

1933

The Arthurian cycle

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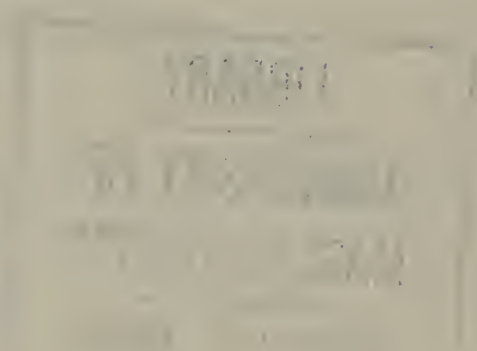
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THE AMERICAN CYCLOPEDIA

By

RUSSELL M. SPEAR



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INTRODUCTION.

THE following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of the President of the Association for the Advancement of the Study of the History of the United States, for the year 1900.

The purpose of this study is to examine the Arabian Legend as conceived by Malory, Pennycuik and Robinson respectively, in an attempt to discover each writer's especial interest and abilities, successes and failures in dealing with this theme. To determine which of these men attained the highest artistic achievement by a comparison of their works as a whole is out of the question. They are distinct and individual artists who must be enjoyed for their individual accomplishments. However, a comparative evaluation of separate phases of their writing can be made to discover in what aspect of the treatment each is most successful.

CHAPTER I
A Study of Melody.

GALORY'S LE MORT D'ARTHUR

Sir Thomas Malory, with the aid of William Caxton, the first English printer, has left for past and future generations a stirring and memorable collection of epical stories. It has survived since 1470 (1) and is still read by thousands of persons with great enthusiasm. Edward Trenchard says, "Only a true man, the offspring of genius, could have so held, and be still holding its ground, age after age." (2)

In the strictest sense Malory's work is not poetry; it is neither rhymed nor metrical, and it has no definitely prescribed form or pattern. But in a larger sense, it is magnificently poetic. If Milton's definition of poetry be applied to Malory's Le Morte d'Arthur, it will be found to fit like a glove. Malory's style is simple, sensuous and rises frequently to great passion.

The stories flow along with swift action; each event is complete in itself, yet contributes its part to the whole. Concrete images and pictures follow one another in vivid succession. Here is an example selected at random:

Then Merlin lodged them in a wood among leaves
beside the highway and took off the bridles of
their horses and cut them to grass, and laid them
down to rest them,....

There is no room in the stories for abstractions or generalized argument since the style is simple, direct narrative.

As for passion—it would be difficult to find anywhere a greater pathos than the lament of Lancelot over the death of Arthur and Guinever:—

1. XV, pp., CXXVI.
2. Ibid, pp., IV.

Truly, said Sir Lancelot, I trust I do not displease you, for he cannot like himself, for my virtue was not, nor is not, for any rejoicing of sin, but my virtue may never have end. For when I remember of her beauty and of her nobleness, that was both with her king and with her; so when I see his corpse and her corpse on his tombstone, truly mine heart would not serve to sustain my careful body. Also when I remember me, not by my default, mine offence, and my exile, that they were both laid cold low, that were peerless that ever was living of christian people, wit you well, said Sir Lancelot, this remembered, of their kindness and mine unkindness, work so to my heart, that I might not sustain myself. (1)

Malory has humor as well as occasion. It is exemplified in many incidents of his story. One good sample is to be found in the scene at Arthur's wedding feast, when a hart runs into the hall followed by a bracket. The bracket bites the hart causing it to leap and upset a knight. The knight, thereupon, carries the bracket away. Immediately a lady comes in crying out to Arthur for the return of her bracket:

I may not be there with, said the king. With this there came a knight riding all armed on a great horse, and took the lady away with him with force, and ever she cried and made great dole. When she was gone the king was glad, for she made such a noise. (2)

This is, of course, a rough ballad-like type of humor but it fits the time of which it is a part, and lends such brightness and natural charm to the story.

Malory's main strength lies in his sheer narrative ability. His stories are full of action and exciting action. Although some of his incidents are of highly dramatic nature, they do not approach formal drama; there is little dialogue and the scenes are too widely scattered. Most of them are recounted in the simple

1. *Id.*, pp., 12.
2. *Id.*, pp., 22.

maintain a steady hand in the transition.

And as the story of the battle of Merton is told in the sequel between the first and second books:

And by sudden adventure Sir Tristan met with Sir Lancelot
in the forest, and with Sir Lancelot he fought, and there two
knights were with Sir Tristan and remained with him, and
asked him if he would join with them. Sir Tristan, said
Sir Tristan, with a good will I would join with you, but
I have promised at a day set near hand to go battle with a
strong knight. And therefore I am loth to have any with
you, for and it misfortune be here to be hurt, I should not
be able to do my battle which I promised. As for that,
said Sir Lancelot, leave your hand ye shall join with us
or ye shall fight us. Well, said Sir Tristan, if ye enforce
me thereto, I will do what I say. And then they crossed
their shields, and came running together with great ire.
But through Sir Tristan's great force, he struck Sir
Lancelot from his horse. Then he turned his horse's head,
and said to Sir Lancelot, knight, make thee ready. And so
through his force Sir Tristan strake Lancelot from his
horse. And when he saw that lie on the earth he took his
bridle, and rode forth on his way, and his man Beuvernail
with him. (1)

Mr. Alfred Nutt speaks as follows on Malory's style: "Malory
is a wonderful example of the power of style. He is a most un-
failing stylist. He frequently chooses out of many versions
of the legend, the longest, best, most picturesque and local beautiful:
his own contributions to the story are beneath criticism as a rule.
But his language is exactly what it ought to be, and it has re-
mained in consequence the classic English version of the Arthur
story." (2)

Various critics have referred to Malory's work as formalism.
André Lang quotes Furnivall in a rather more kindly context.
"('Le Morte Darthur'), he says, 'is a most pleasant jumble and

1. IV, pp. 210.
2. VII, pp. 234

summary of the legends about Arthur." (1) According to present-day standards of art, it is really necessary to agree that Le Morte d'Arthur is a "pleasant jumble." In modern writing form is so clearly defined that, at times, it seems almost to be the principal concern of the writer. Malory, however, had little in the way of form to follow. He was working in a new language, and on a large canvas. In view of the terrific amount of materials from which he had to select, and since the field in which he worked was uncharted, it is a great marvel that his work approaches unity, coherence and form as closely as it does.

For all Malory may seem diffuse to the modern reader, he has kept a definite theme in mind. The Graine of Uther, with which the story opens, leads to the revelation of Arthur's parentage from himself, and this to his illicit love for the girl he does not know to be his sister, and thence to the birth of Mordred. Then comes the statement of Geon:-

To have some of late, a thing that God is displeased with you: and your sister shall have a son that shall destroy you, and all the knights of your realm."... (2)

Arthur tries to avoid this doom. But it comes again when Merlin warns him against marriage with Guinever:

But Merlin warned the king covertly that Guinever was not wholesome for him to take to wife, for he warned him that Lancelot should love her, and she him again. (3)

Arthur married her regardless. The doom is forgotten through long years of prosperity. Arthur conquers Britain and establishes order. He marches on Rome, is victorious and becomes head of all

1. XVII, pp., 13.
2. *ibid.*, pp., 57.
3. XVII, pp., 24.

the kingdom and chivalry of Christendom. The fame and honor of the Round Table increases and spreads continually. Everything seems above the reach of adverse destiny until the coming of the sorcerer. Then all the knights enter the quest with all their accustomed zeal in following wordly affairs. But their skill at arms and their self-reliance is of no avail in this ordeal. Only two of the knights (Galahad and Percival) meet the test and they are called to the future world. Bors is nearly spotted; he comes back scarotified, to reestablish the games and feasts at Camelot. In the meantime, the curse has been at work. The tragic end comes on in spite of all that Arthur and Lancelot can do. The latter cannot resist temptation; and the former will not believe evil of Guinever and his best friend.

This theme of doom is clear in the book. Even though it is forgotten at times, and the story wanders afield, it comes back at the end with desperate reality.

The unity of the work, as a whole, is observable in the characters as well as the events of the story. Arthur is a true knight. He shares the general characteristics of his nobler knights yet he differs from them all in that he shows himself to be King. He dominates in the story from start to finish. There are many other noble and notable figures whose destinies are tied in inextricably with Arthur's. Prominent among these is Lancelot, notwithstanding his one great sin. None other than he could have borne the continual taunts and violence of Gawaine with his patience and repeated efforts for a reconciliation. Gawaine, too, has a strongly marked individuality of character. His regard for

the honor of his mother, his passion for Etta, and his love for his brothers drive him to many unworthy deeds. Yet he is neither a scoundrel nor a savage. Even though he does thirst for revenge upon Lancelot for the unintentional killing of Gareth and Galahad, his long previous affection for Lancelot, along with his devotion to Arthur and his real reverence towards Lancelot, are revealed at the end.

The Saracen Palomides is another distinct warrior. He is a gallant and skillful fighter, but he lacks the gentleness and fine sense of honor of the Christian knights. Sir Borsas, the buffoon, a good fighter, is another character well drawn. He has no great physical strength but will not dodge a fight, and is continually making humorous protests against love and war. Then there is Merlin, half-Christian, half-magician, who is deeply loyal to the house of Uther. Many others, whose characters stand out distinctly, add their contribution to the balancing of the picture. Guinever with her dignity towards Arthur and the court, her flaming passion for Lancelot and her unrequited jealousy; the wife-like discipline of Isidore; and the two thieves surrendering themselves completely but from different impulses; Gahm, with his a sparrow; and Percivale's sister with her pity and self-sacrifice; all these lend individuality--each in her own way--which contributes to the full balance of the great canvas Malory paints.

The unity of Malory, therefore, is to be found, not only in the theme of doom which follows through the book with the life of Arthur, but also in the distinct characterization of the lives of many individuals who are artistically woven into that doom.

It is desirable, at this point, to make a more detailed study of one of the more distinctive characters of Le Morte d'Arthur with a view toward a better understanding of Malory's special ability in creating living individuals who develop and grow during the course of the book.

The impulsive Gawaine answers the purpose exceedingly well. He is a major figure in the cycle and is drawn with the same skill that Malory shows in the characterization of Arthur, Lancelot, Guinever and the other great figures. Besides, he offers a fresher interest since he is generally less familiar to the average student.

Gawaine is a vengeful man, jealous of his honor and that of his family. Early in the book he shows this characteristic:

"But King Pellinore bare the blame of the death of King Lot, therefore Sir Gawaine revenged the death of his father...and slew King Pellinore with his own hands." (1)

This trait follows him all his life even to the end when he taunts Lancelot and finally provokes him to a duel, because of Lancelot's unintentional killing of Gareth and Gaheris.

"My kin, my lord, and mine uncle, said Sir Gawaine, will you well, now I shall make you a promise even I shall hold by, my knight hood, that from this day I shall never fail Sir Lancelot, until the one of us have slain the other." (2)

In his youth he is cruel and merciless. He provokes a battle with Abbot for a petty reason. He overcomes Abbot, who begs for mercy, but Gawaine will have his life regardless.

1. *iv*, pp., 56.
2. *Ibid*, pp., 100.

Sir Gawaine would no longer have, but unluckily his
holy to have stricken off his head; right so came
his (admirer's) long cut of a dagger and fell over
him, and so he came off his head by misadventure. (1)

Gawaine is severely criticized for this action by others and
the matter is brought before Arthur and whenever and the second-
ingly disclosed:

And by ordinance of the queen there was set a quest
of ladies upon Gawaine, and they judged him forever
while he lived to be with all ladies, and to fight for
their interests; and that ever he should be courteous,
and never to refuse mercy to him that sought mercy. (2)

Wherefore, he is more careful, and carries out many brave battles
in defence of ladies.

He is an impulsive man and rushes into battle at the slightest
provocation, provided he is confident of at least an even chance
of winning. Generally, he is cautious about entering a conflict if
the outcome does not seem reasonably certain. Then Gawaine,
Arthur and two other knights are pursued by the five kings:

Lo, said Sir Kay, yonder be the five kings, let us
go to them and watch with them. That were folly, said
Gawaine, for we are but four and they be five. (3)

With this speech Sir Kay rushes at one of the kings and kills
him, whereupon--the odds being even--

Gawaine ran into another king so hard that he broke
him through the body. (4)

He has to be belated by others, nearly always, to be at his
bravest. When Sir Tristan or Lancelot is with him, he will chal-
lenge any foe, no matter how formidable. At the end when he returns
war as Lancelot he rushes immediately to Arthur to gain his sur-

1. *ibid.*, pp. 75.
2. *ibid.*, pp. 69.
3. *ibid.*, pp. 77.
4. *ibid.*

port and backing:

..I require, you, my lord and king, draw you to the war, for wit you well I will be revenged upon Sir Launcelot. (1)

Gawaine is hardly led from the path of virtue by his lust for Mord. He promises Pelleas that he will intercede in his behalf, but when he sees Mordred he is seized with the desire to possess her himself and all thoughts of Pelleas and never leave him. He tells her that he has slain Pelleas, to which she replies:

Truly, that is a great pity, for he was a passing good knight of his day, but of all men on live I hated him best, for I could never be quit of him. And, for ye have slain him I shall be your lady, and to do anything that may please you. (2)

But this affair is short-lived. Pelleas discovers Mordred and Gawaine sleeping and leaves a sword at their throats:

Then she knew well it was Sir Pelleas' sword. Alas! said she to Gawaine, ye have betrayed me and Sir Pelleas both. And if Sir Pelleas had been as unfortun-ate as you as ye have been to him, ye had been a dead knight. (3)

Mordred will have nothing more to do with him. He seeks jus-tice Pelleas swiftly upon his sinners.

Gawaine's light-headed impulsiveness is laid aside when the Sangreel enters its chamber. He is first to take up the quest:

Now, said Sir Gawaine, we have been served this day of what meats and drinks ye thought on, but one thing beggied us, we did not see the holy Grail, it was so preciousely covered; therefore I will make here a vow, that to-morrow, without longer abiding, I shall labor in the quest of the Sangreel. (4)

As to be directed in impulsive behavior, Gawaine's enthu-

1. IV, pp., 861.
2. Ibid, pp., 87.
3. Ibid, pp., 93.
4. Ibid, pp., 93.

laments were made. Early in the quest he becomes tired of the venture and longs for something else:

....He would leave without adventure. For he loved not the tenth part of adventure as he was wont to do. (1) And within the house in a hut he kills a unicorn, whom he does not recognize, (2) merely for adventure and excitement.

Gawain is genuinely hampered in his movements--an adventure lover. He does not take the quest seriously for long because it is too dull. He proves action and constant change of ground. He shows genuine power and direction in his vengeance. When Lancelot kills Gareth and Gaheris, albeit unintentionally, he will not rest until Lancelot meets him in combat. (3)

For all this, Gawain is not an unlikable scoundrel. During his whole life he serves Arthur with devotion. He respects and loves Lancelot and Tristan. When Arthur seems forever to be harmed, he is firm in his determination of this act. (4)

Gawain has courage, too, in the face of death. Although he does not ordinarily court destruction, he faces it when it comes. Twice when Lancelot tells him he must be killed.

At the end of his life, after his fruitless attempt to wreak vengeance upon Lancelot, he sees the folly of his hard-headedness and begs Lancelot for forgiveness, and says his,

....For all the love that ever was between us,
make me sorrying, but come over the sea in all haste,
that thou mayest with many noble knights rescue that
noble king that waits there tonight, that is my lord

-
1. IV, 20., 377.
 2. Ibid, 20., 377.
 3. Ibid, 20., 381.
 4. Ibid, 20., 357.

Arthur, for he is fully justified in being a false
traitor, that is my half brother Sir Mordred. (1)

It is easy to gain from these glimpses of Gwynne a good pic-
ture of him as an individual. He is obviously devoted to the
highest men of his time, but lacks genuine strength of character
and direction. Although he is impulsive, hard-headed, and at
times cruel, he is capable of noble and generous acts, and at
the end, when he sees the fate he has brought on himself, he grows
immaculately. His plea for Lancelot's forgiveness and his appeal
to Lancelot to help Arthur in his distress, lend nobility and
gentleness to his death.

Malory's manner of portraying character is rough and out-
lined on broad simple lines. He does not show the infinite com-
plexities of the mind. Rather he shows the man through an emotional
recital of deeds and attitudes. None the less his characters are
alive, individual and capable of growth.

The morality and philosophy of Malory are thoroughly inter-
wined. A glance at the separate readily identifies his philo-
sophical and ethical views as predominantly Christian.

There is a curious element in the death of Sir Lancelot
which blends with chivalrous adventure and the romantic theory of
heroic life.

The story of Merlin and Nimue (2) is purely mythical in char-
acter, and has little, if any, philosophical significance. There
are many like stories through the book. Yet they are in the small
minority and must yield place to the chivalry, courtesy, and

1. *ibid.*, pp., 47-48.
2. *ibid.*, pp., 73-76.

gentleness that fill most of the work.

Fidelity in love is strongly stressed. Lancelot is imprisoned by King Mordred and told that he will never have Guinever again and that in such a prison he must choose one of them. He replies:

Lover had I die in this prison with verghis, than
to have one of you to my love, smyte my head. (1)

Guinever's infidelity to Arthur is punished in the truly Christian fashion:

She let make herself a nun, and great penance she
took, as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never
could creature make her sorry, but lived in fasting,
prayers and alms-deeds that all manner of people won-
dered how virtuously she was changed. (2)

Courtesy and gentleness, thoroughly Christian traits, are among the key notes of these chivalric tales. When Gawaine strikes down Blamor, and would then have his life, Arthur re-
conciliates with him.

Alas! said Arthur, that is foul and shamefully
done; that shame will never from you. Also ye should
give mercy unto them that ask mercy. (3)

Incidents of this type occur again and again in the story.

The only symbolism in Le Morte Darthur is that of the Chris-
tian Church. There is none of Melory's own invention. His swift
moving, vigorous narrative style does not demand symbols.

The book has been criticized as "bold history and open man
slaughter." (4) It is true that there is a great deal of slaughter
in the stories, yet most of it is in self-defense, or in putting

-
1. Idid, pp., 90.
 2. Idid, pp., 431.
 3. Idid, pp., 69.
 4. Idid, pp., 13.

A careful examination of Le Morte Darthur fails to disclose any symbolism. The following representative pages, selected at random, demonstrates this lack of symbolic expression.

Then Ulfius was glad, and rode on more than a pace till that he came to Uther Pendragon, and told him he had met with Merlin. Where is he? said the king. Sir, said Ulfius, he will not dwell long. Therewithal Ulfius was gone where Merlin stood at the porch of the pavilion's door. And then Merlin was bound to come to the king. When king Uther saw him he said he was welcome. Sir, said Merlin, I know all your heart every deal; so ye will be sworn unto me, as ye be a true king anointed to fulfil my desire, ye shall have your desire. Then the king was sworn upon the four Evangelists. Sir, said Merlin, this is my desire: after ye shall win a wife ye shall have a child by her, and when that is born it shall be delivered to me for to nourish there as I will have it; for it shall be your worship and the child's avail, as nickle as the child is worth. I will sell, said the king, as thou wilt have it. (1)

been lawlessness and according to Christian Faith. Although the means employed to make this and any be questioned, by some, nevertheless the end in itself is commendable. Little else could be expected of an early semi-barbaric society. The remarkable thing is the actual prevalence of goodness and virtue in the account.

As for the "bawdry"---on the first page we encounter Ignatio; but she was within good women and would not consent unto the king. (1)

Her fate, unfortunately, was unhappy but she was good and remained good in her heart.

There is some coarseness in the book, but it is not out of reasonable proportion. Any survey of life in the period would show an great percentage of evil and vulgarity as is found in Le Livre de l'homme. As a matter of fact, it is likely that the real world greatly exceed what represented in history.

Ignatio's excellence is courtesy. Somewhere in it more apparent than at the end of the stories when he meets Christine's repeated brunts with Christian grace and forbearance. (2)

Christian gentility appears frequently in the acts of the knights toward one another and especially toward women. Christine's "charge" (previously quoted) in this respect is typical of the attitude of the Table Round.

In the quest for the Holy Grail, Christianity in its mystical and medieval form has full sway. The adventures are legendary and feature the fall of the wizard, yet the payee behind them

is left. The knights severally take the oath:

I shall labour in the conquest of the Round Table, that I shall hold me out a twelve month and a day, or more if need be, and never shall I return again until the court till I have seen it more deadly than it hath been seen here; and if I may not speed, I shall return again as he that may not be against the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1)

Two of the knights and the trials are welcomed into heaven. Of the remainder many are killed or die in the quest. Less than half return. (2) They are not equal in the quest; and their failure is pointed out both literally and symbolically in this fact.

At the end of the book Christian justice comes into its own with a vengeance. Arthur, because of his crime of incest, is bereft of his kingdom and spurred to the death by the offering of that crime; (3) Mordred, the treacherous usurper is slain outright; (4) Lancelot and Guinever, in recompense for their adulterous love and the part it played in undoing his kingdom, enter the service of the church, and die of remorse and grief; (5) and Gawain meets his end undoing through his overconfidence and hard-heartedness. (6) Thus, for all their sins, each one atones in the end.

This accounting may lead to the conclusion that history preaches. But that is not the case. His retribution is marked out with artistic inevitability; it never descends to the humilitas.

-
1. IV, 60.
 2. Ibid, pp., 47.
 3. Ibid, pp., 479.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid, pp., 485-47.
 6. Ibid, pp., 477.

The moral tone of the book is broad and wholesome. It is never bitter or didactic. In its pages may be found--"noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue and sin", (1)--the whole ethical gamut of mediæval life. The picture is presented wholly and honestly of a world in which victory seems rather more of good than of evil.

CHAPTER II

PART I: The Philology of E. S. Bouleau.

One always hesitates in the attempt to isolate and formulate the philosophy of any poet. "My poet", is one, have developed or followed any definite system of philosophy; and many other little or nothing of philosophic content. For is this strange; since it is the function of the poet primarily to record man's feelings about life and the world in which they live. The matter of man's thoughts and conceptions is traditionally the property of philosophers.

Hence, a consideration of Mr. Robinson's poetry, with a view toward philosophy discovery and discovery, is approached with unusual care. The feelings, the words, the language in poetry are of paramount importance. This fact must be understood before an effort is made to find reasons, interpretations or trends of thought.

Mr. Robinson, however, is remarkable in that he offers that rare combination of poet and philosopher. He is first of all a poet. His most felicitous and compelling expression is poetic. Nevertheless, his poetry is broad and stirred by philosophic thought. At times even--and here his poetry suffers--his philosophy transcends his emotion, and leaves a rather stiff and unyielding residue. Yet these occasions are rare.

It is from these lines nevertheless, that his thoughts on life are most easily ascertained. For example, Mr. Robinson has been called a cosmic pessimist. (1) What can the poet read the following octave would be willing to argue with this verdict?

Unobtrusively void of a clear outline
 Whom to build, or what to formulate,
 The legion life that fights in mankind
 Goes ever glancing forward, up and down,
 Past life and army rampant as war,
 Unobscured of such but ignorance,
 And ever led resolutely along
 To certain ends by great travelers. (1)

Here in the fourth verse, is a declaration of faith in the progress of mankind. In spite of chaos, fits, complications and reversals, Robinson thinks there is reason to believe in the forward march of man.

Again this faith is framed in an octave. This time it is expressed more subtly, and tempered by feeling and mood. In the following lines Robinson is the poet expressing his faith in life:

Here by the windy docks I stand alone,
 But yet conventional. There the vessel goes,
 And there my friend goes with it; but the wide
 That splits and ables between that friend and me
 Love's earnest is of life's all-successful
 And all-triumphant willing, when the ships
 Loose their fretful engines and swing
 Forever from the crushed wharves of Time. (2)

For all one sees Mr. Robinson's faith shining out through these verses, there is an obvious conflict. "The clash arises from the unresolvable discrepancy between life experienced and life desired; the forces involved are colliding reason and wavering faith, each impatient to conquer wholly, each incapable of complete surrender." (3)

Mr. Robinson expresses this conflict more succinctly in the following verses from his long poem, Warlin:

-
1. II, pp., 141.
 2. Idem, pp., 127.
 3. VIII, pp., 17.

"And city on us that our words have since
and leave our souls to grow so far below them;
For we have all two feelings, we men who dream,
Whether we lead or follow, while we serve." (1)

But for all the excellent work, there is no denying or lessening. After, the picture is of a man who can not avoid inevitable defeat, and still meet it with smiling eyes. There is no negation; merely an admission of the very discrepancy of life and heroic acceptance of it.

In every other case only failure, Mr. Robinson seems successful. Hereafter let us be well assured it is in the following lines.

Flung the rich heart instant up, as the freight
forever with indissoluble truth,
Therein robustly poured I self giving,
frankly, frantically. Brief and bold,
Alone the devotion, are the drama
Of wasted excellence; and every dream
Was in it made of an eternal fact
That floats deflected and laughs at years. (2)

"There idealism lifts us the more without an romantic blunder." (3)

Mr. Robinson follows through in his belief in man as a rational being. Professor Gifford says, "Robinson is neither a mystic nor a fanatic, neither a romantic dreamer nor a serious socialist, but an observer of the facts of the spirit as well as of physical realities, who knows man's limitations and weaknesses and yet believes in man's destiny and in life's ideal condition. He is an idealist, who remains attached to Christian freedom, without being hampered by Christian dogma. . . after all, Robinson looks back to Shakespeare, being, nearly alive, like the poet of Hamlet, to the interior of our highest nature and fully sensitive,

1. Id., ib., 109.
2. Id., ib., 109.
3. Id., ib., 109.

live streamers, to our inability to give to the weight of our responsibilities." (1)

Dr. Robinson once said, in reply to a critic who accused him of making the world a "barren house", "I am sorry to learn that I have painted myself in such lugubrious colors. The world is not a 'barren house', but a kind of universal kindergarten where millions of bewildered infants are trying to crawl and walk the wrong way." (2) Again, there is no question. These words are the cry of a man who is confused, but who has still a faith in the eventuality of the life process. Dr. Robinson of his own definitely always to arrange the bloom himself, but he comes nearest doing so when, in Marlin, he says:

Now Arthur, Roland, Lamoleet and Lorraine
are swollen thousands of this eternal will
which have no other way to find the way
that leads them on to their immortality
than by the time-indurating flame
of a scorching desire, lit by the touch
of youth, and impelled with the light
that Michael found, is yet to light the world. (3)

In regard to love, Dr. Robinson follows Shelley. Like Shelley he links together love and the realization of the ideal. "But," as Castro says, "he has been taught by the failure of the romanticists to know love's terror." (4)

From these comments, it is easy to deduce the two things that Dr. Robinson considers potent elements, with love as the stimulant and guide. Most of Dr. Robinson's characters see what the world could call failure, but not of the kind like Brother's

1. III, pp., 24.
2. III, pp., 6.
3. IV, pp., 17.
4. III, pp., 28.

people, police have not known, and even the secret; therefore, Mr. Williams had not considered that failure. Finally, Lawrence, brother, sister and father followed him. In spite of their trouble and misfortune, they had found what remained there, saved him and, in the eyes of Mr. Williams, made him whole. They knew that they were doing; and they knew why they were condemned in the end. Then, they were the staff of great tragedy.

Mr. Lloyd Morris has said the best account of Mr. Williams's philosophy appears in the following statement: "This (Williams's) demand is not of positive action but of positive acceptance; police the list of things that it may lead you; follow it in spite of the fact that the vision of a total acceptance may be- lieve you a fool, as so many like the war of wisdom and of virtue; however your own contribution to the fullest, no matter what they may be, for it is doing you are fulfilling your destiny." (1) In this, he is very close to Browning.

One of Mr. Williams's most successful statements of this in- tuitive philosophy is contained in a significant little poem, or- titled thus:

I cannot find my way: there is no star
In all the sky and nowhere anywhere;
And there is not a whisper in the air
Of any living voice but one so far
That I can hear it only as a bar
Of lost, imperial music, slight and fair
And small, fainter now, and unnumbered,
And leaves no doubt that there are voices and.

So there is not a silence, nor a call,
For one that welcomes, welcomed man to man,

The black and awful words of the night;
 For through it all--through, beyond it all--
 I know the eternal meaning of the years;
 I feel the coming glory of the light. (1)

In all these utterances of Mr. Robinson we find messages and
 a belief in "life's all-sufficient meaning". From Darwin is
 made to say, after his world and nature's law revealed unto
 man:

"And in the end
 The great Unknowable, though not
 Known, shall be known as the end." (2)

Mr. Robinson is not a cosmic pessimist. Rather, he is an
 idealist, struggling against the low dwelling of the world, toward a
 light that ever calls him. He never loses this light, but it is
 safe to say that it represents his belief in God.

This philosophy of life is quite typical of what is held by
 the majority of persons who believe in God and man.

GROUP II

GROUP II: Tennyson's Philosophy.

"Many of us men do not truly, after having noted the searching look of wisdom and discovered the limitations, the first principle enunciated by Yangtze that a God exists revealed at His highest in the reality/^{of} self-sacrificing love, that the world will be essentially free and the soul immortal, that darkness shall in due time be all light, and creative harmony at last, after long discord, shall be obtained.

But Yangtze places in these principles not so much, because he had discovered them for himself, but because they were those upon which the "wisest and the best have rested through all ages." (1)

Yangtze says in Is America LVI, 4., that he -

"expected in the love ideal
the love creature's final law." (2)

All the qualities concerning love of man for God, of man for man and of man for woman are stirred into regulation through the action of "these three-fold laws which he, Yangtze, names Idylls of the Sea." (3)

We behold Arthur and Lancelot, fighting the world's battles together, yielding the splendid impulse of their love for each other:

"Foremost the two,
For each had vowed either in the fight,
Swore on the field of Arctur's deathless love.
And Arthur said, 'What's said is said in God;
Let chance work will, I trust even to the death'" (4)

(One of the most poignant notes of the Idyll is in the nature of this first great Lancelot, according to a lover's allurement

1. Id., p., 174.
2. Id., p., 175.
3. Id., p., 171.
4. Id., p., 170-1.

ability of yielding his own society to the point where he can
bring out the individual qualities and characteristics of all
who he governs. In the Wells passage above this point, yet
he actually breaks it down in the Wells passage, where one by one
the individuals about themselves and in their own way.

Broke says, "In fact, Emerson's treatment in the Wells,
whether consciously or not, the complete breaking down in prop-
ties of the theory of the conventional order and order everyone
into his own nature. I do not think he meant to give us this
good democratic lesson, but he has given it." (1)

Arthur Schopenhauer says of Emerson, "I do not imagine that
Emerson's intellectual force was pre-eminently great or that
his knowledge was very profound; of technical philosophy, for
instance, he said, 'I have had a glimpse of it, and have hardly
survived a week of it'. The view which he has collected
was largely due to the fact that his interests were limited,
and that he was able to develop himself, without any sense of ne-
cessity or effort, mainly in his creative work." (2)

Emerson's philosophy, in so far as he may be said to have
any, is ethical and social. He is a religious person deeply
alive to the social aspect of his day. In his religious soul
and in his spiritual development he is in contact with the
social world, and in the social world he is in contact with the
social world. He is in contact with the social world. He
once summed it up in the following words: "The social world
is the world," he said, "and there is no other world." (3)

1. Wells, pp., 107.
2. Wells, pp., 11.
3. Wells, pp., 117.

This is undeniably a noble aim, yet it is equally undeniable that had he not spent so much of his energy in politics & social work, his art would have been immeasurably finer. Literature or, to be more specific, poetry can have moral or social meaning. Many writers have succeeded in weddling art and a moral passion into literature of mere force and beauty. But Whitman cannot do this. His art is limited and his moral passion merely a vague impulse to the heroic. This point will be brought out in greater detail later.

Whitman's spiritual power is a difficult quality to define or describe. It can be defined best in his own words, "I see the nothingness of life, I know its emptiness--but I believe in Love and Virtue and Duty." (1) The explanation of his belief is never clearer or more logical than this. One must be satisfied with the simple knowledge that he did believe. As Pound says, "Whitman disciplined nothing; the world he did not try to express with profound emotion, but a language of admirable beauty, the fact that there is, or seems to be, an indissoluble mixture of flesh and soul, which humanity is bound to retain, and will not be permitted to reject." (2)

It is clear that Whitman, throughout his life, was a devoted follower of Christ. He refers to Him continually in such words as the following:

(Christ), "that union of man and woman, strength and strength." (3)

By:

1. W. M., 116.
2. Ibid., no., 118.
3. Ibid., no., 120.

"And the Sun is to shed Flower, Jesus Christ is
to my soul. He is the Sun of my soul." (1)

From this knowledge of Parnassus it is an easy step to the
understanding of his characterization of Arthur. Here obviously,
the poet created his prototype of Christ. Arthur says:

"And I was First of all the King who drew
The lightest-armor of this realm and all
The realm together under me, their Head,
In that fair Order of my Table Round,
A glorious company, the Flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world
and be the fair beginning of a time." (2)

One thinks back quite naturally to Christ and the calling of his
disciples. Although this analogy is not exact throughout the
poem, the calling is clear even to the casual reader. They are
good sinners, more men--or women--who held up a religious ideal
to a world that failed to listen, and eventually crucified them.

The delivery of their stories lies, not in the pretenses of
their defeat, nor in their loss of faith in themselves and the
world. Instead, it emerges from their belief in the indestructi-
bility of their souls--their lives in the life to come after
death.

On this point, a criticism of Brooke's interpretation of
Arthur is justified. Brooke says: "Arthur's work was failed,
Love, friendship, his ideal--have all broken. ... The writer
(Parnassus) is to judge from this poem (the *Idyll*) alone, and
from the fact he allows allegorically to Arthur, his soul here at
this time were he not, nor could he believe, his soul be high-
believed, but, on the other, that himself at least of power....

I. O. M.: 177.
I. I. M.: 180.

Despot, and all the world!Unable to affirm or deny! No
clear belief, no triumph of the soul! And the last battle is
fought in a death-white mist, not one ray of sunlight to illumine
it! Men meet not friend from foe; old ghosts look in on the
fight; every man who fought in it fought with his heart cold". (1)

"With fearless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought." (2)

All this is true as far as it goes. Frodo stopped too soon.

The following passage gives the real key to Frodo's wound.

Arthur is speaking:

"I found him in the shining of the stars,
I sought him in the flowering of his life,
but in his hour with him I found him not.
I loved his way, and now I know my life.
O me! For why is all around us here
As if some power had made the world,
but had not force to shape it as he would,
till the night had beheld it from beyond,
and enter it, and make it beautiful
or else as if the world were wholly fair,
but that these eyes of men are dim and dim,
and have not power to see it as it is:
Perchance, because we were not in the clime;
For I, being blind, thought to see the will,
and have but stricken with the sword in vain:
and all I deem I learned in life and friend
is wraith to my sense, and all my soul
feels but into the dark and is no more.
My God, thou hadst for given me in my death:
"Nay--but my Christ--I dare not shall not die." (3)

There is bewilderment here, at the word of God and man, over as
there is in Christ's last words. But there is also the trans-
cendent faith that death is not a passing to a richer life ful-
fillment.

Frodo had to let Arthur die here. He knew that Arthur's

1. VIII, 971-2.
2. I, 100-101.
3. Ibid, 100-101.

Armen was the high for any country yet known to man. He had to let Syria see this too. But he never let her. He gave him the hope of eternal life. Polished, who was a trailer spirit and died early, is the only other of the knights who he allowed to reach this goal. Penelope always believed in the immortality of the soul, and he believed that faith and that hope only on those of his people whom he considered worthy.

CHAPTER III

PART I: THE WORLD OF R. A. BELMONT.

Dr. Bruce Wilcock in his book, From Pioneer to Modern in American Poetry, is very sympathetic to Mr. Robinson. He says of him, "As a poet of New York, he was not without the multi-facetedness of New York, and as a descendant of New England, he possessed little or nothing of the vernal spirit of New England. His is a poetry of the city. Much of his poetry is not the traditional poetry of the New Englanders, of Lowell and Whittier and the American legends, and is devoid of reference to the contemporary and the actual." (1)

This point is also made by some specialists toward Robinson--and has not infrequently been made by the reading public. It is in the opinion of Mr. Lloyd Kinsman who speaks in agreement with most of Mr. Robinson's critics: "For all his traditionalism and his conservatism, Robinson was not a poet of the past. He was a poet of the present. He was a poet of the future. He was a poet of the world. He was a poet of the human race. He was a poet of the universe. He was a poet of the infinite." (2)

Robinson was such a democratic poet that he wrote in a language that was understood by all. It is my purpose to analyze Mr. Robinson's style and to show its significance.

A careful consideration of Mr. Robinson's poetry disclosed that his poetic form, as well as his subject, was of the old-fashioned and of the new. In his later work he has followed the venerable custom of blank verse. Very possibly this fact has much to do with the fact that Robinson was a poet of the old and of the new. It is in this way that Robinson was a poet of the old and of the new. It is in this way that Robinson was a poet of the old and of the new. It is in this way that Robinson was a poet of the old and of the new.

has incorporated into the old forms, the imagery, mood, the
wilderness, restraint, and the sadness of today. Into the vil-
lanella, traditionally built and airy, Mr. Robinson brings a new
and sombre music in his unexcelled tragedy of The House on the
Hill:

They are all gone away,
The house is silent and still,
There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and eaves
The wind blows black and shrill:
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one today
To speak their good or ill:
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
Around the haunted hill?
They are all gone away.

And our poor fancy-play
For time is ended still:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
In the house on the hill
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say. (1)

Here is a declaration of literary independence. Mr. Robinson
has taken an historically still and graceful form in which a
solemn tragedy. Mr. Robinson will not leave the time-tested form,
but he does desert from the accepted use of those forms.

He treats alone through time's old wilderness
As if the trace of all the centuries
Had left no echo--no stone was there, for him. (2)

Even in Mr. Robinson's blank verse,--the medium to which he
reverts in his intention powerful and brilliant in ex-
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ily discernible. In the following passage from Lancelot, in which Lancelot is making a confession to Guinevere, we have another instance, brilliant psychological insight and powerful, even dramatic, restraint:

"When I rode in between your father's hands
And heard his trumpet blown for my lord's honor,
I sent my memory back to Camelot,
And said once to myself, 'God save the King!'
But the words were my throat and were like blood
Upon my tongue. Then a great shout went up
From shining men around me everywhere;
And I remember how fair women's eyes
Then there are stars in heaven, all of them
Thrown on me for a glimpse of that high knight
Sir Lancelot--the Lancelot of the Lake.
I saw their faces and I saw not one
To save a shadow of my integrity:
But I thought once again, 'God save the King!'
Believe a silent lie, 'God save the King!'. . . .
I saw your face, and there were no more things." (1)

There is this coloring of the scene, this character portrayal and this rich simile and imagery through all of Mr. Swinburn's poetry. Let those who believe him responsible read the following lines from Tristram:

.....leaves of gold
With all her hair, young beauty unbroken
By grief and shame and fear that made her white
Will be no longer gold have been in fall,
Gone horror still be his and still and still
Will terror have of margin hence
Whore of horror while his life and here
But speech out like fire out by fire. (2)

Here is another,--a little more uncontrolled passion--held by circumstances still inside the limit of formal and classic restraint. Inside passion, there is decor. Mr. Swinburn is great and interesting & dramatic poet. He has the broad sympathy and psychological insight of a great poet, but he has been unfortunately misjudged as a poet.

J. H. M.: 27.
J. H. M.: 28.

the tense and terrific strain of character upon character. The following quotation from Christen illustrates this unusual power. (It is the night of Mark's marriage to Inuit. Christen and Inuit have watched a moment from time and time to time in the house before the "barge" that Inuit is to follow. Inuit, Inuit and Inuit of Mark, follows them. He is discovered and carried to the ground by Christen. Mark awakes in time to see Inuit in Christen's arms):

"Governail,"
The King said after staring wildly
about him, "he is lying there at your feet?
Turn him and let me see?"

"You know him, sir,"
Christen replied, in tones of no address:
"The name of that you see there is Inuit;
And it is manifestly at your service."

"That was an undecent jest, I fear,
For you tonight, Christen," answered the King.
"Do you not see what you have done to him?
Inuit is bleeding."

"I am glad of that, sir.
So long as there is loss of that bad blood
In him, there will be no such loss of Inuit.
Watch him, and he will be as good as ever;
and that will be about as good as ever.
If I had been absent with him and approved him,
I'd pity the sick fishes," Christen's words,
coming he knew not whence, fell without life
as from a source without it."

"Governail,"
The King said, trembling in his conversation,
"The Queen and her people will be back with you.
When they come with you and of the guard,
and when you come, take Inuit through the garden,
"And through the little window he came out of,"
said Christen,..... (1)

This bit of dialogue shows Mr. Johnson's grasp of dramatic writing.

As one wild natural scene after another opens before us, we are struck by the dramatic intensity of the scenes. The dramatic intensity is inherent in the scenes. Berlin, London and Brighton show clearly the touch lines of classic drama. They are wild like the old tragedies, with an exposition, a knot and a denouement. Each part is made up of carefully elaborated dialogue, interspersed with narrative, where modern thought and speech characteristics merge in brilliant synthesis.

Mr. Robinson is more than a dramatic poet, unfortunately. He has the skill in melody and word music found only among the best writers of English lyric poetry. Observe the following lines from the Attendant Lover, written, who is entirely unknown to most of his countrymen:

"Your low voice tells me that you are sleeping,
And I will come and whisper in your ear."
(1)

This lyrical music makes the scenes more interesting and more dramatic. The scenes are more dramatic and more interesting. The scenes are more dramatic and more interesting. The scenes are more dramatic and more interesting.

Tristram's words
Pierced the silence of the night
To a lone figure, who in shadow stood
The moon of heaven shone down on her
And Tristram said:
(2)

Later, when Tristram comes to the tower, the scene is no longer calm, but filled with light:

...the light of morning
Shone on the tower where Tristram stood alone
And Tristram said:
The light of morning shone on him
And Tristram said:
(3)

1. VI, pp., 5-20.
2. Ibid., pp., 120.

Flashed there before him. (1)

Again we see Tristram lying in the grass:

He stretched his arms,
Laughing to be alive; and over his head
Leaves in the wind that gave them a gay voice
Flickered and ticked with laughter. (2)

In description Mr. Robinson excels. But here again is a modern note that is his own. He sees things in nature as the imagist sees them and his characters interpret the things about them according to their moods. Often too there is symbolism. These three qualities are clearly brought out in the following lines from Merlin. Dagonet and Merlin, sitting on a hill overlooking the city they know to be falling to ruin, have sadly unburdened their hearts to each other. Night overtakes them:

They arose,
And, saying nothing, found a groping way
Down through the gloom together. Fiercer now,
The wind was like a flying animal
That beat the two of them incessantly
With icy wings, and bit them as they went.
The rock above them was an empty place
Where neither seer nor fool should view again
The stricken city. Colder blew the wind
Across the world, and on it heavier lay
The shadow and the burden of the night;
And there was darkness over Camelot. (3)

In this dusk that comes down upon Camelot, is a forceful symbol taken directly from nature. The poet foreshadows the death of a kingdom.

Indeed, Mr. Robinson's use of symbolism demands further comment. In addition to his symbolization in nature are his supernatural symbols of Time and Fate, which may be interpreted to rep-

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1. XI, pp., 126.
 2. Ibid, pp., 156.
 3. IX, pp., 314.

through the intricacies of thought and of moral obligation: a complex study in psychology is made of the mind and its various possibilities. Another psychological, however, leads itself to brief contemplation. Mr. Robinson has said, for some of a better kind, may be called a psychological fiction. This is best illustrated in Tristram. Devious and darkly shadowed the story like the walls of a labyrinth. Early in the story we hear above the voices of the lovers in Plover's garden:

...the morning sun of Cornish coast
Cold upon Cornish rocks. (1)

Like a lone accompaniment, this melancholy music fulfils the lovers' memory wherever they get snatches of the old bliss. It is never far away from them; behind, beating always with solemn insistence.

In Tristram, too, there is the important flight of sea-birds, noticed by Emily of Tristram from the shore:

Look! at the white birds, in Tristram,
Could one see the sea anywhere
A picture more alive or less familiar
Than a blind poem, and the same white birds
Flying, and always flying, and still singing,
Yet never bringing any news of him
That was forgotten.....(2)

These birds return again and again in the poem to symbolize the eternal waiting of the disappointed bride who looked out across the sea in the past, and always in vain.

Mr. Robinson has more. The poem is of the dramatic-romantic variety. It is witty, conventional and polite. An excellent example is to be found in Tristram when Devious delivers a

And troubled is she moved, heart Merlyl coming,
 "You like a flower
 Twilight," he said..... it seemed
 a flower of wonder with a crimson stem
 came leaning slowly and regretfully
 To meet his will— flower of change and peril
 That had a clinging blossom of warm olive
 Half-stifled in a tyranny of black,
 and held the varied fragrance of a rose
 made warm by delicious alchemy. (1)

From these diversified fragments picked here or there as random it is possible to gather a rather clear picture of Mr. Robinson's style. His imagery, restraint, symbolism and vividness are indissolubly tied up with contemporary American poetry. They fit into no other literature or period. His treatment of character with its scientific fervor for psychological detail, will also be shown as essentially of our own time, (2) and his philosophy that of the modern thinkers. (3) Therefore, Mr. Robinson's interests and style are decidedly contemporary. It is true that he has not written of the "philistinism of New York" not often of the "various and varied scenes". These elements after all, lead itself more readily to the novelists and miscellaneous prose writers. The poet is interested primarily in representing the spiritual temper and social attitudes of his time. Mr. Robinson, without question, has done this for his time. He does not care about subways, newspaper advertisements and the modern character since they are not necessary adjuncts to that purpose. Therefore, he has not found it necessary to employ them.

Mr. Loring Loomis offers a beautiful suggestion concerning

1. *Id.*, no., 255, 271.
2. *Ibid.*, Chapter IV, Part I, pp., 76.
3. *Ibid.*, Chapter II, Part I, pp., 27.

Mr. Robinson's mastery of black verse. "He (Robinson) listens in-
to his black voice these centuries ago, listening the break of the
human voice under the impact of fate which have always been a
characteristic glory of English poetry." (1) For his example
Mr. Levinson refers to Iago of Brissay who is watching the white
gulls flying and knows at last that "winter is dead:

We had been there,
The thought, but not for her. We had been there
But not for her. We had not thought of her
any more, and that was strange. We had been all,
It would be always all there was for her,
And he had not come back to her alive,
Not even to go again. (2)

"And he always written you," says Mr. Levinson, with Johnson's
words in mind, "it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise
him." (3)

CHAPTER III

PART II: The Style of Alfred Tennyson

Tommyson's style has one predominant characteristic. In general, it is passionless; a quality which gives much of his poetry an almost feeble tone. This lack of passion and virility in his verse, was the butt of such vicious criticisms by contemporaneous writers and reviewers. Bulwer even went so far as to call the poet "School-like Alfred":

Let School-like Alfred vent her chaste delight
On "drolling little rymes so rare and light!"
Chant "It's weary," in infectious strain,
And catch her "blue fly singing at the house." (1)

In spite of the unnecessary crudity of these verses, it is not impossible to see the kernel of truth in them. A careful study of the lay's fails to disclose passion except in one instance, and here it is questionable; likewise, the innumerable metaphorical of Etarre, is stirred to violent speech when he finds her in bed with Caraine:

"O towers so strong,
How, solid, would'st thou ever in I pass
The crack of artillery shivering to your base
Belt you, and hell burst in your harlot's room...
Black as a devil's heart--yellow as a skull!
Let the fierce east scream through your yellow-holes,
Let whirl the dark of hell's round and round
In dung and rot--let him, who--I saw him there--
Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell!" (2)

This is more the bombastic declamation of passion as inspired by a neurotic man. It is less rhetorical and altogether too long-winded to be entirely sincere or convincing. He is more violent than passionate.

Whatever passion Tommyson has is to be found in his own spiritual or moral aspirations. "When the moral combat of life,

when the great emotions of morality are to be represented, the system occasionally takes the form of poetry. This is one of his great powers. He almost always his personages themselves as their victims, with the exception of the great heroes, but he does draw with a level over the moral degradation which follows on noble passions nobly felt, or the moral depression which follows love that soon begins to feel themselves terrible." (1)

This moral depression is especially apparent in the following passage from Guinevere, where the queen laments 'youth's spiritual fever' (2) and cannot find sleep at all. It is the dawn, she dreams -

An awful dream; for when she came to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there fell a radiance
I scarcely remember, nor the shadow fell
Before it, till it seemed her, and she turn'd -
Then lo! her own, long brooding from her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it
The circle burnt, as with a cry she woke. (3)

Shakespeare's over-elaborate and excessive poetry are nowhere better demonstrated than in the speeches of his knights and ladies. He cannot, or will not, speak natural speech into his blank verse form. This is due largely to his imperfect understanding of character, but more so much to his own desire to create an artificial effect. Reference to the speech of Pellissier, above, makes the point clear. The form is perfect; the verse is lilted with rich images and artistic words, the rhythm is faultless, but naturalness, sincerity and real passion are lacking.

1. Fill, pp. 10-11.
2. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
3. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

It is this very artistry which constantly creates doubt of his sincerity.

It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss, investigate or evaluate the allegorical content of the Idylls. A few words, however, are necessary to point out a grave flaw in Fennel's style. Countless reviewers of the Idylls have made their allegorical interpretation of the poem. Not of them words in any details. Many of them are interesting and some of them merely ingenious. The fact that all this work has been done points definitely to the presence of some allegory in the Idylls. Fennel himself said, the Idylls are merely "a dream of man coming into practical life and ruining by man and sin. That is the allegory in the distance." (1) This statement is sufficiently general and vague to be almost meaningless. Even a casual reading of the Idylls provokes allegorical interpretations. It is likely that the allegorical significance of the poem is much more pronounced than Fennel intended. But it is there; and it is nearly always involved and confusing. As Gracie says, "The allegory and the tale do not fit throughout. They clash and trouble one another...his (Fennel's) poem is not plainly an allegory, nor is it plainly a story. The two things are not amalgamated. In fact, the allegory might as well have been left out altogether." (2)

Andrew Lang goes further with this point, then he suggests that "there is no single fact or incident in the Idylls, nor-

1. IV, pp., 10.

2. VIII, pp., 112-3.

over seemingly explicit, which cannot be evaluated without any
opportunity of allegory whatever. The Mylla must be read, as
a whole poem." (1)

Although it is difficult to agree entirely with the first
statement, the latter is very wise. The fact remains, however,
that he finds it necessary to tell readers how to attack the
Mylla. Therefore, it would seem likely that some general error
is inherent in the form, style or conception of the poem, since
it is not necessary, or even customary, to warn readers away
from specific interpretation of first-rate poetry.

Verneyard's use of symbolism is ubiquitous and infinitely
varied. The subject could not be exhausted in a short learned
and lengthy monograph. It is the purpose of this paper to dis-
cuss merely the most typical forms of symbolism to be found in
the Mylla, and their relative effectiveness.

Four types of symbolism come readily to mind--the incident-
al, the moral, the mystic or religious, and the prophetic. In-
spite of the inevitable overlapping and occasional misunderstanding of
these types, they stand out with sufficient clarity to permit
separate examination and evaluation.

An excellent example of Verneyard's incidental symbolism is
to be found in Merlin and Vivian. Merlin is tired of Camelot
and wants to get away for a time. He goes to the beach, slides
into a boat, and takes off. Unbeknownst to him, Vivian has fol-
lowed:

she took the helm, and he the till; the boat
 drove with a sudden wind across the waves,
 and, touching Syrian shores, they disembarked. (1)

In the first stanza "she took the helm", Tennyson has conveyed the
 significance of the whole story. Vivian knows where she is go-
 ing. Merlin does not. The accidental symbolism is very common
 in the Idylls and is nearly always effective. It is not over-
 done or obtrusive; and it performs its function perfectly.

The moral symbolism can best be illustrated from the advan-
 tures of Sir Percivale in his quest for the Grail. He relates
 an event of his journey:

"And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
 And on the top a city wall'd; the spires
 tripped with incredible swiftness into heaven.
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and there
 cried to me shouting, 'Welcome, Percivale!
 Thou knightest and thou purgest among men!!'
 And glad was I and glad, for found at last
 the men and my voice." (2)

This is the moral symbol of the soul seeking to slake its thirst
 by popular worship, and especially in the face of a ruler of
 men, but all is thirst and dissolution as before." (3). Tennyson
 employs many symbols that are of this general type. When he
 wishes to point a moral lesson. They have sufficient subtlety to
 escape detection and more often than not, are more subtle.
 Many of them are difficult to unravel without considerable study.
 Therefore, this type, though good sometimes, is generally too ob-
 scure for the average reader of poetry.

The mystic or religious symbol takes many forms. Arthur
 himself may be interpreted as a mystic symbol of divinity in man.

1. I, iv., 139.
2. Ibid, iv., 147.
3. VIII, vi., 134.

"I beheld
From eye to eye through all their bright flash
A momentary likeness of the King;
And one it left; their faces, through the crowd
And those around it and the crucified,
Came from the forehead over Arthur, death
Violet-color, vast, and aware, in three rays,
One falling upon each of these fair queens
Who stood in silence near his throne." (1)

These verses clearly link Arthur with supernatural powers. But the obvious symbolism is complicated with many obscure and confusing minor symbols. The hard reader in the attempt to bring clarity out of the welter of allusions and suspensions. Perhaps it is best to read for the story, and look not too closely into the unworkable.

The Grail is another image having mystic and religious significance. It is in itself concrete, but it suggests the purity and divinity of Christ, and hence is open to multitudinous interpretations. It does not confuse so much as it blinds the reader.

The finest example of the mystic symbolism is to be found in The Holy Grail where Percival describes Arthur's hall.

"O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred legend of Camelot....
Glimpses to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great rooms of sculpture, set against
With many a mystic symbol, and the hall;
And in the lowest rooms are slaying men,
And in the second men are sleeping beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
And over all are statues in the wall
Of Arthur." (2)

1. I, op., pp. 27-28.
2. Ibid., pp. 204.

In these verses Tennyson has caught the whole mood and aspiration of Arthur's vision. He is lyric; and for mood, his language is clear and vivid. Unfortunately, however, much of his poetic and religious symbolism is too rich for easy illustration.

The prophetic symbolism is found mostly in the beautiful lyrics which spring up like flowers through the Idylls. In the Coming of Arthur, Merlin's words prophetically in exquisite brevity tell the future of Arthur:

"Rain, rain and rain! and the great blossoms blow;
Sun, sun and sun! and where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes." (1)

Again, there is some obscurity. Yet the beauty and charm of the lyric more than makes up for any possible loss of meaning. Tennyson excels in this type of symbolism as he does in this type of verse.

From this brief examination it is easy to see that Tennyson uses symbolism extensively. When it is vivid and effective. But there are times when it becomes confused. In spite of this confusion, however, the story is seldom injured and the outlines of the narrative remain clear. It is merely unfortunate that his shades of meaning are not always distinguishable.

The general tone of the Idylls is quite different from that of Mr. Robinson's treatment of the legend. Tennyson does not move as soon as dramatic scenes. His Idylls are really little more than a series of loosely tales, held together loosely by the general theme of Arthur and his Noble Mound. Where Mr. Robinson has created three closely knit dramatic poems, Tennyson has
I. I. pp., 121.

tailed through thirteen poetic stories of closely varying qualities of excellence. As a whole they have more or less definite form, yet they are not closely knit. The individual stories wander and vary the central theme in all directions. Some contribute much more to the main theme than others. Two of them are indispensable in the general scheme, and no story here might have been written without affecting the plan greatly. The point is that Tennyson's form is loose and elastic. This matter deserves a separate study.

Tennyson's imagination has given the stories a romantic background. "The scenery throughout belongs to the country which eye hath not seen nor ear heard", and which the heart of man has imagined." (1) The landscape breathes the atmosphere of fairy land, or of vision seen in dream. Tennyson is over everything. Without the air magic Tennyson's imagination has woven about the building of Camelot.

....."The Fairy King
and Fairy Queen have built the city, and;
They came from west & east and north & south
Forward the journey, each with love in hand,
and built it to the music of their songs.
And, as they moved, it is enchanted, son,
for there is magic in it as it grows
giving the King; though some there be that hold
The King a shadow, and the city vain.
.....but, as they sped to meet
They met the King's fair daughter, and
For as he loved a music, like none
They are building still, seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built of ill,
and therefore built forever." (2)

Nature is treated with this same delicious magic. It is not

1. VIII, 100, 101.
2. I, 100, 101.

actual nature but it is too good in fairy lands. The descrip-
tions are exquisite, and good in their very fancifulness. nearly
always they serve as a device to some action of the poem. In
Paradise Lost, when Michael kills Lucifer and thus his fol-
lowers to flight, there is a beautiful picture.

But at the flood and action of the war
They vanished - like - like - like, like a school
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
When the crystal lakes are clear
Have sleeping o'er their shadow on the sand,
But if a man come stirring upon the brink
But lift a shining head against the sun,
There is not left the semblance of a fin
Betwixt the greedy lake and the fish
In, curved into the action of the war,
Flashed all the light of the sun,
And left his lying in the white way. (1)

This is an entirely charming bit of natural description and
an excellent simile. The misfortune of it however, as in so
many similar passages, is that it is too effective as a sim-
ile and retards the action of the story. Paradise Lost is essentially
a lyric poem. It can never be said to be using lyrical passages
when and where they come to hand. Criticism on this point, how-
ever, is hardly justified since these lyrical passages are among
the best things Paradise Lost offers.

If the above quotation from Paradise Lost had been changed to
the next line in the context, -

So varied friendship only ends in war. (2)
there is quite justifiable cause for criticism. This line is
brought in obviously to point a moral. It has no other reason-

(1) Ibid., pp. 100.
(2) Ibid., pp. 101.

ation with the picture; and, as such, should be derided. Pen-
son too frequently descends to details. The outstanding exam-
ple of this trait, perhaps, is to be found in Arthur's last
speech to Guinevere at Caerbury.

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes;..
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee;..
.... All is well, the sin is sin'd, and I,
Lo, I forgive thee, as eternal God
Forgives! Be thou for thine own soul the rest....
I can not take thy hand; yet too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou art sin'd; and mine own flesh
Hath looked down on thine polluted, cries
"I loathe thee;" (1)

Here Arthur is the "impossible man." (2) It is difficult to
find any excuse for this last speech. "The king does preach too
much to an unhappy woman who has no reply." (3)

Unlike Mr. Robinson, Penenson resorts not infrequently to
melodramatic effects. The adventures of the Lancelot's gift of
diamonds into the river and Lancelot's death in the river on the win-
dow ledge.

Close underneath his eyes, and right across
There those (the diamonds) had fallen, slowly and the large
Thereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night." (4)

There is no definite preparation for this coincidence. It is too
well timed to have any plausibility. It is not inevitable.

It is not strange to find that Penenson shows an error in his
treatment of the Idylls. Error goes hand in hand with a wide
knowledge of life and of people. It is nowhere more obvious than

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1. I, no., 111.
 2. III, no., 111.
 3. IV, no., 111.
 4. I, no., 111.

Or read from Tivion's song:

"In love, if love be love, if love be true,
Faith and loyalty are never to be found:
Unfaith is what is true in love is all."

It is the little with which the love,
That by and by will make the world true,
And ever shining slowly through the night." (1)

There is some good sense, excellent symbolism and some noble
thoughts. Tivion never goes better than in his songs, however
these are lyric poems. There is no real sense in
them, nothing, involved or profound. The songs, according
to the author's intention are to be read as
songs, not very clever stories. They want to be read as
true songs, however, only in brief but excellent passages.

CHAPTER IV

PART I: W. A. Lubbock's Development of Tractor.

ience in order to show the good to believe is their
most shining and universal principle. To those men, the
purely casual accidents of existence have no official way;
what remains is a specific reading of life as a message." (1)

It may be easy to agree or disagree with these reasonable
critics in their praise of Mr. Robinson's character. They
have made extravagant statements, but they offer no proof.
Therefore, it is necessary to investigate Mr. Robinson's work
and determine first-hand what approach he has in reaching
actual characters that show individuality, growth and develop-
ment. For each of these, it is necessary to list the words as
they appear. Lincoln, a few lines in the poem, leads
himself readily to examination.

Mr. Robinson's intention is no mean to show. He is a man
of experience and responsibility, who gives himself to love
with his whole soul, and love is what he is. Still, he knows
that a life alone can love and reach its own end to allow
the good reason for pursuing self-realization. His love for
himself comes upon him with sudden and terrible force, when
he finds in between his own's words to pass but not convey
but to "the other. Afterward, when he tried to speak away
from her, for her sake and his own, he tells her of his thoughts
on their first meeting:

"When I told in between your father's words
and heard his answer alone for my love, ...
..... I just want to tell you
from within and around me everything;
and I thought you were my own."

That there are stars in heaven, all of them
There are no.....
I and their father and I and their son
To serve a master of my ancestry;
But I thought more than, to make myself
Believe a great lie, 'and save the lives....'
I and your son, and your wife and your daughter." (1)

Here is flesh and blood. It is flesh and blood that has been
let an abductor. He has been a great fighter, an adventurer and
a loyal friend of Arthur. For the moment the passion of love is
too much for him. He wants escape from the ordinary pressures
of his life. Wherever there is, but not for long. Wherever he
is to go about the world. These adverse circumstances
gradually alter him. He does not want to break away from
himself and about himself from the world, but only for his
own sake of mind and for love as well. But she is a woman and
a Queen--she will not let him go. Lancelot
salutes her with a cry:

"God, what a pain of heart I feel on this
The heart that has been broken by the world." (2)

The inevitable conclusion of their love by being killed
and the world is bound to death by fire. Lancelot, the
until now his thought primarily of himself and of his strained
position with regard to Arthur, gives to the occasion. For the
first time he thinks more of himself than of himself; and with
with friends to the end, killing right and left, he comes to
and the world with him in the end. Lancelot's death is the end:

"The great flame had been lit the first,
Then, like a candle, it had been lit,
There was a great of smoke, and a great

Of steel, and a howling down of banners,
 Not like to any in its hatch, profound,
 Deadly, and ungodly execution.....
 I found a refuge; and there saw the Queen,
 All white, and in a ward of woe unlisted
 By Lancelot, with a dozen knights about him,
 And Lancelot, who raised her while he struck,
 And with his lance she lay propped away.
 Not over in the legendary mist
 Of wars that none today can verify,
 Had ever men annihilate their kind
 With a more vicious intensity,
 Or a more skillful frenzy. Lancelot
 And all his mortal adjuncts are by now
 Too far away for any swift reversal".....(1)

From this point on, the emphasis is laid on the inner con-
 flicts and struggles that arise from this change. The cruel line
 in the clash of souls that takes place in Joyous Gard after the
 flight of the two lovers, when the King has come with an army--
 at the insistence of Gawain who is mad for the loss of his
 leathers, death and Gaherin by the hand of Lancelot. Battles
 are fought every day with the usual havoc of youthful lives. The
 rainy seasons come in. Dark events are brewing. Lancelot's at-
 tentions to Guinevere are more slack:

He led her closely up with a cold show
 Of care that was less heartened than the Queen
 Her eyes would have been. (2)

Why is Lancelot's passion slackening? It is because of sadness over
 the death of comrades slain in his war--a reluctance to fight
 against Arthur and his knights. There are many the powers, but
 there is a more important reason that takes precedence over all
 others; Lancelot's love has come to a point where it cannot last
 without destroying itself. Lancelot's love is short-lived. Unfor-

1. IX, pp., 355.
 2. Ibid, pp., 412.

ful love is passionately opposed to vicissitudes; it wishes a life for a time but cannot be of long duration. Circumstances deprive Lancelot and Guinevere of being a swift close to their mutual decline. The end of it all is contained in Lancelot's remark:

".....All things have an end..." (1)

Lancelot cannot easily bear the burden of a great passion when its height is passed. He has loyalties, ambitions, and aspirations to satisfy. Love, for him, is only a step on the way to higher fulfillment. He will never be one of those—

"The food themselves on bones dryer than hay,
Rejoicing not what they eat, but always eating." (2)

When Arthur offers to send Guinevere back to Lancelot in safety, and withdraw his forces, Lancelot sees the only possible way out of their trouble. Besides, he must follow his destiny which calls him to other battles, greater power and larger thoughts. He expects to lose the memory of his love for Guinevere and all that it meant to him, as a beautiful phase of his existence. And he knows that she will remain true to their mutual vision:

"and if you hid your memory now so that
Your story from the book of what has been,
Your phantom happiness were a ghost indeed,
and I the least of wretches living now,—
You false to me and your sacrifice
To writ a niche in hell." (3)

When the fatal hour of parting comes and she must go back to Arthur, it is Lancelot who uses the language of reason. When things

1. *Id.*, no., 417.
2. *Idem.*
3. *Idem.*

The lovers stand silently listening to the beating of their hearts. Instinct breaks the spell of paralyzing horror. While these clouds their vision, the bravely disguised boy will not so let the vast prey upon the floating wreckage of their souls, or dare leave ruin and may remain for them of promise:

"Are you sure that a word given
Is through words more than a word forgotten?" (1)

The incident that these favorable circumstances may be viewed to liberate them from their dreadful fate:

"Tristram, fair things you
May have a shadow black as night before them,
And each will have a shadow black as night
Behind them. All this may be a shadow,
Sometimes, that we may live to see behind us--
Thinking that we had not been all so near
Control that it was always to be mine." (2)

She is the one who looks like in the face and a word of words of mine. So, for all his passion, cannot silence his mind, which looks forward and forward, looking self-conscious with a word, according on some circumstances and allowing for freedom. So much his recent realization. Allowing to be filled with his own world, perhaps, he says:

"The fairest of all things for his love,
He had not given the spirit first of his mind
To meet himself a man. That was my way..." (3)

Again he seems in other belongings:

"If there were not an army of angels behind us
To bring you back to fruitless longing,
There would not be an end of this suffering
To God and the love itself of this suffering."

-
1. Cf. ...
 2. Ibid., no., 16.
 3. Ibid., no., 13.

But to be tried a trial is not the lady
 "Innocent of days to cure a silver affliction." (1)

Innocent can transcend the moment. The lady:

Tristram, believe
 That if I die you will not be dead,
 So I believe that you will not be dead.
 ... We must wait for the
 To see not daily enough to be seen too,
 "Innocent of days to cure a silver affliction." (2)

Tristram stands still in wonder. The thought of outside beauty
 his mind:

"Innocent of days to cure a silver affliction."
 Of such a sort as one here would be seen,
 If it were not for the fact that it is a woman,
 If ruin of the world were your own ruin." (3)

The sound is interrupted by a loud cry to come to the
 the lovers. Tristram quickly turns his head to the sound. Innocent
 rushes into Tristram's arms and they appear to him to be in
 there.

In the action that follows Tristram is reminded of himself.
 He is unwilling to let the lady go when his own, and he is
 and very much removed:

"If it be not for
 That she has not yet had a vision of you,
 It may be that she is a little more from you
 arrived for a long feeling on your heart--
 "Hitting a bit, the heart" (4)

Tristram replies:

"In that your own
 To make a vision of me? If it be so,
 Before you take my reason take my life." (5).

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1. vi, 77.. 14.
 2. Ibid, 78., 49, 45
 3. Ibid, 78., 21.
 4. Ibid, 78., 21.
 5. Ibid, 78., 67.

From this moment on he readily acknowledges and registers his courage in the face of temporal dangers even though he has almost little in the face of mortal ones. The good soldier, with his doubts about the Queen's husband, he rides forth broken-hearted into the forest, travelling tirelessly until he falls from the saddle from sheer exhaustion. He is found by Goughnail and taken to the castle of Morvan to pay and recover his health. The doctors all say words to his distress, but all in vain. When he has regained his health, he journeys to Brittany where he puts in many months of thinking in the cause of King David. The latter has a beautiful daughter, Isolt of Brittany, who dearly loves Tristan. Although Tristan cannot return her devotion, he is moved by her innocent love of him and finally marries her:

The war life still goes,
And for as long as there was life in him
Was his to Charlot and to wonder at,
That he should have this white rose fiery thing
To call his wife. (1)

This marriage is a consent on the part of Tristan. He cannot offend David nor Isolt, yet he cannot ever really love his wife. His love is still for Isolt of Ireland whose image continually flashes before him. He busies himself in studious labour and for the years estate has been untroubled. From Goughnail comes from Camelot with the news that Tristan is to be married by Arthur. Tristan returns to Camelot with Gawain, where he learns of King's displeasure and Isolt's desire to see him. Isolt of

Eventually a religious letter comes from Mother, in which she tells
 Elizabeth that Paul is dying in Cornwall. The vicarage does
 not even touch him in his intense grief. He must see Paul again.
 He thinks of the almost inevitable death he will meet and urges
 Cornwall and to join him on the journey. Mark finally realises
 the reality of his vengeance and allows Elizabeth to see Paul.

The meeting is one of ghosts. They are both taken out by
 the fearful fate that has befallen them. There is great sadness
 and tenderness in their speech. Paul says,

"I am not afraid to die,
 Elizabeth, if you are trying to think of that—
 or even to think of that. My mind is at
 my own time, and I am not afraid to die; and I am not afraid to die;
 that one life is full of joy, and in the summer,
 the whole of the winter crying to God,
 the world!" (1)

"God knows," he said,
 how full my love, which is the best of me,
 know what a full of trust and understanding
 there is in yours, when I could think and die
 as easily and as soon, could I, by being
 that way, leave you behind as here and there.
 I would be gone from you and be forgotten
 like waves in childhood on forgotten water,
 if that were enough left to bring you life
 and you lay back into those clouds again,
 and those eyes looking at me." (2).

Meanwhile, driven by stress, Elizabeth and Mark
 alone a shining blade in Elizabeth's side. Paul,

Elizabeth was very to God,
 and her last cry, could hear the voice saying
 "If it was possible—give him thanks—his name....
 it was not worth.....Paul!" (3)

Elizabeth's death is the last scene. His death

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- 1. H. M. 19.
 - 2. H. M. 20.
 - 3. H. M. 21.

is a witness of continuous and mobility.

This group agrees to show Mr. Robinson's remarkable and life-long character, the ability of independent and creative living, growing distinction and his leadership and inspiration in building them. It seems almost fair to give judgment on one of his works, yet his work and creative career which are so well illustrated in reality. His poems are all everywhere available. The fact that Mr. Robinson's work gathered some new material, the more to show that, yet apparently different in the variety of individuals involved in them, is a promising ground for his creative ability in this important phase of literary art. The thorough mastery of the literature of his day shows his definitely as a work of the present day.

CHAPTER IV

PART II: Alfred Rosenberg's Character.

When Tennyson sets out to create characters, he is quite obviously out of his metier. His figures in the Idylls, with the possible exception of Elaine and Lancelot are either type characters or figments of the poet's imagination. They do not achieve anything like distinctive individuality nor do they develop and grow like real human beings.

This viewpoint is illustrated nowhere better than in Merlin and Vivien. This poem is as devoid of human complexities as a moralizing fable. Tennyson is absorbed apparently in presenting the conventional scheme of opposing Vice and Virtue; Merlin represents fine Victorian innocence and Vivien, unmitigated sin. He is so interested in this contrast that he makes Vivien a moral monstrosity, a mere incarnation of the lure of the flesh.

As soon as Merlin and Vivien land at Broceliande she greets us to him--

Holding by his heel,
Writhed toward him, glided on his knee and set;
Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet
Together, curved an arm about his neck
Clung like a snake; and letting her left hand
Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,
Made with her right a comb of pearl to part
The lists of such a beard as youth gone out
Had left in ashes-- (1)

It is prettily said, but the skill of expression does not hide the vulgarity of the situation. Vivien is a female fiend; and Merlin, admonishing himself, whispers "harlot." (2)

1. I, pp., 370.

2. Ibid, pp., 378.

The beauty of the verse in this poem is maintained on a high artistic level. It is unfortunate that Tennyson did not elevate the tone of the poem and give us real living human values.

Vivien does not care a snap of the fingers for Merlin. She merely wants to possess his powerful charm, so that she may destroy him and others that stand in her way. She conjures him by every lure of the flesh:

"Yield my boon,
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am." (1)

When this proposition fails to elicit a favorable response, she sings him a song, challenging his lack of faith in her love;

"In love, if love be love, if love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can neer be equal powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all." (2)

Thereupon Merlin, without reason, goes into a long recital of the founding of Arthur's kingdom. When he has finished, Vivien takes up the attack again. She sings another stanza of the song. (3) Merlin responds with another long and somewhat pointless fable, which winds up with the question:

"I rather dread the loss of use than fame;
If you--and not so much from wickedness,
As some wild turn of anger-----might
play me falsely-----
Should try this charm on whom ye say/love." (4)

Vivien is stirred to wrath at this suggestion:

-
1. pp., 371.
 2. Ibid, pp., 372.
 3. Ibid, pp., 373.
 4. Ibid, pp., 374.

"Have I not sworn I am not trusted. Good!
Well, hide it; hide it: I shall find it out,
And being found take heed of Vivien"..... (1)

Merlin "sorely answers her":

"Full many a love in loving youth was mine;
I needed then no charm to keep them mine
But youth and love." (2)

Then he tells another long and rather tedious legend.

He interrupts him once,

...And made her lithe arm round his neck
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes
Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's
On her new lord, her own, the first of men. (3)

The conversation then turns to her imagined wrongs. While we have wandered through all these digressions the thread of the love-context is nearly lost. Vivien pours forth story after story of the sins and failings of Arthur's knights (and incidentally Merlin's friends). He corrects her and so uses her tales of being "a leon-born and a roofless." (4)

She then falls to weeping, playing the injured woman. He puts his arm about her "more in kindness than in love." He withdraws stiffly and says:

"I will go.
In truth, but one thing now--better have died
Thrice than have asked it once--could make me stay--
That proof of trust--so often asked in vain! (5)

She is hardly done with this speech, when a fierce thunder-

1. I, pp., 374.

2. Idem.

3. Ibid, pp., 375.

4. Ibid, pp., 376.

5. Ibid, pp., 376.

storm breaks over them. She rushes into his arms and begs him to save her. The storm passes:

And what should not have, had been,
For Merlin, overtalk'd and over worn,
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept. (1)

She puts the charm over him in a moment and he lies dead in the hollow oak. She cries:

...."I have made his glory mine"
And shrieking out, "O fool!" the harlot leapt
Adown the forest, and the thicket closed
Behind her, and the forest echo'd "fool." (2)

There is no psychological truth in the poem. Merlin is not in love; he is not in his dotage. He sees through Vivien and he hates her character. And in spite of the fact that he suspects her desire to destroy him--in the end he yields, not his love, but the charm with which she does destroy him: By this act he is made not an object of pity but an object of contempt.

Where we should expect an analysis of feelings, an interplay of real thought, and emotion building up to a natural climax, we get only stories of heraldy and chivalry from Merlin's lips, and foul unprovoked slander from Vivien.

Profes or Cestre has summed up the Idyll briefly: "The poem may be meant as an allegory (and rather outward at that) of the blackness of evil love. But the discultory conduct of the narrative, the lack of psychological substance and of dramatic interest prevent us from being moved. Under a rich

1. I, pp., 380.
2. *Ibid.*

display of verbal effects, the action lags, the feelings are inadequate or vulgar, and the conclusion falls flat." (1)

Elaine is indubitably the most natural and appealing of all Tennyson's characters. "She too is a type, but she does possess dignity, directness, sincerity and charm. She is first seen when Lancelot enters her father's hall at Astolot:

...the Lord of Astolot
With his two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stood the lilly maid
Elaine, his daughter;"....(2)

During the feasting and story-telling that follow,
Elaine is captivated with the dashing stranger,

Herr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among the ladies ate in hall,
And noblest,....she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with the love that was her doom. (3)

She lives in a world of dim fantasy and is happy, not knowing she is happy until she sees Sir Lancelot. Her whole being comes alight with her innocent love for him. She is the type who loves at first sight and forever. The next morning he rides away, bearing her favor, which she innocently begs ask him to wear. He leaves his shield, which she carries to her chamber. There she sits and makes fanciful stories to fit each dent and scratch in it:

....This out is fresh:

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1. *NY*, vol., 73.
 2. *I*, vol., 383.
 3. *Idem*.

That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
And that at Caerleon; this at Camelot;
And oh, God's mercy, what a stroke was there! (1)

This is a beautiful and true picture of a young girl's heart. It is thoroughly convincing.

Later when she hears of his fearful wound-

Through her own side she felt the sharp lance go... (2)

When Gawaine makes love to her she is not ashamed to tell him of her love for Lancelot. She cannot remain at home when she knows of Lancelot's wound, and begs her father to let her go to him. He says:

"Being so very wilful you must go,".. (3)

But the words change in her heart to the whispering promise:

"Being so very wilful you must die." (4)

Her conviction that she will die of her love excuses her constant devotion to one who does not care for her. She is entirely a woman. This certainty of death does away with all convention.

She finally comes to Lancelot-

....lying unclean, unloved
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself.
(She) uttered a little tender dolorous cry. (5)

When he kisses her face, as he would have kissed a child, it means much more than that to her:

At once she slipped like water to the floor...

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1. I, pp., 380-1.
 2. Ibid, pp., 383.
 3. Ibid, pp., 392.
 4. Idem.
 5. Idem.

And all her beauty and sacred blood itself
In the heart's shrine on her single food. (1)

The nurse's love is death. And so she will return
As can make, she continues her love for him.

Thus, suddenly and unexpectedly she says:
"I have come all. I love you; let me die."
"Ah, sister," answers the doctor, "what is this?"
And immediately answering her voice says,
"Your love," she said, "your love-to me your wife."
And the doctor answers: "What I choose to do
I have been waiting, waiting, waiting;
But now I will be with you of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I have not to be with
You to be with you, to be with you,
To serve you, and to follow you through the world." (2)

And she then to the very verge of unconsciousness in her
sudden love, but she does not go over the verge. And to be on
the verge, and not pass beyond it, is the very mark of innocent
girlhood and indeed by character love." (3)

Then the doctor called her his smiling friend and she said
she will love him of it.

"For all this will I follow;" (4) she said, and is then,
meaning, to be with him. And she says:

At the end of her last ^{scene} / is a beautiful and touching scene.

The following beautiful scene, full of her lovely words:

Then, like a bird's voice from a distant field
Approaching through the darkness, and the light;
Singing the sweetest song, and the most
And the most beautiful and the most
Of all, and the most beautiful of all. (5)

During the scene the doctor says to her and she answers, "Let me

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1. I, pp. 219.
 2. Ibid, pp. 219.
 3. VIII, pp. 219.
 4. I, pp. 219.
 5. Ibid.

die.' With the same words she said. Her family matters about her and she said her family. In her country she is a little child again. When she is married she will be followed out, she naturally and innocently dies.

It is a pathetic story with much of the same and un-
concerning. But her all that, perhaps she was created as
usual individual as much as he was created a type--the kind-
ness and good will she is given by a sudden and profound love.

She is more in her love, but not as a specific individual.
She follows a type again. Love created her and she follows, with
and more she has to realize it. Indeed it all becomes in play-
ing with an idea, and he has to make the figure fit his pattern.

Guinevere is another fixed character, and a much commoner
one. There are of her: "She represents a commoner type.
Her intelligence is of the highest, and her character has little
variety. It is clear that she has a mind, but it does not move in
the World of the Mind... She is chiefly and lovingly, courteous,
never to show, capable of a great service and of a great re-
sistance; but this is not an extraordinary. Such a woman may be
very common. There is nothing essentially attractive to her--
and's character. She is common, but she is a queen in power." (1)

The various phases of her character are in Laurel and
Lily. The story says that if there was any anything in her
character--her love.

She looks like a little woman's face;
"Arthur, my love, Arthur, my love, Arthur,
That is the only one, my love--"

But who was past from the sun in heaven?
 He never made word or sentence to be,
 He never had a shadow of life within,
 He never met for us; only once today
 There I found a word written in his eyes;
 Some smiling word he never'd said; his--glow
 Went in the glory of his pale hand,
 And smiling was to give himself,
 To make that his smile; but, friend, be sure
 He is all dead, very dead, as dead as all;
 For who lives must have a touch of earth;
 The lot was mine the color: I am yours,
 Not yours, as you show, save by the land." (1)

The whole poem is--written down in the same old-fashioned hand-
 held style. Later, in the same style she is reached by a new
 melody. But even in this melody she is still an ordinary
 woman. Melody and all other feelings and interests. There
 she is a woman of intellect, power or variety, what she says is for
 melody and at least melody almost of these qualities. But
 intelligence is without them. Her speech which begins with the
 lines

"It may be I am weaker of belief
 Than you believe in, I know of the lake," (2)

is entirely inadequate. It lacks passion, power, variety,
 or any of the qualities it should have. It betrays her again as
 a very ordinary type of woman.

Once her melody is found to be groundless, she settles
 down again into her commonplace of strong--but not for long:

.....The words that told the end,
 To make it seem the death that cannot die,
 And save it even in silence, began
 To wax and bloom her. (3)

1. I, no., 80.
 2. Ibid., no., 806.
 3. Ibid., no., 808.

This goes on until now our heart is no longer, and our finally bid farewell to them. This very night their party is unbroken, and they ride away weeping. We go to the castle of Arthur and find the king in the chamber of blood. Here she is alone and weeping. She feels her betrothed, but is not fully present. Her thoughts stray from her heart as they wander, to the king's grief, and back again. She speaks with herself:

"I hold me, Arthur, for surely I know,
The king is your betrothed, but in thought—
The king is yours, though I think again
The king is yours, though I think again
And I have more power to see his face,
To see his face!"
And even in saying this,
Her heart from the king's side of the king
Went flying, and she saw the king's face
In which she saw his face. (1)

Then she continues to recall her love of her first ride with Lancelot and her love for Arthur.

In all these times there is no word of repentance. She is really miserable and she says,

(2) "I am self-guilt in her thoughts again, (2)

And at this very moment the king rides to the door. However, hearing the king's step, she retreats on the floor, and Arthur's voice speaks to her. He tells her of the destruction she has wrought, that he is now going to his death, but that he forgives and loves her still. He assures her that in the future life, she will understand and love him rather than Lancelot.

This breathes love and love for Israel, and for the first time and lower still. Then one feels her systemized. Then she breathes, but not until then. She is still the ordinary woman. A strong sense of intellect or conscience, would have prevented without loving either, or would not have prevented. But, as Emily says, "this type of woman does not really consist of a mind of this kind still she loves love for one, and alone herself loving neither. Guinevere at last loves either, and then she has a horror of herself--not, alone she loves herself, she is un-
satisfied on this one side, and, forgetting the other, looks forward to no further work in heaven. This also is characteristic of this ordinary type." (1)

Whatever of growth is to be found in Tolstoy's character comes in the very last years, and it is not enough to make the enormous leap of the mind out of a wretched situation. The intelligent and the serious are all those of the ordinary world.

The examination of these several figures gives a good sur-
vey of Kennedy's limitations as a creator of characters. He is
at his best in his treatment of women, but even here his defini-
teness is obvious. He does not understand the working of human
minds, and consequently he cannot do more than create from his
own imagination figures of characters who have no other in-
dividual than the others, in spite of the fact that he has
tried to make them as real as possible. His figures, even though they are in-
dividual from the others, are still little more than a mechanical
arrangement of parts.

Chapter V

General Description: An evaluation
and comparison of the work of Robinson,
Pennington and others.

There is no uniform schedule of measurement by which it is possible to judge accurately the superiority of one poet over another. Each artist has a background, a philosophy and a style that is entirely his own, and consequently unique. This situation is especially pronounced when the poets under consideration are the products of different periods and societies.

For purpose of comparison, however, it is possible to form workable judgments by placing the poets side by side and measuring their respective abilities within definitely prescribed bounds. Their philosophies may be compared, and so may their styles and their skill in creating characters. These categories reach out toward infinity in their number and variety. In this case, only the three mentioned are to be employed.

Although this method is not, and never can be exact and thoroughly just, nevertheless it will serve to differentiate the writers and give some notion of their relative success or failure in handling the traditional story.

Two things occur to the mind when the philosophies of Malory, Tennyson and Robinson are brought together. They are alike in their belief in the upward progress of civilization and its ultimate eventuation in a happier future for humanity. They aspire toward the predominance of good in the world and believe in it. At the same time these conclusions are reached by entirely different means. The philosophy of each writer is representative of the thought of his period. Malory, an adherent to the medieval Christian religion, views life with

unquestioning faith. Tennyson, a product of the Victorian era, gives reason with his religious faith. Science has made him question the orthodox religious beliefs; he has revised and amplified them but not discarded them. Robinson has completely thrown off the Christian theology and builds his philosophy entirely upon reason.

It is useless to discuss the relative merits of these philosophies. They all point toward the same end. Each is representative of its time and serves amply to justify itself in its time. Although it is more natural for individuals of the present day to accept a reasoned theory of life than to fall back on pure faith, that does not make Robinson more significant than the others. It merely shows that Robinson is essentially of our own age.

In the portrayal and development of characters there is wider ground for comparison. Malory succeeds in creating individuals who grow under his pen. They are neither complex nor subtle but rather simple rugged characters who live by the Christian ideals of courtesy, faith and courage. Tennyson's figures are not individuals so much as they are types. They do not grow; nor do they come alive very often. Some of them are not human at all. Arthur is partly divine and Vivien is wholly diabolic. With but occasional lapses into reality, Tennyson's figures are dream creatures seen in a dream world.

Robinson's characters are very much alive and very real;

they are drawn with infinite skill, they have decided individuality and they grow. Unlike Malory's men and women, these people are sophisticated, complex and subtle. Robinson has not only drawn vivid, growing individual characters but he has given us intimate knowledge of all the subtle nuances of thought that move them. They are reasoning beings. They know what they are doing and where they are going. This makes their tragedy doubly telling.

Again, although Tennyson may be eliminated on this point, it is difficult to decide where the laurels belong. Malory is more vivid than Robinson. Because his characters are simple, he creates them with few words and makes them grow by their deeds. Little attention is given to their thoughts. Robinson, however, is much more thorough and penetrating. He has brought a profound knowledge of psychology into play in developing his characters. His is, perhaps, the more difficult task because he is dealing with people who are infinitely more complex. At the same time his success is equally comparable with Malory's. For this reason then, it seems logical to give preference to Robinson.

In the matter of style, the poets are of wide variance. Malory uses a very loose form; Tennyson's form is more clearly defined but is far from tight; while Robinson weaves his stories into very close form.

Malory does not resort to the use of symbolism. But of the two others, Robinson's is the more effective. He does

not resort to symbols as frequently, nor are his symbols ever ^{so} as involved or confusing as Tennyson's.

Although Malory employs prose, while Tennyson and Robinson express themselves in blank verse, some comparison can be made. Malory and Robinson have passion; Tennyson has not. Malory and Robinson, for all the latter's complex characters, have a greater simplicity than Tennyson who is involved not only in his allegorical concepts and symbols, but in his manner of expressing simple narration or description. Malory, however, by virtue of his subject matter seems to have a greater simplicity than Robinson. All of them possess sensuousness in a more or less similar degree.

Malory shows humor; it is broad and elementary. Tennyson whose humor is good in some of his other poems, fails to put any into the Idylls. Robinson has humor, but it is subdued, polite and generally grim.

A glance at the three writers gives the impression that Tennyson is more conscious of his art than the others. His expression is almost too perfectly polished. Malory--it may be because he is writing in prose--seems to be least conscious of his medium, and probably is hence the greatest artist in the matter of expression. At least he is more direct, natural and vivid than either Robinson or Tennyson.

The three writers may be compared easily and with some justice in regard to their respective dramatic ability. Tennyson has little or no dramatic ability because he has no

definite individual characters from which to create live interplay among persons. Malory makes individual scenes dramatic but they are separated by long passages of narration and are never bound together in anything resembling dramatic form. Mr. Robinson however, is definitely dramatic not only in the conception of his characters and individual scenes, but in the whole form of each of his poems.

The morality of the three works varies greatly. Tennyson is obviously too didactic. Malory is much broader and more artistic. Nevertheless, the good Christian lesson does creep in now and again, although never as a hobby. Robinson, however, moves freely in a world outside religious creeds and doctrines. His morality is a reasoned thing, based upon a direct and penetrating study of actual life in an age of reason. He is broader, wiser and less hampered in his thinking than either Tennyson or Malory.

In lyrical and descriptive ability Tennyson is superior to the other writers. In fact, he stands almost alone in this phase of poetical art. It is especially difficult to compare Robinson and Malory on this point since they use entirely different media. Malory's non-metrical expression is undoubtedly lyrical in many passages, and he has strong, swift power of description. Nevertheless, Robinson, with the aid of meter, seems more lyrical and his descriptive ability is quite equal to Malory's if it does not surpass it. Again the two are so widely different in every respect that it is useless to be dogmatic.

The imagination of the poets, likewise, takes entirely different forms and interests. Walory excels in imaginative narration; Tennyson's imagination is most distinguished in his lyrical and descriptive passages; and Robinson's imagination turns most successfully to the portrayal of the psychological complexities of the human mind.

For this reason alone, it is impossible to say which is the greatest artist, since the things to be covered are so dissimilar.

Obviously, if this study is valid, Walory and Robinson are nearly equally matched in their abilities; and Tennyson lags far behind.

In the final analysis, however, the readers are the judges. Those who like fine lyrics and beautiful description will always turn gladly to Tennyson; those who like exciting action and vivid narration will hold fast to their Walory; and the ones who get their chief delight from poetry in the psychological presentation of characters will never forsake Robinson. And though Walory and Robinson may seem equally matched as artists, Walory will always be read by infinitely more readers than Robinson, since his stories and his people are much more easily understood.

Summary

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