2</sup> *Break.*] Die. It is a fact of observation that water will cool below freezing point without expanding, if the vessel be undisturbed.

<sup>3</sup> *Below.*] *I.e.*, as if between the eyes and the brain.

## V

One of several apologies for the poem. The writing numbs his pain, though it is inadequate to express his grief.

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
    To put in words the grief I feel ;  
    For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
    A use in measured language lies ;  
    The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds,<sup>1</sup> I'll wrap me o'er,  
    Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;  
    But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI

A reply to foolish consolations. He gives familiar instances of the "commonness of loss," and one nearer his own case of a girl awaiting her lover. So he was awaiting Hallam, and preparing to show him all he had thought and written, at the very moment of his death.

One writes, that "Other friends remain,"  
    That "Loss is common to the race"<sup>2</sup>—  
    And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

<sup>1</sup> *Weeds.*] The word is used with the suggestion of "widow's weeds," the only phrase in which it survives in ordinary speech.

<sup>2</sup> *Hamlet*, i. ii.

That loss is common would not make  
 My own less bitter, rather more :  
 Too common !<sup>1</sup> Never morning wore  
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, whereso'er thou be,  
 That pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
 Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,  
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
 Drops in his vast and wandering<sup>2</sup> grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
 At that last hour to please him well ;  
 Who mused on all I had to tell,  
 And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
 And ever met him on his way  
 With wishes, thinking, "here to-day,"  
 Or "here to-morrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek unconscious dove,  
 That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
 And glad to find thyself so fair,  
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Demeter and Persephone* :

"And grieved for man thro' all my grief for thee."

<sup>2</sup> *Vast and wandering*.] *Richard III.*, i. iv. 39 :

"Still the envious flood  
 Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth  
 To seek the empty, vast, and wandering air."

*Troilus*, i. i. 105 : "The wild and wandering flood."

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest ;  
And thinking "this will please him best,"  
She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
And with the thought her colour burns ;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?  
And what to me remains of good ?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me, no second friend.<sup>1</sup>

## VII

The poet visits his friend's house before the dawn. (See CXVIII.)

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,<sup>2</sup>  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

<sup>1</sup> Refers back to line 1. But that this "wise world of ours is mainly right," though a little wanting in tact, is shown by lxxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> 67 Wimpole Street.

A hand that can be clasp'd no more <sup>1</sup>—  
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
 And like a guilty thing <sup>2</sup> I creep  
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
 The noise of life begins again,  
 And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
 On the bald street breaks the blank day.<sup>3</sup>

## VIII

A second poem on his poem, marking an advance. In v. it was a  
 "narcotic," here a flower planted on the tomb.

A happy lover who has come  
 To look on her that loves him well,  
 Who lights and rings the gateway bell,  
 And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light  
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
 And all the place is dark, and all  
 The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
 In which we two were wont to meet,  
 The field, the chamber and the street,  
 For all is dark where thou art not.

<sup>1</sup> See x. 19 ; cxviii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Like a guilty thing.*] Borrowed from the description of Hamlet's ghost starting at cock-crow. The point here seems to be the stealthiness of the approach in the night.

<sup>3</sup> A marvellous line, expressing by alliterative monosyllables the utter weariness and emptiness of life now that "he is not here."

Yet as that other, wandering there  
     In those deserted walks, may find  
     A flower beat with rain and wind,  
 Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
     O my forsaken heart, with thee  
     And this poor flower of poesy  
 Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
     I go to plant it on his tomb,  
     That if it can it there may bloom,  
 Or dying, there at least may die.

*End of Section One.*

## IX

The next eleven poems have reference to the ship that is bringing Hallam's body back to England. This bids the vessel good speed and a fair voyage ; in the manner of Horace's famous Ode (i. 3), *Sic te diva potens Cypri*.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
     Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
     With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
     In vain ; a favourable speed  
     Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
 Thro' prosperous<sup>1</sup> floods his holy urn.

<sup>1</sup> *Prosperous*.] So Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*, v. i. 161 "a *prosperous* south wind."

All night no ruder<sup>1</sup> air perplex  
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
 As our pure love, thro' early light  
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere<sup>2</sup> all your lights around, above ;  
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;  
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
 My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
 Till all my widow'd race be run ;<sup>3</sup>  
 Dear as the mother to the son,  
 More than my brothers are to me.<sup>4</sup>

## X

Bring him safe to shore, that we may bury him in mother earth. It could make no difference to *him* whether his body were wrecked or reached land, but it would make a difference to *us* ; a church-yard has a look of rest, the sea would toss him continually, and oss him among seaweed.

I hear the noise about thy keel ;  
 I hear the bell struck in the night ;  
 I see the cabin-window bright ;  
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
 And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
 And letters unto trembling hands ;  
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

<sup>1</sup> *Ruder.*] For this use of the comparative as a strong positive, cf. lix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Sphere.*] Exhibit in your hollow sphere.

<sup>3</sup> Repeated xvii. 20 ; *widow'd*, cf. v. 9 ; xiii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See lxxviii.

So <sup>1</sup> bring him : we have idle dreams :  
 This look of quiet flatters thus  
 Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
 The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells <sup>2</sup>  
 Should gulf him fathom-deep <sup>3</sup> in brine ;  
 And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
 Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI

A calm, bright morning in autumn on a Lincolnshire wold stretching to the sea ; a calmness, alas ! in tune with despair and death.

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
 Calm as to suit a calmer <sup>4</sup> grief,  
 And only thro' the faded leaf  
 The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
 And on these dews that drench the furze,  
 And all the silvery gossamers  
 That twinkle into green and gold :

<sup>1</sup> *So.*] Referring back to ix. 5, *i.e.*, with a fair wind, with "a look of quiet."

<sup>2</sup> *Wells.*] A favourite use of Tennyson for water, as in *The Two Voices* :

"To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
 Come from the *wells* where he did lie."

<sup>3</sup> *Fathom-deep.*] Written for "fathoms deep."

<sup>4</sup> *Calmer.*] Grown calmer.



Calm and still light on yon great plain  
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
 To mingle with the bounding<sup>1</sup> main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
 These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
 And in my heart, if calm at all,  
 If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
 And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
 And dead calm in that noble breast  
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep.<sup>2</sup>

## XII

The poet's soul flies out from the body, as Noah's dove from the ark, though on a sadder errand, to greet the approaching ship.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
 To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
 Some dolorous message knit below  
 The wild pulsation of her wings ;<sup>3</sup>

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
 I leave this mortal ark behind,  
 A weight of nerves without a mind,  
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away

<sup>1</sup> *Bounding*.] Here and always in this poem means "limiting" ; xviii. 6 ; lxxxviii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> With this should be remembered Wordsworth's lines, equally true to the mood of bereavement :

"No motion has she now, no force ;  
 She neither hears, nor sees,  
 Whirl'd round in earth's diurnal course  
 With rocks and stones and trees."

<sup>3</sup> *Wild pulsation of her wings*.] A Latinism like Virgil's "remigium alarum."

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,<sup>1</sup>

And saying ; " Comes he thus, my friend ?  
Is this the end of all my care ? "  
And circle moaning in the air :  
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ? "

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn,  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII

He compares himself to a widower who dreams his wife is by his side, and weeps. So the poet's tears and fancies are a sign that his loss is only partly realised, as if in a dream.

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
And, where warm hands<sup>2</sup> have prest and closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

<sup>1</sup> *The marge.*] *I.e.*, the ship's horizon.

<sup>2</sup> *Hands.*] See x. 19 ; xiv. 11.

Come Time, and teach me many years  
I do not suffer in a dream ;  
For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approaching sails,  
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV

The torpor of sorrow continued.

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
 No hint of death in all his frame,  
 But found him all in all the same,  
 I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV

A wild evening in autumn. The poet could hardly bear the storm but for his fancy that the sea is calm for the ship's passage; and yet again the storm in his heart would incline him to sympathy with that without, were it not for the dread that the sea is not calm.

To-night the winds began to rise  
 And roar from yonder dropping day :<sup>1</sup>  
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
 The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
 The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
 The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver  
 That all thy<sup>2</sup> motions gently pass  
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
 And but for fear it is not so,  
 The wild unrest that lives in woe  
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

<sup>1</sup> *Dropping day.*] West.

<sup>2</sup> *Thy.*] The ship's, as in xiv.

That rises upward always higher,  
 And onward drags a labouring breast,  
 And topples round the dreary west,  
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI

The poet asks how the moods described in xi. and xv. can be moods of the same sorrow. Are they only superficial changes, or has reason lost control?

What words are these have fall'n from me?

Can calm despair<sup>1</sup> and wild unrest<sup>2</sup>

Be tenants of a single breast,

Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take

The touch of change in calm or storm;

But knows no more of transient form

In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark

Hung in the shadow of a heaven?

Or has the shock, so harshly given,

Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,

And staggers blindly ere she sink?

And stunn'd me from my power to think

And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man<sup>3</sup>

Whose fancy fuses old and new,

And flashes into false and true,

And mingles all without a plan?

<sup>1</sup> *Calm despair.*] xi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Wild unrest.*] xv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *That delirious man, etc.*] *i.e.*, a madman.

## XVII

A welcome and blessing of the vessel in the manner of Horace's famous Ode.

Thou comest, much wept for : such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding<sup>1</sup> sky,  
Week after week : the days go by :  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,<sup>2</sup>  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee ;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

<sup>1</sup> *Bounding.*] See xi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *A line of light.*] As if from a lighthouse on the English coast.

## XVIII

Beginning with a repetition of the sentiment in x., the poem passes through a burst of passion to the first glimpse of a possibility of realising the aspiration of i.

'Tis well ; 'tis something ; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.<sup>1</sup>

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,<sup>2</sup>  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a reference to *Hamlet*, v. i. 263 :

“ And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring ! ”

<sup>2</sup> One of the supreme quatrains of the poem.

## XIX

A very beautiful poem, completing the series on the burial, and comparing the poet's grief to the river Wye, which is tidal, and so alternately silent and vocal as the tide rises and falls. It was written in Tintern Abbey.

The Danube to the Severn<sup>1</sup> gave  
The darken'd<sup>2</sup> heart that beat no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

<sup>1</sup> Hallam died at Vienna (see lxxxiv. 19), on the Danube, and was buried at Clevedon, on the Severn.

<sup>2</sup> *Darken'd.*] Because confined. So x. 8, "thy *dark* freight."



## XX

Takes up the thought of XIX., and speaks of griefs as less and greater ; the former only being expressible in words. These are compared to the servants of a house, those to the children.

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fullness from the mind :  
“ It will be hard ” they say “ to find  
Another service such as this.”

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win ;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
“ How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.”

*End of Section Two.*

## XXI

A defence of his elegy. See v., viii. A singer cannot but sing, and his song must be grave or gay according to his mood.

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak ;  
“ This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.”

Another answers, “ Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.”

A third is wroth, “ Is this an hour  
For private sorrow’s barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

“ A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon ? ”

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And unto one her note is gay,  
     For now her little ones have ranged ;  
 And unto one her note is changed,  
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII

With xxii. begins a short series of poems on the Path of his Life,  
 as it was and is.

The path by which we twain did go,  
     Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
     Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
 From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
     And crown'd with all the season lent,  
     From April on to April went,  
 And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
     To slant the fifth autumnal slope,<sup>1</sup>  
     As we descended following Hope,  
 There sat the Shadow<sup>2</sup> fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
     And spread his mantle dark and cold ;  
     And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip ;

And bore thee where I could not see  
     Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste ;<sup>3</sup>  
     And think, that somewhere in the waste  
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

<sup>1</sup> Hallam died on 15th September, in the fifth autumn of their acquaintance.

<sup>2</sup> *Shadow.*] Death can only be defined by negatives.

<sup>3</sup> *In haste.*] See xxiii. 6. The poet had a wish to die.

## XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits ;  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,<sup>1</sup>  
I wander, often falling lame,<sup>2</sup>  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where it ran  
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb ;  
But all the lavish<sup>3</sup> hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :<sup>4</sup>

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought ;  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech :

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood :

<sup>1</sup> In this line we have a hint of the discussions that are to follow.

<sup>2</sup> The point emphasised is the aimlessness and weariness of the new, lonely life.

<sup>3</sup> *Lavish.*] Rich with trees.

<sup>4</sup> *Pan.*] Universal nature personified, as by Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 266 :

“ Universal Pan,  
Knit with the graces and the hours in dance,  
Led on the eternal Spring.”

And many an old philosophy  
 On Argive<sup>1</sup> heights divinely<sup>2</sup> sang,  
 And round us all the thicket rang  
 To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV

Was our old life really so happy? Did it lead through Paradise?

And was the day of my delight  
 As pure and perfect as I say?  
 The very source and fount of Day  
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.<sup>3</sup>

If all was good and fair we met,  
 This earth had been the Paradise  
 It never look'd to human eyes  
 Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief  
 Makes former gladness loom so great?<sup>4</sup>  
 The lowness of the present state,  
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
 A glory from its being far;  
 And orb into the perfect star  
 We saw not, when we moved therein?

<sup>1</sup> "Argive" and "Arcady" must not be pressed. Argive must mean simply Greek, and Arcady stands for the conventional home of poetry.

<sup>2</sup> *Divinely*.] An epithet of philosophy borrowed from *Comus*, 476; repeated in *lii.* 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Wandering isles of night*.] Sun-spots.

<sup>4</sup> First edition reads: "Hath stretched my former joy so great."

## XXV

It was not Paradise indeed, but Life—happy, not as being without  
toil, but in the companionship of love.

I know that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared ;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air ;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love :

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI

The "path of life" still winds onward : its virtue will depend upon  
his continuing to love his friend. In this determination the  
poet has reached some answer to the question he proposed at  
starting : How may good come out of the evil ?

Still onward winds the dreary way ;  
I with it ; for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker <sup>1</sup> Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

<sup>1</sup> *Canker.*] Corrode, make decay.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
 And goodness, and hath power to see  
 Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
 And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
 Or see (in Him is no before)  
 In more of life true life no more,<sup>1</sup>  
 And Love the indifference to be,<sup>2</sup>

So might I find, ere yet the morn  
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
 That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
 To cloak me from my proper<sup>3</sup> scorn.

## XXVII

This secret, that the virtue of life is love, is here drawn out and emphasised. The poet will not envy any ease due to want of sensibility.

I envy not in any moods  
 The captive void of noble rage,  
 The linnet born within the cage,  
 That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes  
 His license in the field of time,  
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
 To whom a conscience never wakes ;

<sup>1</sup> *True life no more.*] Because the virtue of life is love.

<sup>2</sup> And (in) love the coming indifference.

<sup>3</sup> *Proper.*] Own.

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,  
Nor any want-begotten rest.<sup>1</sup>

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.<sup>2</sup>

*End of the Third Section.*

## XXVIII

The first Christmas after Hallam's death ; one of three Christmas poems (see LXXVII., CIV.), each marking a new departure of thought.

The time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again :

<sup>1</sup> *Any want-begotten rest.*] Any contentment due to a vacuum.

<sup>2</sup> See lxxxiv.



But they my troubled spirit rule,  
 For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
 The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX

The accustomed Christmas merriment shall go on, because it is accustomed.

With such compelling cause to grieve<sup>1</sup>  
 As daily vexes household peace,  
 And chains regret to his decease,  
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
 To enrich the threshold of the night  
 With shower'd largess of delight,  
 In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
 Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,<sup>2</sup>  
 That guard the portals of the house ;<sup>3</sup>

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
 Why should they miss their yearly due  
 Before their time ? They too will die.

<sup>1</sup> The reader will recall Stevenson's words in *A Christmas Sermon*: "In the midst of the winter, when his life is lowest and he is reminded of the empty chairs of his beloved, it is well he should be condemned to this fashion of the smiling face."

<sup>2</sup> *Use and Wont.*] Tennyson was always much moved by precedent ; see the lines "You ask me why, tho' ill at ease" ; but cf. *civ.* 19.

<sup>3</sup> If the "cold font" is wreathed, why not the cold house? Both have associations with death.

## XXX

The first celebration of Christmas brings to the poet the first hope of  
immortality for his friend.

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
We heard them sweep the winter land ;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like<sup>1</sup> our voices rang ;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is sweet,"  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
Once more we sang : "They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

<sup>1</sup> *Echo-like.*] The song was only sung because it was sung last year, and it was sung without spirit.

“ Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
 With gather’d power, yet the same,  
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
 From orb to orb,<sup>1</sup> from veil to veil.”<sup>2</sup>

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
 O Father, touch the east, and light  
 The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI

Revelation does not satisfy curiosity as to the nature of the life  
 beyond death.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
 And home to Mary’s house return’d,  
 Was this demanded—if he yearn’d  
 To hear her weeping by his grave ?

“ Where wert thou, brother, those four days ? ”  
 There lives no record of reply,  
 Which telling what it is to die  
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,  
 The streets were fill’d with joyful sound,  
 A solemn gladness even crown’d  
 The purple brows of Olivet.

<sup>1</sup> *From orb to orb.*] See lxii. 11 ; lxxii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *From veil to veil.*] From incarnation to incarnation, from one individual existence to another. See lxxxii. 6. For the word, cf. *Two Voices* :

“ An inner impulse rent the *veil*  
 Of his old husk ” (of the dragon-fly).

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
 He told it not ; or something seal'd  
 The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII

But curiosity would be cast out by perfect faith and love.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,<sup>1</sup>  
 Nor other thought her mind admits  
 But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
 And he that brought him back is there.

Then<sup>2</sup> one deep love doth supersede  
 All other, when her ardent gaze  
 Roves from the living brother's face,  
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
 Borne down by gladness so complete,  
 She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet<sup>3</sup>  
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,<sup>4</sup>  
 Whose loves in higher love endure ;<sup>5</sup>  
 What souls possess themselves so pure,  
 Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

<sup>1</sup> *Prayer.*] Faith and thanksgiving.

<sup>2</sup> *Then.*] The poet is describing a scene. At the sight of Christ a deep love rises in Mary's heart, and for the moment swallows up all other ; so that she rises and bathes His feet. It does not mean that her affection for Lazarus is permanently superseded.

<sup>3</sup> St. John xii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Prayer is the natural expression of faith and love toward an ideal object.

<sup>5</sup> From the thought of Mary's connecting her brother's renewed life with Christ, the poet receives a hint of how departed spirits may be thought of as "in God." This he develops later. See cxxix. 11 ; Prologue, 39, 40.

## XXXIII

The poet turns aside to say a word of kindly patronage in defence of religious devotion, supposed in 1850 to be peculiarly feminine. See vi. 13.

O thou that after toil and storm  
     Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
     Whose faith has centre everywhere,<sup>1</sup>  
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,<sup>2</sup>

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
     Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
     Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
     Her hands are quicker unto good :  
     Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
 To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
     In holding by the law within,<sup>3</sup>  
     Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
 And ev'n for want of such a type.

<sup>1</sup> *Centre everywhere.*] Because it thinks of the Divine Spirit as diffused through the universe. See cxxix. Cf. *The Higher Pantheism*.

<sup>2</sup> *Form.*] Creed. See cxxvi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> You that find the Divine Spirit only in man's conscience must be careful to keep your ideal higher than that of the world. See xxxvi. Cf. Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*.

## XXXIV

The three next poems consider the idea, now come prominently forward, of the life after death. In the very fact of human life there are intimations of immortality, because life must have some purpose. If not, the creation is merely the wild work of some irresponsible artist. If that were so, the Creator could have no claim on us; and the sooner life were ended the better.

My own dim life should teach me this,<sup>1</sup>  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson is reported as once saying: "If there be a God that has made the earth, and put this hope and passion in us, it must foreshow the truth."

## XXXV

But if it were certain that death was the end, could I not at any rate love my friend till I die? No, the sense of universal decay would sap my love also. Love could never be more than a sensual passion or a dull companionship, if we could contemplate losing those we love.

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow house :  
"The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust" :

Might I not say, " Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive " ?  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or slow  
Draw down *Æonian*<sup>1</sup> hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be ; <sup>2</sup>

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
"The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case ? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

<sup>1</sup> *Æonian*.] Lasting for ages. It is the Greek word rendered "everlasting" in our Gospels. *Æon*, an age, is a favourite word of Tennyson's, see cxxvi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *To be*.] Future, as in xxvi. 12.

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI

There is in the mere fact of human life, as has been said, an intimation of immortality and other truths, but we may bless the wisdom of God for not leaving them to be discovered by speculation, but bringing them into open evidence by the Incarnation of the Word.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,<sup>1</sup>  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word <sup>2</sup> had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See xxxiv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *The Word.*] St. John i. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Savages inhabiting Pacific islands.



## XXXVII

An apology for handling religious problems in poetry. It was from his master, Hallam, that the poet learned his religion, and this remained his comfort in bereavement.

Urania<sup>1</sup> speaks with darken'd brow :  
    "Thou pratest here where thou art least ;  
    This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou :

"Go down beside thy native rill,  
    On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
    And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene<sup>2</sup> replies,  
    A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
    "I am not worthy but to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,  
    And owning but a little art  
    To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues ;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,  
    And all he said of things divine,  
    (And dear as sacramental wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

<sup>1</sup> *Urania*.] "The heavenly one" ; strictly, the Muse of Astronomy, but used, after Milton, for the Sacred Muse. Cf. *Princess*, i. 190, "*Uranian Venus*."

<sup>2</sup> *Melpomene*.] "The singing one" ; strictly, the Muse of Tragedy, but used for the Elegiac Muse.

"I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;  
And loiter'd in the master's<sup>1</sup> field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song."

## XXXVIII

Another poem on his poetry, introducing the new thought that his friend may take pleasure in it.

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing<sup>2</sup> season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX

A parallel between the spirit's leaving the body and a bride's departure for her new home; but with a sad contrast.

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower!

<sup>1</sup> *The master's.*] Hallam's; cf. lxxxvi. 29, "the master-bowman."

<sup>2</sup> *Blowing.*] Blossoming.

## IN MEMORIAM

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
    To take her latest leave of home,  
    And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
    And tears are on the mother's face,  
    As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
    Becoming as is meet and fit  
    A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
    A life that bears immortal fruit  
    In such great offices as suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
    How often shall her old fireside  
    Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
    And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
    Till even those that miss'd her most,  
Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
    Till growing winters lay me low ;  
    My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XL

On earth the friend was ever growing in wisdom, but the poet understood and shared the changes. Death has put a stop to this. And that introduces the new fear that as his friend has got the start in the life beyond the veil, the poet may never overtake him, and so never again be in the same world. And so he longs to leap all grades between them, and be once more with his friend.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
And I have lost the links that bound  
Thy changes ; here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly !<sup>1</sup> yet that this could be—  
That I could wing my will with might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee :

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in death ;<sup>2</sup>  
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields ;

<sup>1</sup> *Deep folly.*] Refers to the wish that follows.

<sup>2</sup> *Vague fear implied in death, etc.*] A reminiscence of *Measure for Measure*, III. I. :

“ Ay, but to die, and go we know not where,  
    . . . Or to be worse than worst  
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts  
Imagine *howling*.”

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
 An inner trouble I behold,  
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
 That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
 The wonders that have come to thee,  
 Thro' all the secular<sup>1</sup> to-be,<sup>2</sup>  
 But evermore a life behind.

## XLI

The answer to the fear expressed in XL. It was only being with him here that made me seem his equal; so, though unequal, I may be with him there.

I vex my heart with fancies dim :  
 He still outstript me in the race ;  
 It was but unity of place  
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
 And he the much-beloved again,  
 A lord of large experience, train  
 To riper growth the<sup>3</sup> mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
 When one that loves but knows not, reaps  
 A truth from one that loves and knows ?

<sup>1</sup> *Secular.*] Means "belonging to the ages." So lxxv. 6, "the secular abyss to come."

<sup>2</sup> *To-be.*] Used by Tennyson as a noun, "the future."

<sup>3</sup> *The.*] *I.e.*, my.

## XLII

Another answer. Perhaps Death is but a sleep, and we do not begin the life beyond till all have died. In that case my friend will be the same when we meet as when we last parted, no trait of human character lost, and certainly not love ; just as a flower though it loses colour at night reawakens to the same colour.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom <sup>1</sup>  
Thro' all its intervital gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last,  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
But that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began :

And love would last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in Time,  
And at the spiritual prime <sup>2</sup>  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

<sup>1</sup> *Folded bloom.*] He compares spirits to flowers which fold up their petals in the dark.

<sup>2</sup> *Prime.*] Daybreak.

## XLIII

The fear of being forgotten still haunts him. May not the dead forget the life here as we forget our babyhood? Even so, as we seem to have hints of a pre-natal life, some dim recollection of earth may penetrate into the life beyond, and prompt a question that will be answered.

How fares it with the happy dead?  
     For here the man is more and more;<sup>1</sup>  
     But he forgets the days before  
 God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
     And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
     Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
 A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years  
     (If Death so taste Lethean springs)<sup>2</sup>  
     May some dim touch of earthly things  
 Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So *The Two Voices*:

"If thro' lower lives I came,  
 I might forget my weaker lot:  
 For is not our first year forgot?  
 The haunts of memory echo not.  
 Moreover, something is or seems,  
 That touches me with mystic gleams,  
 Like glimpses of forgotten dreams."

<sup>2</sup> So *The Two Voices*:

"As old mythologies relate,  
 Some draught of Lethe might await  
 The slipping thro' from state to state."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Ring*:

"Dead so long, gone up so far,  
 That now their ever-rising life has dwarf'd  
 Or lost the moment of their past on earth,  
 As we forget our wail at being born."

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
    O turn thee round, resolve the doubt,  
    My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLIV

To the bodily life we owe the growth of individual mind and  
memory, which surely will not be lost again at death.

The baby new to earth and sky,  
    What time his tender palm is prest  
    Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that "this is I" :

But as he grows he gathers much,  
    And learns the use of "I," and "me,"  
    And finds "I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch" :

So rounds he to a separate mind  
    From whence clear memory may begin,  
    As thro' the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
    Which else were fruitless of their due,  
    Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.



## XLV

True, *we* forget ; but our forgetfulness has a use in keeping our hopes set forward. Beyond the grave forgetfulness will serve no purpose, and we shall see our lives in all the detail of their extent. Then the five years of our friendship will be seen to be the richest part of the whole. But to enrich five years out of a lifetime is a triumph unworthy of Love ; and so the poet prays Love to bless the whole with his influence.

We ranging down this lower <sup>1</sup> track,  
The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last  
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past ;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;  
The fruitful hours of still increase ;  
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far,  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lower.*] On earth.

<sup>2</sup> *From marge to marge.*] Love is to extend his "province" as Lord over the *whole* life from beginning to end.

## XLVI

This poem refers back to XLIV. The notion that immortality is only corporate, the single spirit being merged in the Universal, is declared to be unsatisfying. At least Love requires a meeting of souls for a last farewell before such a loss of individuality.

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds,<sup>1</sup> and fusing all  
The skirts of self<sup>2</sup> again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
Eternal form<sup>3</sup> shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside ;  
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good ;  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth ? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,<sup>4</sup>  
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
"Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light."

*End of the Fourth Section.*

<sup>1</sup> The metaphor is from planets falling back into the sun.

<sup>2</sup> *Fusing all the skirts.*] Melting the outline.

<sup>3</sup> Form shall be as eternal as spirit, *i.e.*, our spirit shall always retain individuality.

<sup>4</sup> *Fade away.*] Into the Universal Spirit.

## XLVII

A new section opens here with a new poem of apology; and as the questions to be discussed are doubts concerned with the presence of evil in the world and man, the apology is addressed to philosophers, as before to theologians. The poet does not propound formal doubts in order to resolve them, but gives Love's answer to such as rise in his own mind. To treat them in verse helps self-restraint; and to treat them otherwise would be beyond the poet's power.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
     Were taken to be such as closed  
     Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
 Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part <sup>1</sup> and prove ;  
     She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
     What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love : <sup>2</sup>

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
     But better serves a wholesome law,  
     And holds it sin and shame to draw <sup>3</sup>  
 The deepest measure from the chords :

<sup>1</sup> *Part.*] Divide, so as to define. So in *The Two Voices* :

“To put together, part, and prove.”

<sup>2</sup> *Vassal unto love.*] A reference to Shakespeare's Sonnet 26 :

“Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage.”

<sup>3</sup> Tennyson had an artist's sense of the shamefulness of over-passing bounds. F. T. Palgrave quotes a saying of his that “Scott's Maid of Neidpath was almost more pathetic than a man has the right to be” (*Life*, ii. 502).

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLVIII

The apology is continued to the general reader. He is welcome to whatever light may break from any quarter upon the poet's mind; but if he objects to a poet's fancy playing with such grave questions, he may remember that beneath all speculation his grief grows ever darker and more hopeless.

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## XLIX

A cry to his friend's spirit to be near and help in all crises of life :  
when he is unmanned by sorrow, and when pain makes him  
doubt the love of the Creator, and when life seems full of  
purposeless torture, and Time mere chance ; also when death  
comes.

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick  
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust,  
And Time, a maniac,<sup>1</sup> scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury, slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term<sup>2</sup> of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

<sup>1</sup> *Time* (seems) a *maniac*.

<sup>2</sup> *To point the term.*] To point out the goal.

## L

A doubt is suggested by the preceding invocation ; and answered :  
Spirits would not be misled by superficial defect or occasional lapse, but having learnt wisdom by death would make allowance.

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?  
Is there no baseness we would hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith ?<sup>1</sup>  
There must be wisdom with great Death :  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LI

Love makes allowance even for defect of love, from which all other defect arises.

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

<sup>1</sup> Have I love for my friend and no faith in his judgment ?

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"  
     The Spirit of true love replied ;  
     "Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
 Nor human frailty do me wrong.  
  
 "What keeps a spirit wholly true  
     To that ideal which he bears ?  
     What record ? not the sinless years  
 That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :  
  
 "So fret not, like an idle girl,  
     That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.<sup>1</sup>  
     Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,  
 When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl."<sup>2</sup>

## LII

Sin may be unavoidable, but must not be acquiesced in. We may see in the retrospect that good has come out of evil, but we must not call the evil good.

How many a father have I seen,  
     A sober man, among his boys,  
     Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
 Who wears his manhood hale and green :  
  
 And dare we to this fancy give,<sup>2</sup>  
     That had the wild oat not been sown,<sup>3</sup>  
     The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
 The grain by which a man may live ?

<sup>1</sup> Sin comes in rather abruptly here. There is surely a distinction to be drawn between human inability to perfectly realise an ideal, and "sins of will" (liii. 3). The metaphor from pearls does not seem helpful ; the body has more influence on the spirit, than the shell on the pearl.

<sup>2</sup> Give.] Give in.

<sup>3</sup> Of course it is the passionate heat of the nature that produces, if it does, both the wild oats and the fruit ; it is not the sowing of the wild oat that makes the ground fertile. The thought or the expression here is wanting in precision.

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound  
 For life outliving heats of youth,  
 Yet who would preach it as a truth  
 To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
 For fear divine Philosophy<sup>1</sup>  
 Should push beyond her mark, and be  
 Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIII

In face of the problem of evil—in all its shapes, sin, disease, death—he declares his faith (or is it but a dream, a wish?), that the evil will at last, somehow, prove to be good. The emphatic words are "aimless" (l. 5), "rubbish" (l. 7), "in vain" (l. 9), "fruitless" (l. 11), "but" (l. 12).

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
 Will be the final goal of ill,  
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood :

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
 That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
 When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
 That not a moth with vain desire  
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
 Or but subserves another's gain.

<sup>1</sup> *Divine Philosophy.*] From *Comus*, 476.



Behold, we know not anything ;  
 I can but trust that good shall fall  
 At last—far off<sup>1</sup>—at last, to all,  
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
 An infant crying in the night :<sup>2</sup>  
 An infant crying for the light :  
 And with no language but a cry.

## LIV

This trust in the eternity of all life is confronted with the fact of Nature's prodigality of individual existences ; so that the wish which seemed to be in accordance with the mind of God is rebuffed, and faith, left without evidence, dwindles to a faint hope.

The wish, that of the living whole<sup>3</sup>  
 No life may fail beyond the grave ;  
 Derives it not from what we have  
 The likest God within the soul ?<sup>4</sup>

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
 That Nature lends such evil dreams ?  
 So careful of the type she seems,  
 So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere  
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
 And finding that of fifty seeds  
 She often brings but one to bear ;

<sup>1</sup> *At last—far off.*] So in last stanza of Epilogue, "one far-off divine event.

<sup>2</sup> So cxxiii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Two Voices* :

"Who forged that other influence,  
*That heat of inward evidence,*  
 By which he doubts against the sense?"

<sup>4</sup> *I-e., love.*

I falter where I firmly trod,  
 And falling with my weight of cares  
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
 That slope thro' darkness up to God ;

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
 And gather dust and chaff,<sup>1</sup> and call  
 To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.<sup>2</sup>

## LV

Still worse is behind. Not only is Nature prodigal of the single life in the interest of the species, geology reveals that thousands of species are extinct. What if man also become extinct? If so, the discord between his "splendid purpose" and such an outcome of it, his faith in God's love and such evidence to the contrary, would be horrible.

"So careful of the type?" but no,  
 From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
 She cries "A thousand types are gone :  
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
 I bring to life, I bring to death :  
 The spirit does but mean the breath :  
 I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
 Who roll'd<sup>3</sup> the psalm to wintry skies,  
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

<sup>1</sup> *Dust and chaff.*] Probably means empty dogmas. Cf. *The Two Voices* :

"The dust of systems and of creeds."

<sup>2</sup> *Larger hope.*] Hope for immortality of the whole race.

<sup>3</sup> *Roll'd.*] So *lxix. 14.* The idea is of organ music borne on the wind.

Who trusted God was love indeed  
 And love Creation's final law—  
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
 Who battled for the True, the Just,  
 Be blown about the desert dust,  
 Or seal'd within the iron hills?<sup>1</sup>

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
 That tare each other in their slime,  
 Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
 What hope of answer, or redress?  
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVI

The farewell at the grave.

Peace, come away: the song of woe  
 Is after all an earthly song:  
 Peace, come away; we do him wrong  
 To sing so wildly; let us go.

Come, let us go: your cheeks are pale,  
 But half my life<sup>2</sup> I leave behind:  
 Methinks my friend is richly shrined,<sup>3</sup>  
 But I shall pass; my work will fail.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Be fossilised.

<sup>2</sup> *Half my life.*] Cf. Horace's phrase about Virgil, "half my soul."

<sup>3</sup> *Richly shrined.*] In this poem.

<sup>4</sup> *My work will fail.*] See later, lxxiv., lxxv.

Yet in these ears till hearing dies,  
 One set slow bell<sup>1</sup> will seem to toll  
 The passing of the sweetest soul  
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
 Eternal greetings to the dead ;  
 And "Ave, Ave, Ave,"<sup>2</sup> said,  
 "Adieu, adieu" for evermore !

## LVII

So far the poem is elegy, and here it might end. But the poet reflects that elegy is idle and fruitless of comfort, as it serves but to remind its hearers of their mortality. The rest of the poem shall be in a higher strain. A nobler farewell is anticipated.

In those sad words I took farewell :<sup>3</sup>  
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,<sup>4</sup>  
 As drop by drop<sup>5</sup> the water falls  
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
 Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
 Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
 And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

<sup>1</sup> *Set slow bell.*] Cf., for the alliteration, Shakespeare's Sonnet 71 :

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell."

*Set* seems to mean at regular intervals.

<sup>2</sup> *Ave et Vale* (hail and farewell) was the form of solemn adieu to the dead at Roman funerals. See Virg. *Æn.*, xi. 97 ; Catullus, ci. 10.

<sup>3</sup> This implied that the poems so far are a farewell to the dead, spoken over the grave.

<sup>4</sup> *Echoes in sepulchral halls.*] So far the poem has done nothing but repeat and dwell upon the fact that Hallam had died.

<sup>5</sup> *Drop by drop.*] Referring to the disconnectedness of the poems, symbolised by the "Ave," "Ave," "Ave," of lvi.

The high Muse answer'd : " Wherefore grieve  
 Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?  
 Abide a little longer here,  
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

*End of the Fifth Section.*

LVIII

A poor poem, added in 1851. He contemplates a change in his sorrow ; she will be his settled companion, her harsher moods will vanish, and the world will hardly recognise her.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
 No casual mistress, but a wife,  
 My bosom-friend and half of life ;  
 As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
 And put thy harsher moods aside,  
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
 Nor will it lessen from to-day,  
 But I'll have leave at times to play  
 As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
 With so much hope for years to come,  
 That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LIX

The next six poems are occupied with the thought, Does my old friend remember me? Hopes alternate with fears. To express their difference in spiritual station, the poet takes various similes from love affairs between people in different social grades, not very convincingly. First he compares his love to that of a village maiden for one above her in rank. The love is here all on one side and hopeless.

He past ; a soul of nobler<sup>1</sup> tone :  
    My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
    Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
    She finds the baseness of her lot ;  
    Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
    She sighs amid her narrow days,  
    Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
    And tease her till the day draws by ;  
    At night she weeps, "How vain am I !  
How should he love a thing so low ?"

<sup>1</sup> *Nobler.*] "Very noble." See ix. 9, "ruder."

## LX

Here he protests that though there must be disparity in station, yet in love he is equal to his dead friend, nay, to the highest of his peers.

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man ;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

## LXI

And yet, if the remembrance of an inferior, even of his love, could mar heavenly bliss, forget it and him.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
 His other passion wholly dies,  
 Or in the light of deeper eyes  
 Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXII

And yet again, as a man on earth has a hierarchy of objects of love, not excluding dog and horse, so in heaven among his new enterprises his friend may perchance spare him sympathy.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
 And love in which my hound has part,  
 Can hang no weight upon my heart  
 In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
 And yet I spare them sympathy  
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
 As, unto vaster motions bound,<sup>1</sup>  
 The circuits of thine orbit round  
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIII

Or, if even sympathy is too much to ask, the poet may come into his friend's mind as a part of the old familiar landscape of earth, which he takes a pensive pleasure in recalling.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
 As some divinely gifted man,<sup>2</sup>  
 Whose life in low estate began  
 And on a simple village green ;

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, in thy new orb. See xxiv. 15 ; xxx. 28 ; lxxii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a reference to the story of Baron Ward. 1



Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
“ Does my old friend remember me ? ”

## LXIV

But these are fancies. The one certain solace is the absolute value of love, and so of the love of each to each, and so of mine to thee, and this thought brings happiness.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt ;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With "Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought<sup>1</sup>  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee,  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXV

Apology for taking interest in gaiety, by a comparison with one who has lost his sight. For both the present is wiped out, the past alone is real.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

<sup>1</sup> Metaphor from butterfly and chrysalis.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair <sup>1</sup>  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
His inner day can never die,<sup>2</sup>  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVI

The next five poems, perhaps connecting with the thought of the blind man, are concerned with Night.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,<sup>3</sup>  
There comes a glory on the walls :

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

<sup>1</sup> This last stanza is one of the most truthful and poignant pictures in literature.

<sup>2</sup> The blind man has an inner day of thought wrapped in an impenetrable darkness of sense.

<sup>3</sup> Hallam was buried at Clevedon, on Severn.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
    From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
    And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
    A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
    And in the chancel like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVII

When in the down I sink my head,  
    Sleep, Death's twin-brother,<sup>1</sup> times my breath ;  
    Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
    When all our path was fresh with dew,  
    And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
    I find a trouble in thine eye  
    Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
    I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
    It is the trouble of my youth<sup>2</sup>  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

<sup>1</sup> *Death's twin-brother.*] A Greek description of Sleep, applied here for the sake of the contrast in l. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Trouble of my youth.*] Hallam died in 1833, and the poem was published seventeen years later, when Tennyson was forty-one. Contrast the "trouble" of this vaguer and much later dream with that described in iv.

## LXVIII

A dream containing an allegory of the idea with which the poem opened, that Gain may spring out of Loss, if "Love clasps Grief."

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost :  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chatter'd<sup>1</sup> trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,<sup>2</sup>  
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs :  
They call'd me in the public squares<sup>3</sup>  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :  
I found an angel of the night :  
The voice was low, the look was bright,  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :<sup>4</sup>  
The voice was not the voice of grief ;  
The words were hard to understand.

<sup>1</sup> The chatterers are people whose lives have not been deepened by sorrow.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, I made my poet's crown out of thorns ; wrote verses about sorrow and death.

<sup>3</sup> See xxi.

<sup>4</sup> *Touch it into leaf.*] Referring to l. 1. The idea is that joy comes out of sorrow to those who do not seek to escape from it.

## LXIX

I cannot see the features right,  
    When on the gloom I strive to paint  
    The face I know ; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night : <sup>1</sup>

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
    A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
    A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
    And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
    Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores :

Till all at once beyond the will <sup>2</sup>  
    I hear a wizard music roll,  
    And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXX

Sleep, <sup>3</sup> kinsman thou to death and trance  
    And madness, thou hast forged at last  
    A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer France.

<sup>1</sup> *Hollow masks of night.*] Mere dream faces, not of people he knows.

<sup>2</sup> *Beyond the will.*] His efforts to picture his friend's face are unsuccessful ; suddenly when he tries no longer, the face appears.

<sup>3</sup> In sleep, the body lies as it were dead, but the soul may be caught up into the seventh heaven, only the trance of sleep is a delusion.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?<sup>1</sup>  
     Then bring an opiate treble-strong,  
     Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong<sup>2</sup>  
 That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
     Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
     The days that grow to something strange,  
 In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
     The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
     The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

*End of the Sixth Section.*

LXXI

An anniversary of Hallam's death ; a wild day in autumn. The poet relapses into a mood of wild grief, entirely desperate.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
     And howlest, issuing out of night,  
     With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
 And lash with storm the streaming pane ?

Day, when my crown'd<sup>3</sup> estate begun  
     To pine in that reverse of doom,  
     Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
 And blurr'd the splendour of the sun ;

<sup>1</sup> Had you so much influence with the soul as to deceive it ?

<sup>2</sup> The dream was marred by a sense that he was being wronged ; and so he prays sleep to come again, and make the illusion perfect.

<sup>3</sup> *Crown'd.*] At its height of happiness.

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
    With thy quick <sup>1</sup> tears that make the rose  
    Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame <sup>2</sup>  
    Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
    A chequer-work of beam and shade  
From hill to hill, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;  
    Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
    When the dark hand struck down thro'  
    time,  
And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
    Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,  
    And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
    Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;  
    Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

<sup>1</sup> *Quick.*] Not "fresh," "life-giving," but "quick-falling." Cf. *Demeter and Persephone* : "My quick tears kill'd the flower."

<sup>2</sup> Had the day been as calm and sunny as it is the reverse, it would have been no less hateful ; as it is, its destructiveness is typical of that signal act of destruction it once wrought, and therefore appropriate.



## LXXII

The next five poems speak of the fame that has been lost. The thought in this poem is that the force that did not earn fame here is reserved to be spent elsewhere.

So many worlds,<sup>1</sup> so much to do,  
     So little done, such things to be,  
     How know I what had need of thee,  
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
     The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath :  
     I curse not nature, no, nor death ;  
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass : the path that each man trod  
     Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
     What fame is left for human deeds  
 In endless age? It rests with God.<sup>2</sup>

O hollow wraith<sup>3</sup> of dying fame,  
     Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
     And self-infolds the large results  
 Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIII

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
     To those that watch it more and more,  
     A likeness hardly seen before  
 Comes out—to some one of his race :

<sup>1</sup> Cf. xxx. 28 ; lxii. 10.   <sup>2</sup> *It rests with God.*] Cf. *Lycidas*, 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Wraith.*] A shadowy form of the dead, supposed for a while to haunt the grave ; and so an admirable symbol of Fame.

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,<sup>1</sup>  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,<sup>2</sup>  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXIV

An expansion of the two preceding poems.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Below.*] The dead.

<sup>2</sup> I can see his likeness to such of the great and wise as I know, but there are others whom I do not know. But why should I speak of it at all, since he belongs now to their world, not to ours.

<sup>3</sup> *Dust of praise.*] Beginning to fall again as soon as it has risen. Cf. *Vision of Sin* :

“Dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.”

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
 And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
 The world which credits what is done  
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
 But somewhere, out of human view,  
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXV

Modern poetry, whether imaginative or prophetic, is doomed to quickly perish ; as being born too late.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
 And in a moment set thy face  
 Where all the starry heavens of space  
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ; <sup>1</sup>

Take wings of foresight : lighten thro'  
 The secular <sup>2</sup> abyss to come,  
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
 Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
 The darkness of our planet, last,  
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

<sup>1</sup> From *Cymbeline*, I. iii. 20 :

“ Till the diminution  
 Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle.”

<sup>2</sup> *Secular*.] See xl. 23.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

## LXXVI

Also it must perish, as dealing with events small in comparison with the heroic past. Nevertheless, I must sing my elegy.

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd <sup>1</sup> in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief—then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

<sup>1</sup> *Foreshortened.*] We see things near us out of their proper proportion.

## LXXVII

The second Christmas after Hallam's death ; marked by calmness.  
 Contrast the first Christmas, described in xxx. Has sorrow then  
 perished ? No, it mingles still in all the relations of life, play  
 as well as work, but gives no outward sign.

Again at Christmas did we weave  
     The holly round the Christmas hearth,  
     The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog<sup>1</sup> sparkled keen with frost,  
     No wing of wind the region swept,  
     But over all things brooding slept  
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
     Again our ancient games had place,  
     The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.<sup>2</sup>

Who show'd a token of distress ?  
     No single tear, no type of pain :  
     O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !  
     No—mixt with all this mystic frame,<sup>3</sup>  
     Her deep relations are the same,  
 But with long use her tears are dry.

<sup>1</sup> *Yule-clog.*] A provincial name for the large log burnt at Christmas.

<sup>2</sup> *Hoodman-blind.*] A Shakespearean name for blind-man's buff.

<sup>3</sup> *Mystic frame.*] xxxvi. 2.

## LXXVIII

An explanation of ix. 20.

“More than my brothers are to me” —  
Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.<sup>1</sup>

But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in Nature's mint ;  
And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
Thro' all his eddying coves ; the same  
All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

<sup>1</sup> *In fee.*] In perpetual possession : possibly a reminiscence of Wordsworth's Sonnet on Venice :

“ Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee.”

## LXXIX

The poet imagines how his friend would have borne *his* death. He would certainly have turned his loss to gain. His example, then, although actually "unused," only imagined, shall be rich in influence to strengthen and comfort.

If any vague desire should rise,  
That holy <sup>1</sup> Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ; <sup>2</sup>

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks,  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit <sup>3</sup> thus shall set me free ;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

<sup>1</sup> *Holy.*] The poet, looking at Death as coming to himself, calls it "holy."

<sup>2</sup> *Tearless eyes.*] Eyes that, in that case, would not have wept as they have.

<sup>3</sup> *Credit.*] Used as in lxx. 5, for "virtue," "influence."

## LXXX

He asks, Would not my affection have grown with years? Am I not, then, a loser by my friend's death? By an image drawn from the ripening influence of frost he reassures himself.

Could I have said while he was here  
    " My love shall now no further range ;  
    There cannot come a mellow change,  
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store : <sup>1</sup>  
    What end is here to my complaint ?  
    This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
" More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet :  
    " My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
    And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after-heat."

## LXXXI

He charges Death not with the decay of the natural body, or the waste of a precious heart and intellect, but with the destruction of audible communion.

I wage not any feud with Death  
    For changes wrought on form and face ;  
    No lower life that earth's embrace  
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

<sup>1</sup> The answer to the question of the first quatrain is "No." *Then*, it follows, *Love had hope*, etc.



Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks <sup>1</sup>  
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks <sup>2</sup>  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth :  
 I know transplanted human worth <sup>3</sup>  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak. <sup>4</sup>

## LXXXII

A second Spring Song. In xxxviii. the gay season was in too sharp contrast with the poet's sorrow ; a year has passed, and now he anticipates that the new spirit in the world will put a new spirit also into his sorrow. The poem marks a growth in reconciliation.

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded <sup>5</sup> noons,  
 Thy sweetness from its proper place ?  
 Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons ?

<sup>1</sup> So xxx. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Straw left after threshing.

<sup>3</sup> See lxxiv. 18.

<sup>4</sup> One of the places in the poem where passion finds perfect expression.

<sup>5</sup> *Clouded.*] Still, too long clouded.

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.<sup>1</sup>

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud,  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIII

An imaginary picture of what might have been, had Hallam lived and married the poet's sister as was proposed. He sketches their intimacy still growing, till at death they would have been found "a single soul." A poem curiously unhappy, as ignoring altogether the wife, but redeemed by two lines (19, 20).

When I contemplate all alone,  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou should'st link thy life with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

<sup>1</sup> A less happy description than the rest of the verse.

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee ;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest :

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As linked with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive<sup>1</sup> at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXIV

To love is always a good, therefore the poet still welcomes new friendships. This does not take the place of the old friendship, which is indeed not dead, but eternal; still, as communion is interrupted there is room for a friendship that can clasp hands; and this the spirit of the dead seems himself to urge. He describes his sorrow, and the influence that kept it from sinking into despair or folly.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,<sup>2</sup>  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried<sup>3</sup> in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above,  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;  
And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love;

<sup>1</sup> *Arrive.*] For "arrive at," a Shakespearean use.

<sup>2</sup> xxvii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *O true and tried.*] Cf. Epilogue (to Edmund Lushington), "O true and tried"; suggesting that he is the friend here addressed.

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,<sup>1</sup>  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,<sup>2</sup>  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost ! O crowned soul !

<sup>1</sup> *Whose hopes were dim.*] Suggests a reason for Hallam's early death. His ideals were so high and clear that he was allowed at once to realise them.

<sup>2</sup> *Equal-poised control.*] Metaphor from a yoke.

Yet<sup>1</sup> none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands,  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilising intellect :

And so<sup>2</sup> my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,<sup>3</sup>  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met ;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

<sup>1</sup> Yet.] Referring back to l. 29. The poet recognised that for a living man to be so absorbed in sorrow as to neglect duty could not be right.

<sup>2</sup> So.] Referring back to l. 44.

<sup>3</sup> His poetry and speculation.

I woo your love : I count it crime  
    To mourn for any overmuch ; <sup>1</sup>  
    I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had <sup>2</sup> master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
    Eternal, separate from fears.  
    The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
    And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,  
    And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
    Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
    My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,  
    A part of stillness, yearns to speak :  
    " Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

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

<sup>1</sup> Cf. xlvii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Had.*] Would have.

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free?  
How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall;  
" 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;  
Or so methinks the dead would say;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play,  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,



My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
 Quite in the love of what is gone,  
 But seeks to beat in time with one  
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
 The primrose of the later year,  
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXV

A calm sunset after rain, said to have been written at Barmouth  
 (*Life*, i. 313).

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
 That rollest<sup>1</sup> from the gorgeous gloom  
 Of evening over brake and bloom  
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
 'Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd<sup>2</sup> wood,  
 And shadowing down the horned<sup>3</sup> flood  
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
 The full new life that feeds thy breath  
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,  
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

<sup>1</sup> *That rollest . . . from evening.*] The west wind.  
*Dewy-tassell'd.*] So *Princess*, i. 93:

"In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees."

<sup>2</sup> *Horned.*] A Virgilian epithet ("corniger"), with perhaps some appropriateness in the curve of the river.

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
    On leagues of odour streaming far,  
    To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

## LXXXVI

The poet revisits Cambridge.

I past beside the reverend walls  
    In which of old I wore the gown ;  
    I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;  
  
And heard once more in college fanes <sup>1</sup>  
    The storm their high-built organs make,  
    And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophets blazon'd on the panes ;  
  
And caught once more the distant shout,  
    The measured pulse of racing oars  
    Among the willows ; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about  
  
The same gray flats again, and felt  
    The same, but not the same ; and last  
    Up that long walk of limes I past <sup>2</sup>  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.  
  
Another name was on the door :  
    I linger'd ; all within was noise  
    Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

<sup>1</sup> Probably King's College Chapel.

<sup>2</sup> At Trinity College.

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
And labour, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string ;  
And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point with power and grace,  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A strong bar of bone over the eyes.

## LXXXVII

Ode to a nightingale. The poet asks at what point in our being the senses and passions meet, because the nightingale's song is not only now sad and now joyful, but sometimes mixed of both. So his own song, which set out to be an elegy, turns now and again, beyond his will, to a song of triumph at the glory of the universe.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
     Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,<sup>1</sup>  
     O tell me where the senses mix,  
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
     Thy spirits in the dusking leaf,  
     And in the midmost heart of grief  
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
     I cannot all command the strings ;  
     The glory of the sum of things  
 Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXVIII

A reminiscence of the old happy days.

Witch-elms that counterchange<sup>2</sup> the floor  
     Of this flat lawn<sup>3</sup> with dusk and bright ;  
     And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
 Of foliage, towering sycamore ;<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rings Eden.*] Sings as if the spring world were Paradise.  
*Quicks.*] Quick-set hedges, again in cxiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Counterchange.*] A term borrowed from heraldry.

<sup>3</sup> *This flat lawn.*] At Somersby Rectory.

<sup>4</sup> Referred to again in xciv. 55.

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal<sup>1</sup> air  
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
And dusky purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon :

<sup>1</sup> *Liberal*.] So Shakespeare, *Othello*, v. ii. 220, "liberal as the north (wind)."

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
    Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
    And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
    Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
    Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
    He loved to rail against it still,  
    For "ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss  
    The picturesque of man and man."  
    We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
    And last, returning from afar,  
    Before the crimson-circled star <sup>1</sup>  
Had fall'n into her father's grave, <sup>2</sup>

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
    We heard behind the woodbine veil  
    The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

<sup>1</sup> *Crimson-circled.*] Refers to the colour of sunset. *Star.*] The planet Venus. See cxx. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Her father's grave.*] The west, where the sun has set ; the sun is called the father of Venus, on La Place's hypothesis that the planet was so evolved.

## LXXXIX

The longing for communion comes back. (See L.) He first denies that if the dead returned, they would be unwelcome.

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear :  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,<sup>1</sup>  
Behold their brides in other hands :  
The hard heir strides about their lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Lotos-Eaters* :

"Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy."

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
    Whatever change the years have wrought,  
    I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XC

He bids his friend come as he was or as he is, in spring or summer,  
    but in the sun, a spirit not a ghost.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
    And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
    Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;<sup>1</sup>

Come, wear the form by which I know  
    Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
    The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
    May breathe with many roses sweet  
    Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
    But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
    Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

<sup>1</sup> *The sea-blue bird of March.*] A quotation from Alcmán, referring to the kingfisher.



## XCI

Yet a vision might be held "subjective"; an appeal to history might seem my memory not thine, an appeal to futurity my forecast not thy prophecy.

If any vision should reveal  
    Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
    As but the canker of the brain ;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
    Together in the days behind,  
    I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
    A fact within the coming year ;  
    And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
    But spiritual presentiments,  
    And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCII

There is a more excellent way ; spirit should appear not to sense  
but to spirit.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band <sup>1</sup>  
That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb ;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods <sup>2</sup> in unconjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name ;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wordsworth's *Affliction of Margaret* :

"I look for ghosts, but none will force  
Their way to me. 'Tis falsely said  
That there was ever intercourse  
Between the living and the dead."

<sup>2</sup> *Gods.*] A not very happy use, perhaps a recollection of a line in  
*Comus*, 11 :  
"Among the enthroned gods on sainted seats."

## XCHH

Consider what preparation is needed before such a meeting : it is only calm imagination, cloudless memory, conscience at rest, that spirits will "haunt."

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought would  
hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits  
They can but listen at the gates  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCIV

The presence of the dead at last realised. On a summer night in the garden he reads over again his friend's letters, and in a trance seems caught up with his friend to the heights, and comprehends the secret of the universe. (See the poet's description of such a trance in *Life*, i. 320, ii. 473, and in *The Ancient Sage*.)

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :  
The brook alone far-off was heard  
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes<sup>1</sup>  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

<sup>1</sup> Night moths.

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
Of that glad year which once had been,  
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely <sup>1</sup> on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and strange  
Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touched me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
His living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is,<sup>2</sup> and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

<sup>1</sup> The letters read strangely, especially the protestations of unalterable love in the light of his death, and the handling of human puzzles in the light of his fuller knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> *That which is.*] An expression of Greek philosophy for the Supreme Truth of things. See cxxiii. 21.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame<sup>1</sup>  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd<sup>2</sup>  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume ;

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

<sup>1</sup> He finds it impossible to express in terms of the intellect the comprehension he received of mysteries ; it was not a learning so much as a becoming.

<sup>2</sup> The breaking in upon his trance of the landscape of earth is well given by the repetition of the verse in which it had been described.

## XCV

A poem on Faith and Doubt, suggested by the eighth quatrain of the last poem. The process of facing and laying doubts is compared to tuning a musical instrument.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
    Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
    Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
    In many a subtle question versed,  
    Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
    At last he beat his music out.  
    There lives more faith in honest doubt,<sup>1</sup>  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
    He would not make his judgment blind,  
    He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;  
    And Power was with him in the night,  
    Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is more faith in God and in truth, in questioning than in accepting a proposition that no longer seems true, even if it has been previously held to be a part of revealed truth.

<sup>2</sup> God is not only a God who reveals, but who "hides himself"; and worshippers are apt to make up for the defects in revelation by

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVI

The poet's affection recognises itself in the universal spirit of Nature, though the latter is infinitely greater and more glorious ; of this universal spirit the poet's friend is now somehow a part. He compares the relations of one still on earth with a friend in heaven to those of a wife and husband, who though vastly apart in intellect are united by their affection. Like the other poems (LIX., LXI.) which compare spiritual with social and intellectual grades, it is not very successful.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
I look'd on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tunc,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

imaginations as little compatible with the glory of God as the golden calf was. There is perhaps a reference to respectable people who combine a worship of money with a zeal for orthodoxy.



Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
    He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
    Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
    He reads the secret of the star,  
    He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
    A wither'd violet is her bliss ;  
    She knows not what his greatness is ;  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
    Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
    She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
    She darkly feels him great and wise,  
    She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
"I cannot understand : I love."

## XCVII

A refusal to visit Vienna.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
    And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
    When I was there with him ; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That City. All her splendour seems  
No livelier than the wisp<sup>1</sup> that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr<sup>2</sup> at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
He told me, lives in any crowd,  
When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

<sup>1</sup> *No livelier than the wisp.*] *I.e.*, than a will o' the wisp on the river of death.

<sup>2</sup> *Gnarr.*] A provincial word for "snarl."

Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

*End of the Seventh Section.*

## XCVIII

The second anniversary of his friend's death ; to how many myriads  
is it an anniversary either of life or of death. With these last  
the poet claims kindred.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
So loud with voices of the birds,  
So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast  
By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
A song that slights the coming care,  
And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

## XCIX

The four next poems relate to leaving Somersby, the Tennysons' home in Lincolnshire, in 1837. This says, To leave a landscape associated with his friend is to lose him a second time. (Compare LXXVIII.)

I wake, I rise : from end to end  
    Of all the landscape underneath,  
    I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
    Or low morass and whispering reed,  
    Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
    That hears the latest linnet trill,  
    Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
    Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
    To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock ;<sup>1</sup>

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
    And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
    And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

<sup>1</sup> M. Morel quotes from the *Ode to Memory* (1830) :

“And swerves to left and right thro' meadowy curves  
That feed the mothers of the flock.”

## C

The associations of the poet's family with the place must give way to those of the next inhabitant, and their memory fade.

Unwatch'd the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved that beech will gather brown,  
'This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the plain,  
At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CI

The two regrets conflict and are combined.

We leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;  
They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CII

A dream on the eve of leaving the old home. The departure has suggested the final departure of death, and reunion with his friend, now grown greater; the poet also having grown in spiritual stature so as to be his friend's peer in the life beyond. At the grave the Muses are not left behind; since they had been devoted to the ideal.

On that last night before we went  
     From out the doors where I was bred,  
     I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
     And maidens<sup>1</sup> with me : distant hills<sup>2</sup>  
     From hidden summits fed with rills  
 A river<sup>3</sup> sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
     They sang of what is wise and good  
     And graceful. In the centre stood  
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
     The shape of him I loved, and love  
     For ever : then flew in a dove  
 And brought a summons from the sea :<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Maidens.*] The Muses; human powers and talents.

<sup>2</sup> *Distant hills from hidden summits.*] Cf. *The Ancient Sage* :

"This wealth of waters might but seem to draw  
 From yon dark cave, but, son, the source is higher,  
 Yon summit half-a-league in air—and higher  
 The cloud that hides it. . . . Force is from the heights."

<sup>3</sup> *River.*] Life.

<sup>4</sup> *Sea.*] Eternity.

And when they learnt that I must go  
    They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
    To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
    And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
    We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,  
    And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
    The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
    And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb ;<sup>1</sup>  
    I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,  
    And one would chant the history  
    Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
    Began to foam, and we to draw  
    From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
    But thrice as large as man he bent  
    To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck :

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Epilogue 19.



Whereat those maidens with one mind  
    Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong :  
    " We served thee here," they said, " so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind ? "

So rapt I was, they could not win  
    An answer from my lips, but he  
    Replying, " Enter likewise ye  
And go with us " : they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
    A music out of sheet and shroud,  
    We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

*nd of the Eighth Section.*

### CIII

Christmas approaches in the new home. All is strange. (Compare  
    XXVIII., LXXVII.)

The time draws near the birth of Christ ;  
    The moon is hid, the night is still ;  
    A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
    That wakens at this hour of rest  
    A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
    In lands where not a memory strays,  
    Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CIV

Christmas-eve again. (Cf. xxx., lxxvii.) Tradition is broken, but there is a suggestion at the end of the poem that change may mean progress.

This holly by the cottage eave,  
To-night, ungather'd, shall it stand :  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows :  
There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and mime ;  
For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
For who would keep an ancient form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast,  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds <sup>1</sup> by yonder wood.  
    Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
    Run out your measured arcs,<sup>2</sup> and lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

## CV

The thought of the new life in the new home has led (for the first time) to a poem on the New Year, as an epoch which may leave behind all that separates man from good and man from man. Amongst the things to be "rung out" the poet includes "grief that saps the mind" and his "mournful rhymes."

Ring out wild bells to the wild sky,  
    The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
    The year is dying in the night ;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
    Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
    The year is going, let him go ;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
    For those that here we see no more ;  
    Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
    And ancient forms of party strife ;  
    Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

<sup>1</sup> *Rising worlds.*] Stars.

<sup>2</sup> Hasten through your prescribed orbits.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
    The faithless coldness of the times ;  
    Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
    The civic slander and the spite ;  
    Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
    Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
    Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
    The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
    Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVI

In pursuance of his new year's resolution, the poet keeps his friend's birthday (1st Feb.) as of old.

It is the day when he was born,  
    A bitter day that early sank  
    Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

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

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To <sup>1</sup> yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,  
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat ;  
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by :

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVII

He has said "private grief" saps the mind ; now he says his "barren faith" and "vacant yearning" have yielded little result. They are only his own imaginations ; he cannot know what change has really come to his friend. So he determines to find some actual and present fruit of sorrow.

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

<sup>1</sup> To.] So that they point to.

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies:  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.<sup>1</sup>

## CVIII

He finds such fruit of sorrow in the consideration of his friend's character, which he proceeds to discuss in the following six poems, and exhibit as an ideal. It is here presented as the union of opposites: wealth of material with critical power; logic with enthusiasm; passion with purity; love of freedom with love of order; grace of woman with strength of man.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course;

<sup>1</sup> I cannot by searching attain to the wisdom of the dead, I must see to it that I do not miss the wisdom of the sorrowful. See cxii.

High nature amorous of the good,  
 But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;  
 And passion pure in snowy bloom  
 Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
 Of freedom in her regal seat  
 Of England, not the schoolboy heat,  
 The blind hysterics of the Celt;<sup>1</sup>

And manhood fused with female grace  
 In such a sort, the child would twine  
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
 And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
 Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain  
 My shame is greater who remain,  
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CIX

The description is continued, and the point made that Hallam already in his lifetime exercised influence.

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
 The men of rathe<sup>2</sup> and riper years:  
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
 The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
 To flicker with his treble tongue.

<sup>1</sup> So cxxvi. 7: "The red fool-fury of the Seine."

<sup>2</sup> *Rathe*.] Early.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
And loved them more, that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CX

He was, in one word, a "gentleman," with all that word implies in manners and morals.

The churl <sup>1</sup> in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
To who may grasp a golden ball  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,  
To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

<sup>1</sup> *Churl*.] One not a gentleman.



So wore his outward best, and join'd  
 Each office of the social hour,  
 To noble manners, as the flower  
 And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
 Or villain<sup>1</sup> fancy fleeting by,  
 Drew in the expression of an eye,  
 Where God and Nature met in light,<sup>2</sup>

And thus he bore without abuse  
 The grand old name of gentleman,  
 Defamed by every charlatan,  
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXI

An apology for admiring genius with all its faults.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
 That I, who gaze with temperate eyes<sup>3</sup>  
 On glorious insufficiencies,  
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
 Of all my love, art reason why  
 I seem to cast a careless eye  
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Villain.*] In the old sense, of one not a gentleman.

<sup>2</sup> So lxxxvi. 36: "We saw The God within him light his face."

<sup>3</sup> I, who make allowance for the weaknesses of men of genius, hold very cheap the perfection of inferior natures.

<sup>4</sup> *Lesser lords of doom.*] Ordinary people who are yet "masters of their fate," people who are virtuous without being in any way great.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXII

How invaluable would have been his friend's wisdom in a revolutionary crisis! (Such, probably, as Europe was passing through in '48.)

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;<sup>1</sup>  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

<sup>1</sup> Repeated from cvii. 15.

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
     Becoming, when the time has birth,  
     A lever to uplift the earth  
 And roll it in another course,

With many shocks that come and go,  
     With agonies, with energies,  
     With overthrowings, and with cries,  
 And undulations to and fro.

## CXIII

How invaluable, also, to qualify the blind enthusiasm for Knowledge !  
 (This superstition has now been exploded by thirty years of  
 School Boards ; but at the time when Tennyson wrote, just  
 before the Great Exhibition, it was believed by some that the  
 Diffusion of Useful Knowledge would bring in the millennium.  
 A less militant image suited to these less confident times will be  
 found in *The Ancient Sage* :

“ For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake  
     That sees and stirs the surface-shadow there  
     But never yet hath dipt into the abysm.”)

Who loves not Knowledge ?<sup>1</sup> Who shall rail  
     Against her beauty ? May she mix  
     With men and prosper ! Who shall fix  
 Her pillars ?<sup>2</sup> Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
     She sets her forward countenance  
     And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire.

<sup>1</sup> For the contrast of Knowledge and Wisdom, see Prologue.

<sup>2</sup> *Pillars*.] The pillars of Hercules represented the farthest boundary of the ancient mariners.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
She cannot fight the fear of death.<sup>1</sup>  
What is she, cut from love and faith,<sup>2</sup>  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but from hour to hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## CXIV

Spring revives, and his regret revives with it.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

<sup>1</sup> Knowledge cannot be a substitute for Religion.

<sup>2</sup> Character is not the product of intellect alone, but far more of "love and faith," "reverence and charity."

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
     The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
     And drown'd in yonder living blue  
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
     The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
     And milkier every milky sail  
 On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
     In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
     The happy birds, that change their sky <sup>1</sup>  
 To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast  
     Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
     Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXV

But it is less regret for the past friendship, than hope for some future reunion ; springing out of trust in the beneficence of the God of nature.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
     That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
     And meets the year, and gives and takes  
 The colours of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
     The life re-orient out of dust,  
     Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
 In that which made the world so fair.

<sup>1</sup> *Change their sky.*] A phrase from Horace i. *Ep.* xi. 27: "Cælum . . . mutant, qui trans mare currunt."

Not all regret : the face will shine  
    Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
    The dear, dear voice that I have known  
Will speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
    For days of happy commune dead ;  
    Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVI

But that future is yet to come ; the interval serves to heighten the  
    desire and delight of the reunion.

O days and hours, your work is this,  
    To hold me from my proper place,  
    A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue  
    Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
    And unto meeting, when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
    And every span of shade that steals,  
    And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Courses of the suns.*] From Shakespeare, Sonnet 59 :

“ Even of five hundred courses of the sun.”

## CXVII

A defence of hope both for a future life and for a higher civilisation here based on the world's experience in the past. Science shows a growth through ages of the world till it was ready for man's habitation; and a growth through ages of mankind upward from the savage. Why should man's development be arrested at this point? It need not be if he will treat these evolutions as the type of higher moral development.

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
The giant labouring in his youth;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,<sup>1</sup>  
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead,  
Are breathers of an ampler day<sup>2</sup>  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,<sup>3</sup>  
If so he type this work of time

<sup>1</sup> Time is still young, but already there is a clear distinction between the material and the spiritual in the world.

<sup>2</sup> *Breathers of an ampler day.*] A reminiscence of Virgil's "*Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit Purpureo* (*Æn.*, vi. 640).

<sup>3</sup> Mankind may improve here, and also in the world to come.

Within himself, from more to more ;  
Or,<sup>1</sup> crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXVIII

The new resolve to be cheerful-minded shows itself in his changed feeling towards the house where his friend lived. (See VII.)

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

<sup>1</sup> Or.] To some self-cultivation is possible ; others who are at the mercy of circumstances, may yet transfigure their woes into glories, and forge their character out of calamity.



And bless thee, for thy lips are bland  
 And bright the friendship of thine eye ;  
 And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
 I take the pressure of thine hand.<sup>1</sup>

## CXIX

An ironical apology for his poem to the scientific materialist.

I trust I have not wasted breath :  
 I think we are not wholly brain,  
 Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
 Let Science prove we are, and then  
 What matters Science unto men,  
 At least to me ? I would not stay.<sup>2</sup>

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
 Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
 His action like the greater ape,  
 But I was born<sup>3</sup> to other things.

<sup>1</sup> *Hand.*) See vii. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> The theory that men are automata cannot be interesting to men. The poet implies that the fact that men do interest themselves in science is the best proof that they are not automata.

<sup>3</sup> *Born* is emphatic.

## CXX

A beautiful song to the "planet of love," which is both evening and morning star. As the first, it watches all things ending, as the second, all things beginning, and always with sympathy. So though the poet's past has been one of regret, and his present one of hope, he recognises that both are expressions of the same constant love.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun<sup>1</sup>  
    And ready, thou, to die with him,  
    Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
    The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
    Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
    By thee the world's great work is heard  
    Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
    And voices hail it from the brink ;  
    Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
    For what is one, the first, the last,  
    Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

<sup>1</sup> See lxxxviii. 47.

## CXXI

An appeal to his friend to be with him. He thinks it must have been his friend's influence that prompted him not to yield to his calamity, but to seek to pierce through the clouds that had blotted out his heaven, and rediscover the reign of law.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd<sup>1</sup> to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,<sup>2</sup>  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

<sup>1</sup> *Yearn'd.*] "Strove" in first edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Former flash of joy.*] The brief time of their friendship.

## CXXII

The two voices. Nature says, "All is vanity"; the spirit cannot say "Farewell."

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!  
There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIII

He rehearses the creed which he formulated in LIII. He found God not in nature, or science, or theology, but in the aspirations and longings of his own heart.

That which we dare invoke to bless;<sup>1</sup>  
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;  
He, They, One, All; within, without;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

<sup>1</sup> The poet speaks of God as both within and without us; as within, and inspiring both our faith and doubt; as without, in a Power which we guess at rather than know, one God and yet a Spirit diffused through all things.

I found Him not in world or sun,  
     Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
     Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
 The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
     I heard a voice "believe no more"  
     And heard an ever-breaking shore  
 That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
     The freezing reason's colder part,  
     And like a man in wrath the heart<sup>1</sup>  
 Stood up and answer'd "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
     But that blind clamour made me wise ;<sup>2</sup>  
     Then was I as a child that cries,  
 But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I seem<sup>3</sup> beheld again  
     What is, and no man understands ;  
     And out of darkness came the hands  
 That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

<sup>1</sup> *The heart.*] Cf. Pascal : "Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas."

<sup>2</sup> *Made me wise.*] Brought me the conviction that the Father was near and blessing me.

<sup>3</sup> *Seem . . . is.*] A contrast borrowed from Greek philosophy to express the difference between phenomenal and eternal existence. See xciv. 39 ; cxxx. 2.

## CXXIV

Apology for the bitterness of some poems ; what seemed despair was never quite hopeless ; Love never believed the suggestions of sorrow, and the poet's anxiety and confidence were equally inspired by Love.

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;  
She did but look through dimmer eyes ;  
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,<sup>1</sup>  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song ;  
And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail<sup>2</sup>  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

<sup>1</sup> *Gracious lies.*] Possibly the same sense as "what slender shade of doubt may flit" in xlvii. Does *gracious* mean graceful? And would this couplet explain the popularity of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* among religious people?

<sup>2</sup> See cii.

## CXXV

He whose King is Love has constant assurance that all is well.

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
That moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the vast of space  
Among the worlds, that all is well.

## CXXVI

All is well not only for the two friends but throughout the world, though in times of revolution (which are bad times for kings and beggars) all may not seem well to those who do not see the principle of truth and justice at work. But the dead understand.

And all is well, tho' faith and form<sup>1</sup>  
Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;  
Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

<sup>1</sup> *Faith and form.*] See xxxiii. 3, 4. It was a favourite idea with Tennyson that a principle sometimes preserves its vitality by changing its shape. Cf. *Morte d'Arthur* :

"God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth<sup>1</sup> lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell,  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVII

Love and Faith for the individual after death must go along with  
Love and Faith for the race in this world. No doubt there  
will be apparent retrogressions, but nevertheless there is real  
advance ; else life would be contemptible. The poet thinks he  
discovers a purpose in things.

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

<sup>1</sup> *Brute earth.*] From Horace Ode i. 34. "*bruta tellus*," which  
means "the immovable weight of earth."



No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade ;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like new,  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil coöperant to an end.<sup>1</sup>

Cf. last verse of Epilogue, and *The Two Voices* :

“ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro’ thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.”

## CXXVIII

A descant on the thought that his friend, like all men, has a double and mysterious nature.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
O, loved the most when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown, human, divine !  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye,  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine !

Strange friend, past, present, and to be,  
Loved deeper, darker understood ;<sup>1</sup>  
Behold, I dream a dream of good  
And mingle all the world with thee.<sup>2</sup>

## CXXIX

The spiritual nature of his friend's presence is emphasised ; it seems diffused everywhere, but is none the less personal and an object of love.

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;  
I hear thee where the waters run ;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

<sup>1</sup> A recurrence to the thought in l. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The dream of good is not only for one soul, but for all mankind. As he had grieved for all men in his friend (vi. 7), so in him he hopes for all.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
 But tho' I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;  
 My love is vaster passion now;  
 Tho' mixed with God and Nature thou,<sup>1</sup>  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXX

*Sursum corda*, an invocation to the will in man, the true and immortal principle of his nature, to permeate his whole being, and lift its voice in prayer to God, confident that He hears and helps, though the fact whether of God's existence or of man's immortality cannot be proved to the reason till we "see God."

O living will<sup>2</sup> that shalt endure  
 When all that seems<sup>3</sup> shall suffer shock,  
 Rise in the spiritual rock,<sup>4</sup>  
 Flow through our deeds and make them pure,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The expression of this verse is open to objection, but the thought is clear. For *Nature*, cf. lxxxiv. 32, 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Living will*.] Free will in man.

<sup>3</sup> *All that seems*.] All that has no real and eternal existence, such as the material universe, including man's body. See xciv. 39; cxxiii. 21.

<sup>4</sup> The will is compared to a fountain, which rises in our nature from a spiritual source. In *Will* he calls it "Heaven-descended Will."

<sup>5</sup> The character depends on the will. Cf. *De Profundis*:

"This main-miracle, that thou art thou,  
 With power on thine own act and on the world."

That we may lift from out of dust<sup>1</sup>  
 A voice as unto<sup>2</sup> him that hears,  
 A cry above the conquer'd years<sup>3</sup>  
 To one that with us works, and trust,  
 With faith that comes of self-control,<sup>4</sup>  
 The truths that never can be proved  
 Until we close with all we loved,  
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

---

The Epilogue is an epithalamium addressed to Edmund Law Lushington, who married Cecilia Tennyson. The poem "was meant to be a kind of *Divina Commedia*, ending with happiness" (*Life*, i. 304). The last few lines alone are on a level with the preceding poem, and bring it to a magnificent close. (See liii. 1; cxxvii. 23.)

O true and tried, so well and long,  
 Demand not thou a marriage lay ;  
 In that it is thy marriage day  
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
 Since first he told me that he loved  
 A daughter of our house ; nor proved  
 Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
 Some thrice threc years: they went and came,  
 Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
 And yet is love not less, but more ;

<sup>1</sup> *From out of dust.*] From our nature, which is dust and to dust returns.

<sup>2</sup> *As unto.*] In full assurance, though the fact cannot be demonstrated.

<sup>3</sup> *Conquered years.*] Time, like the World, may overcome a man's faith, or faith may gain the victory over Time.

<sup>4</sup> Self-control springs from self-reverence, and a man must respect the principle of his own nature before he goes on to recognise it as in any way divine.

No longer caring to embalm  
    In dying songs a dead regret,  
    But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
    Than in the summers that are flown,  
    For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
    As echoes out of weaker times,  
    As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
    That must be made a wife ere noon ?  
    She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
    And then on thee ; they meet thy look  
    And brighten like the star that shook <sup>1</sup>  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
    He too foretold the perfect rose.  
    For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
    As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
    Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

<sup>1</sup> *Shook.*] Vibrated. So in *Dream of Fair Women*, 36.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
    And I must give away the bride ;  
    She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
    That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
    That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
    Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
    Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
    The " wilt thou " answer'd, and again  
    The " wilt thou " ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet " I will " has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
    Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
    By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
    The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
    The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
    Await them. Many a merry face  
    Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
    With him to whom her hand I gave.  
    They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
    For them the light of life increased,  
    Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
    To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
    My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
    And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
    As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
    Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
    Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
    And those white-favour'd horses wait ;  
    They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
    From little cloudlets on the grass,  
    But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver through the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;  
And breaking let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,



And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge ; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.