

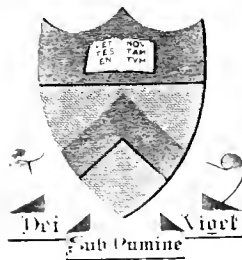


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I.  
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.  
(1770-1850.)

Immediate predecessors: Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Crabbe, Burns.  
Contemporaries: Campbell, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Byron, Shelley,  
Keats. Period of poetic production 1798-1820.

I.  
WORDSWORTH'S CHARACTER AND LIFE.

A strong nature : high-spirited, enthusiastic, a lover of joy, fond of outdoor life, not fond of general society, obstinate, independent, reserved, self-controlled, reverent. His happy boyhood and somewhat aimless youth culminated in a tremendous enthusiasm for the French Revolution. The loss of this enthusiasm, through the excesses of the revolutionists and the wars of the French Republic against liberty, resulted in a period of gloom and despair : faith eclipsed : moral energy gone : joy of life destroyed. Influence of William Godwin's atheistic philosophy,—poverty,—idleness,—disappointment. CRISIS. The restoration of faith and hope, peace and joy, through the sisterly love of Dorothy Wordsworth and the friendship of Coleridge. Return to fellowship with nature and a simple life among peasants. The founding of a new school of poetry whose watchwords are "simplicity," "naturalness," "deep feeling." A long, quiet, happy life in the English Lake Country ; devoted to poetry ; interested in politics and occasionally writing in prose ; growing more and more conservative with age, but always keeping the humanitarian sympathies of his youth, and living plainly, as much as possible out-of-doors.

Four periods of Wordsworth's life.

1. EDUCATION.

Born at Cockermonth, near English Lakes, 1770. Grammar-School at Hawkshead (1778). A pleasant, fruitful time ; life free and joyful ; fair schooling, much general reading and out-of-door sport,—skating, riding, fishing,—passionate love of nature. St. John's College, Cambridge (1787). Careless student life. Dissatisfied, restless : dislike for academic routine : reading of English poets, Chaucer, Spenser and Milton : study of modern languages, especially Italian : pedestrian tours in long vacations, through English Lakes, and in the Alps. No prizes, no university honours. Two poems in MS. *An Evening Walk*, and *Descriptive Sketches*, (partly finished), when he graduated. Residence in France (1791). Paris in springtide of Revolution. Spring and summer of 1792 at Blois : converted to ideal Republicanism by Michel Beaupuy. Returned to England in December.

## 2. STORM AND STRESS.

London; a poor young man without a profession. His two poems published, without success (1793). Horrors of French Revolution. Revulsion of feeling in England. Republican France becomes oppressor of free nations (Italy: Switzerland: Holland). England arrayed in arms against her. Wordsworth's inward conflict between republicanism and patriotism (1794). Religion obscured by infidel philosophy of Godwin. Moral collapse: loss of energy and joy of living.

Life at Racedown, with his sister Dorothy, in farmhouse (1795). Calvert's legacy (£900). Return to simplicity; communion with nature; contact with lowly human life: gradual restoration of hope, The country home at Alfoxden (1797). Friendship of Coleridge; renewal of poetic inspiration; RECOVERY OF JOY.

## 3. PRODUCTIVENESS.

Wordsworth begins to work with new idea of poetry: the emotional treatment of simple themes in plain words. *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) published in conjunction with Coleridge. Volume contains *We are Seven*, *Expostulation and Reply*, *Tintern Abbey*, etc. Received with indifference and ridicule by the public.

W. goes to Germany with Dorothy. Returns to live at Grasmere in the English Lake country. Second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, with new poems and prose defence of theory (1800). Marries Mary Hutchinson (1802). Third edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Writes *Resolution and Independence* and first *Sonnets to Liberty*.

Living at Dove Cottage, writes his greatest poems: *Ode to Immortality*, *To Duty*, *Happy Warrior*. *Poems*, in 2 Vols. (1807). Removes to Rydal Mount (1813), is made Stamp Distributor for Westmoreland. Has now his place as a poet for the chosen few, but still not popular. His poetry becomes more philosophic and didactic. *The Excursion* (1814).

W.'s sympathies remain democratic, but his opinions become conservative. He is a defender of Church, but seldom enters one. Lives simply; spends much time in open air; a great walker; travels every summer. His fame rises; helped by reaction from unjust ridicule. Rejoices in overthrow of Napoleon at Waterloo. *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815). *Peter Bell* (1819). *Sonnets to River Duddon* (1820). His poems are collected and published in four vols.

## 4. REPOSE.

Wordsworth now begins to reap harvest of honour from his work, but produces little new that is of high quality. Revises and alters text of his earlier poems; goes abroad frequently. *Eccelesiastical Sonnets* (1822). *Yarrow Revisited* (1835). In 1839 receives D. C. L. at Oxford. *Poems of Early and Late Years*, 1842. Succeeds his friend Southey as Poet-Laureate in 1843; dies peacefully at Rydal Mount in 1850, and is buried in the churchyard at Grasmere. *The Prelude*, 1850 (written 1799-1805).

## II.

## WORDSWORTH'S THEORY OF POETRY: HIS THREE STYLES.

A. Sources: <i>Preface</i> —	<i>Lyrical Ballads</i> , 2d Edition	1800
<i>Appendix</i> —(on Poetic Diction)	“ “ “	“
<i>Preface</i> —	<i>Poems in 2 Vols.</i>	1815
<i>Essay Supplementary</i> —	“ “ “	“

First paragraph of Preface 1800, explains that *Lyrical Ballads* was published “as an experiment . . . to ascertain how far, by *fitting to metrical arrangement* a selection of the *real language* of men in a state of *vivid sensation*, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of *pleasure may be imparted* which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.” Four points.

(1.) Aim of poetry to impart pleasure. (2.) Atmosphere of poetry vivid feeling. (3.) Medium of poetry language of real life. (4.) Adjunct of poetry metrical arrangement. Criticism of the last two points: (4.) Metre is much more than an adjunct; rhythm an important factor in poetical charm. W.'s limitations in the use of metrical forms: he lacked richness, vigor, variety. (3.) Language of real life is not always suited to poetry: sometimes bare, cold, trivial, absurd. e. g. *Goody Blake, The Highland Boy, Peter Bell*. Poetry uses those words which are most rich in noble associations; arranges them in new, musical order; gives them a touch of surprise; enhances their power and beauty by original and striking use. W. at his best did not use the “language of prose:” e. g. *Tintern Abbey: The Prelude, Book I: Sonnet on Westminster Bridge, 1802*.

B. W. wrote in three styles: the first, that 18th Century, “Poetic Diction” from which his “theory” was a revolt; the second, a style of studied simplicity and plainness, in conformity with his theory; the third, a broader, grander style in which his greatest poems were composed. At the close of his career he fell back to some extent into the formality of his early youth. Examples: (1) Artificial Style—elaborate, ornate frigid. 1789–1793. *Descriptive Sketches*, 1st Ed.—first forty lines. (2) Rustic, restrained style—objective, no decorations, few words, emotion suggested more than expressed, simple effects, buoyant spirit. 1797–1804. (a) *Lucy Gray* (1799). (b) “*I wandered lonely as a cloud.*” (1804). (c) “*Strange fits of passion have I known.*” (1799).

(3) Rich, stately style—subjective, emotion more fully expressed, more complex effects, dignity and grandeur. From 1804 onward. (a) *Laodamia* (1814). (b) *The Primrose of the Rock* (1831). (c) “*O dearer far than light and life are dear.*” (1824).

Compare, two by two, the poems marked a, b, and c in these groups. W.'s most individual work was done in the rustic style—his greatest work in the richer style, e. g., *Ode on Immortality, Ode to Duty*, etc.

## III.

## IMPORTANT POEMS OF WORDSWORTH.

## A. POEMS SIGNIFICANT IN LITERARY HISTORY.

(1.) *Peter Bell*: theme, the conversion of a wicked pedlar, through influences of natural fear, the fidelity of an ass to its dead master, and the sight of human love and grief. A typical poem in W.'s most rustic style. Written in 1798. Published in 1819. Much ridiculed. Parodied by Shelley.

(2.) *The Excursion*: W.'s longest poem: blank verse: "views of Man, Nature and Society:" a fragment of larger poem, of which *The Prelude* = introduction: *The Recluse* (unfinished) = Part I: *The Excursion* = Part II: Part III, not undertaken. A typical poem in W.'s most didactic style, heavy, prolix, but with fine passages, e. g., the episode of "Margaret," Book I.

## B. POEMS OF PERMANENT VALUE. Four Groups.

(1.) Interpretations of Nature: *To the Cuckoo*. *To a Skylark*. *To the Small Celandine*. *To the Daisy*. *Daffodils*. *The Primrose of the Rock*. *Tintern Abbey*.

(2.) Poems on common joys and sorrows of human life: "We are Seven." *Lucy Gray*. *Margaret*. *Michael*. *Resolution and Independence*. *The Highland Girl*. *The Solitary Reaper*. Five "Lucy" poems.

(3.) Poems on questions of human duty and destiny: *Ode to Duty*. *The Happy Warrior*. *Ode on Immortality*. *A Poet's Epitaph*. *At the Grave of Burns*. *Laodamia*. Book I, *The Recluse*.

(4.) Poems on Liberty and Social Order. Sonnets. *Song at Brougham Castle*. *Dion*.

Four qualities in these poems.

(1.) Truthful, imaginative observation of nature, especially of (a) Sound, and (b) Movements of clouds, waters, etc. Little sense of colour or of fragrance.

(2.) Sympathetic insight into human feeling: quiet, thoughtful, profound.

(3.) Lyrical enthusiasm of moral emotion.

(4.) Sobriety, sanity, temperance of manner. Thought and feeling well-balanced. Impassioned seriousness. A clear steady view of life. Force without fever.

## IV.

## WORDSWORTH'S MESSAGE: THE RECOVERY OF JOY.

Relation of this message to his youthful happiness, enthusiasm for French Revolution, disappointment and despair (1793-1795), restoration to peace and gladness through nature, friendship and religion. His wish to impart his joy to others through poetry, "to console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier."

Three elements in W.'s poetic prophecy of the joy of living:—(1.) The

beauty of the natural world ; its vital meaning ; its relation to the spiritual experience of man ; its unity as the expression of an indwelling Spirit. His faith that "every flower enjoys the air it breathes." His counsel to "let nature be your teacher." (2.) The value of the humblest human life. W. not the first poet of the lowly life (Burns, Cowper, Crabbe) but the most thoughtful, steady and happy. "Love has he found in huts where poor men lie."

Three traits in his peasant pictures :

- a. Figures are generally solitary.
- b. They find relief from sorrow through meditation and resignation rather than through action.
- c. They are made happy by small, common pleasures and simple affections.

Limitations in W.'s interpretation of common life :

- a. Lack of humor.
  - b. Slight part which romantic love plays in his poetry.
- (3.) The faith that human liberty and progress will be best secured by obedience to law and fidelity to duty. Hope of society lies in regeneration rather than in revolution. W. never lost his early passion for humanity. But he ceased to be a radical in politics, and sought the progress of mankind through the elevation of the individual by moral purpose and religious hope.

## II.

### GEORGE GORDON. 6TH LORD BYRON.

(1788-1824.)

#### "THE ABSALOM OF POETRY."

A just estimate of Byron is difficult because critical opinion is divided about him ; *e. g.*, Goethe called him "the greatest talent of the 19th century," and Carlyle thought him "a sulky dandy." Both cannot be right, perhaps neither of them is so. Yet we must form some judgment of his character, because his work is pervaded by it. Always published himself ; is the hero of all his poems. This intensified feelings of contemporaries, hostile or admiring, toward his writings.

## I.

### BYRON'S CHARACTER AND LIFE.

(1.) **SECRET OF CHARACTER:** an indomitable life-long rebel. This the source of his strength and weakness. **DOUBLE-NATURED.** On the one hand, brave, generous, self-sacrificing, scornful of hypocrisy, enthusiastic for the cause of liberty. On the other, hostile to all control, human or divine ; incapable of repose ; vain, self-indulgent, reckless, ostentatious, licentious.

(2.) **THREE MISFORTUNES.** (1) His Mother, vain, hot-tempered, foolish, neglectful. Abandoned by her husband, a rake and gambler, after Byron's birth. (2) His Lameness, the curse of his life. Rebelled against it : was keenly sensitive to supposed ridicule : tried to conceal it by dress and way of

walking : thought it a monstrous injustice. Contrast the noble way in which Scott bore the same infirmity. (3) His Title. In 1798, succeeded his uncle, a murderer. Made him proud and self-willed. B. rated his noble birth above his fame as a poet.

(3.) GOOD INFLUENCES. His Scotch nurse taught him the Bible. A tutor named Ross awakened his interest in ancient history. At Harrow School, Dr. Joseph Drury treated him kindly but firmly.

(4.) EDUCATION AND TRAVELS. Enters Harrow 1801. A great and wide reader, but not a deep one ; fond of sports, especially swimming ; kind to his inferiors, jealous towards his equals, resentful towards his superiors. At Trinity College, Cambridge, 1805-1808, leads a fast and eccentric life. As undergraduate, publishes *Hours of Idleness*, immature, affected. Severely criticized. Replies with *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a sharp and successful satire. 1809, enters Parliament. Travels for two years in Portugal, Spain, and Asia Minor. Swims the Hellespont.

(5.) POPULARITY AND MARRIAGE. Returns to England 1811. Publishes two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), which make him immediately and immensely popular. *The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Corsair, Lara, Hebrew Melodies, The Siege of Corinth, Parisina* follow quickly. From childhood always falling in love. Disappointed by Mary Chaworth, who jilted him for another (see *The Dream*). Deep and true affection for his half-sister, Augusta Leigh. Has one amour after another. Marries Miss Milbanke (1815), a devout and proper young heiress. Five weeks after the birth of their child, she leaves his home, never to return, charging him with infidelity. As a consequence, England becomes uninhabitable for him, and he goes to the continent (1816).

(6.) ON THE CONTINENT. Makes a public display of his grief. Dresses and behaves extravagantly. Lives for a time with Jane Clairmont, a connection of the Shelleys, at Geneva, where he writes *The Prisoner of Chillon*, canto III of *Childe Harold*, part of *Manfred*. Goes to Italy (Venice, Ravenna, Pisa), where he writes *Childe Harold* (canto IV), the dramas, *The Vision of Judgment* and *Don Juan*, his best poems. His *liaison* with Countess Guiccioli draws him away from grosser debauchery. His better nature asserts itself for the first time in twenty years. Takes a warm interest in revolutionary movements in Italy. In 1823 espouses the cause of the Greeks, then seeking liberation from Turkish rule. Goes to Greece : contributes money and personal aid to insurgent cause. Exposure and hardship induce a fever which result in his death at Mesolonghi. This last sacrifice was the noblest achievement of his career.

## II.

### CAUSES OF HIS POPULARITY.

(1.) NOBLE BIRTH and celebrity in fashionable society. He combined genius with title. This made him popular with the British public, which "dearly loves a lord."



(2.) SPIRIT OF REVOLT. The reaction from the French Revolution and the formation of the Holy Alliance threatened a return to the old régime of oppression. Byron's opposition found a ready response in all Europe. But negative and destructive poetry has a short duration. (*Chil. Har.* III. 19, 20, 64, 81-84; IV. 96, 98.)

(3.) STYLE. A mediation between the old and the new schools. In theory he placed the classic diction of Pope as highest. But in practice he was affected by the modern spirit. He blended the intensity, freedom, enthusiasm, and force of the Romantic movement, and the stateliness, splendor, sonorous diction, and ornamentation of Classicism. This satisfied the popular taste.

(4.) RHETORICAL BRILLIANCE. Combined vivid passion with a large command of language. This is the secret of eloquence. Commonplace ideas, thus arranged, are dazzling. Good rhetorical verse wins temporary applause, but true poetry is for all time.

### III.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF HIS WRITINGS.

(1.) LYRICS; few in number and excellence:—*Hebrew Melodies*: "She walks in beauty;" "Oh! snatched away in beauty's bloom;" "The Assyrians came down." *The Isles of Greece*. "When we two parted." "Fare thee well." "'Tis done—but yesterday a King!" "'Tis time this heart should be unmoved" (last lyric).

(2.) SATIRES.—*English Burds and Scotch Reviewers*. *Vision of Judgment*. *The Age of Bronze*. Some of Byron's best workmanship is found in his satirical poems.

(3.) NARRATIVES IN VERSE.—*The Giaour*. *The Bride of Abydos*. *The Corsair*. *Lara*. *The Siege of Corinth*. *The Prisoner of Chillon*. *Mazeppa*. Metrical Short stories, all simple in plot, romantic in spirit, swift in movement, and (except *Pris. of Chillon*) superficial in interest. Example: *The Giaour*. Story told in broken fragments, by different people. Hero a young Christian (to the Turke an infidel, or Giaour,) who carries off from a harem a beautiful slave named Leila. She is recaptured by her master, Hassan, and thrown into sea. The Giaour lays an ambush for Hassan, kills him in single combat, sends the head to Hassan's mother, and retires to a monastery, where he dies. Little thought, no character, much sensation and passion.

(4.) MIXED VERSE: Narrative, Descriptive, Satirical and Lyrical. *Childe Harold*: a poetic book of travels, in Spenserian stanzas, interwoven with reflections on life and history. Cantos I. and II. written during his journey to the East (1809-1810). Affectation of Spenserian style in diction, but in spirit modern and romantic. Canto III. a record of his journey up the Rhine and through Switzerland, after separation from Lady Byron. Full of eloquent descriptions of scenery. Canto IV. written in Italy, dwells on historical associations and works of art; the summit of his achievement. *Don Juan*, *Beppo*.

(5.) DRAMAS.—*Werner. Manfred. Marino Faliero. Cain*, a theological drama on the origin of evil.

## IV.

## GENERAL ESTIMATE OF BYRON'S POETRY.

Chief characteristic: Force. Not broad, sustained, balanced; but full of intense energy, indignant, enthusiastic, mocking.

## 1. DEFECTS.

(a.) Absence of clear, solid convictions. Vibrates between belief and unbelief, democracy and aristocracy. Constant only in revolt against restraint of individual liberty.

(b.) Limited knowledge of human nature, and narrow sympathies. Heroes are villains adorned with incongruous virtues. Sympathizes only with those characters who are reckless and passionate like himself. His sister Augusta the only fine woman in his poetry.

(c.) Shallow thought and commonplace sentiments.

(d.) Style careless and full of errors. (*Ch. Har.* IV. 1, 89, 180; III. 62. *Stanzas to a Lady on Leaving England.*)

Goethe's praise is explained by the fact that Byron's defects were less evident in translation; and yet Goethe pointed out Byron's greatest weakness when he wrote "*Sobald er reflectirt, ist er ein Kind.*"

## 2. MERITS.

(a.) Superb power of feeling and expressing indignation against tyranny. e. g. *Ch. Har.* IV. 47.

(b.) Sympathy with the wilder aspects of Nature: the sublimity of mountains, the mystery of night. Lacks intimacy with birds and flowers. (*Cf. Ch. Har.* III. 93; IV. 178.)

(c.) Profound and vivid sense of the grandeur of the Past. (*Cf. Ch. Har.* II. 2; IV. 82.)

These merits give Byron a permanent place in English Literature, but he does not rank as high as he did in his life-time. Shelley a greater poet, not because he had greater talents, but because he was more sincere and reverent, preferred poetry to rhetoric, and was more than a passionate rebel.

## III.

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

(1792-1822.)

"THE KNIGHT-ERRANT OF IMPOSSIBLE IDEALS."

## I.

"A POET'S POET." STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

S. aimed to inspire the many and reform the world, but produced no changes in society and learned that he must be content with "fit audience

though few." The title of "poet's poet" implies strength and weakness. S. had sincerity, enthusiasm for his art, intimacy with its secrets, and partial mastery of its methods. Inspired Browning, Arnold, Swinburne. But his nature and training prevented him from full development and from touching the people—the true aim of art. His work gradually improved and his last poems were his best.

## I.

## LIMITATIONS OF HIS POETRY.

(1.) *A Defect of Form*: obscurity and incoherence of expression. Most evident in his longer poems.

(2.) *A Defect of Intellectual Substance*: absence of tried and tested thoughts. Convictions lack stability and unity; poetry lacks a firm foundation. No guide but impulse, no permanent and objective standard of right and wrong, revolted against the hard and hollow forms of traditional religion, and successively passed through Materialism, Atheism, Mysticism, Trancendentalism; his last trend is toward Theism. Browning thought if Shelley had lived he would have finally ranged himself with the Christians.

(3.) *A Defect of Human Sympathy*. Generous, philanthropic and democratic, but not an apprehender of humanity. An apostle of fraternity, but the unreality and remoteness of his writings are not adapted to human beings. Browning very aptly called him a "Sun-treader." He seems hardly to belong to this earth.

## III.

## LIFE AND CHARACTER.

Grandfather a baronet. Father, Timothy Shelley, an obstinate, prejudiced, illiterate, narrow-minded, Pharisaical squire. Byron's misfortune was his mother; S.'s was his father. S. was unworldly, impulsive, wayward, capricious, unselfish, intensely affectionate; led on by intellectual curiosity and desire to reform the world; peculiar in his physical appearance, social habits, and mental constitution. Beautiful face; tall, slender figure; bright eyes; high, thin voice; sinuous movements. Tastes simple, almost childish; for many years a vegetarian. Intending to do only good, he did much harm to himself and others.

(1.) EDUCATION. At school, did not care for athletics, rebelled against fagging, unpopular save with a few. A great reader, especially of romantic novels, and a dabbler in chemistry. Writes *The Wandering Jew*, first poem, and *Zastrozzi*, a wild romance. 1810, publishes with another *Original Poetry, by Victor and Cazire*, partly plagiarized from Monk Lewis. In same year brings out second novel, *St. Irvyne*, and enters University College, Oxford. Forms close friendship with T. J. Hogg. Studies metaphysics and becomes a radical and skeptic. Expelled for publishing a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811), and forbidden to return home.

(2.) MARRIAGE. Great blot on his life was the abandonment of his first wife, Harriet Westbrook, who bore him two children. S. said that marriage

was a mockery after love had ceased. Harriet drowned herself two years after S.'s elopement with Mary, the daughter of William Godwin. Godwin's utilitarian philosophy had a most baneful influence upon S. Chancellor Eldon denied S. possession of his children. Later he married Mary.

(3.) WRITINGS. *Queen Mab* (1813), a crude, atheistic poem. *Alastor* (1816), a musical poem, on the solitude and sorrow of the soul in the quest of ideal beauty. *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* (1817), same theme, vague but exquisite. *The Revolt of Islam* (1818) expresses S.'s political dreams,—long, intricate, incoherent, unreal,—a revolt against tyranny, but with no clear conception of freedom.

(4.) LIFE AND DEATH IN ITALY. Goes to Italy 1818, finally settling at Pisa. Love for Mary begins to wane. *Epipsychidion* expresses his strange and impossible ideal of love; addressed to Emilia Viviani. S.'s best artistic work done in Italy. Drowned while sailing from Leghorn to his summer home on the Bay of Spezzia. His body was burned, and the ashes interred in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome.

#### IV.

##### SPECIMENS OF SHELLEY'S BEST WORK.

###### A. LYRICS.

(1.) Shorter ones delicate and musical; e. g., "I arise from dreams of thee;" "Music, when soft voices die;" "One word is too often profaned;" "When the lamp is shattered;" *Stanzas written in Dejection, near Naples*.

(2.) Longer ones most unique expression of his genius, perfect in their way; e. g., *Arethusa*, *The Cloud*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *To Liberty*, *To Naples*.

(3.) Characteristics:—(a) freedom of imagination, (b) spontaneous music of utterance, (c) ethereal tone, (d) note of passionate yearning and unsatisfied desire. Two reasons why his lyrics excel his other poetry: (a.) He had native gift of song. (b.) He held the "inspirational theory" of poetry, that it comes from "evanescent visitations," of which lyrics are brief records. Lacked patience for longer forms of poetry.

###### B. DRAMAS.

(1.) *Prometheus Unbound*. Presents his passion for reform. Allegorical characters. Prometheus = loving and suffering humanity. Asia = spirit of love in nature. Jupiter = tyrant god of superstition. Demogorgon = eternal wisdom. Demogorgon overthrows Jupiter. Prometheus is released from the rock to which he has been chained, and withdraws to a land of bliss with Asia. Beautiful rhapsodies, but no clear social vision.

(2.) *The Cenci*. A tragedy of terror, of unrivalled intensity. Two faults: (a) The subject, an incestuous passion, not fit for literature. (b) No gradation of character. His beings are young angels or old devils.

## C. ELEGY.

*Adonais*, his only elegy, is immortal. Inspired by pity for Keats's death, which he supposed was due to adverse criticism. Graceful in movement, mournful and musical; closes with fine passage on the immortality of the soul.

## V.

## THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

(1.) CLASS: Lyrical ballad, expression of emotion predominating over story.

(2.) METRE: four-stress iambic and anapaestic; lines in quatrains, rhyming *aa bb*. Irregularities: (a) Trochaic stress at beginning of line (ll. 8, 12); stress difficult (ll. 66, 69.) (b) Double rhyme (41, 42; 72, 73) (c) 22 defective rhymes. (d) Five-line stanzas. Note change in conclusion to iambic.

(3.) ORIGIN. Written at Pisa (1820), and published with *Prometheus Unbound*. Lady Mountcashell was the source of inspiration. Her garden was "as unpoetical a place as could well be imagined."

(4.) CHARACTERISTICS. A piece of pure idealism, the flowers being endowed with human emotions. But the descriptions show close realism.

(5.) THEME. A certain plant, without flower or fragrance, is yet more sensitive to beauty than the other plants of a garden, which is kept by a beautiful and tender lady. Upon her death, the garden goes to decay. The Sensitive Plant, the last survivor, is finally killed by winter.

E. TEACHING. The form of Beauty is transitory, but its spirit is immortal. (See "Conclusion.")

## IV.

## JOHN KEATS.

(1795-1821.)

## "THE POET OF IMMORTAL YOUTH."

Small in bulk, slight in substance, the work of K. has a lasting charm, a perpetual influence. His three little books were extravagantly praised by his friends, ridiculed by the orthodox critics, ignored by the world. His was a swift, ardent life, born in obscurity, soon overshadowed with pain, suddenly extinguished; but he achieved the embodiment in English verse of the spirit of immortal youth. A rich fancy, a love for nature and old legends, a tender and passionate idealism, a wonder at the discovery of beauty everywhere, a melancholy of unrealized dreams—these are the qualities of youth and of Keats. Thomas Gray is his antithesis, the poet of advancing age, looking backward and inward, cool, discriminating, self-controlled.

## I.

## LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS.

(1.) EDUCATION. Born in London, the son of an hostler. Attended

school at Enfield until fifteen. A vigorous, active, attractive boy, fond of fun and fighting. Liked Latin, history, mythology, but never studied Greek. At Enfield formed friendship with Chas. Cowden Clarke, who placed in his hand Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the fount of K.'s poetical inspiration. Apprenticed to a surgeon at Edmonton, and afterwards studied medicine in London. Was surgical assistant at Guy's Hospital (1816). Gave up surgery to pursue poetry.

(2.) RELATION TO OTHER WRITERS. Early associated with Leigh Hunt and the Cockney School, who encouraged his work but exposed him to attacks of conservative reviewers. Had no real alliance with any party. Had slight sympathy for Hunt, knew Shelley but little, and Byron not at all. Influenced by older poets, Spenser, Shakespeare (in *Juvenilia* and *Endymion*), Dryden (in *Lamia*), Milton (in *Hyperion* and the Odes), but in reality an original poet. K. was neither (a) a classic poet, though his later work shows classical restraint and simplicity, nor (b) a romantic poet, though his verse is marked by much mediævalism, sentiment and embroidery. He is (c) essentially a Renaissance poet, with his æsthetic spirit, and his worship for beauty whether in the past or the present.

(3.) FIRST BOOK: *Poems* of 1817. Full of beauties and faults, eager, joyous, enthusiastic. Contains imitations of Spenser, Moore and Hunt, two longer poems of fancy,—“I stood tiptoe upon a little hill” and *Sleep and Poetry*, and two fine sonnets,—*On the Grasshopper and Cricket* and *On first looking into Chapman's Homer*. Made no impression on the public.

(4.) SECOND BOOK: *Endymion* (1818). Written in the country. Shows strong love for classic mythology and living nature, imperfectly combined. The story is loosely told, words are carelessly chosen and incorrectly used, there is too much ornament and sentiment. But it is full of beauty and influenced Tennyson, Swinburne, Morris. The author's preface confesses its defects.

(5.) ADVERSE CRITICISM. *Endymion* was criticised severely in *Blackwood's Magazine* and *The Quarterly Review*. In reality, the reviews were personal vituperations, which called the poet “Johnny Keats,” advised him to go back to the apothecary shop, and described his poem as “calm, settled, drivelling idiocy.” Keats was neither (a) “snuffed out” by these articles, as Byron and Shelley supposed, nor (b) untouched by them, so Lord Houghton insists. Truth lies between these extremes. His courage was not destroyed, for he predicted that he would “be among the English Poets after his death.” But (c) the sting of these articles was that they ruined K.'s hopes of earning a livelihood by his pen, and delayed his prospect of recognition as a poet.

(6.) CONSUMPTION AND ENGAGEMENT. Inherited consumption quickened by a journey to Scotland. Brother Tom dies of same disease. Brother George departs for America. K. becomes engaged to Fanny Brawne, a beautiful, silly girl, who could not respond to his intense, feverish, consuming passion. This passion hastened his death.

(7.) **THIRD BOOK:** *Hyperion and Other Poems* (1820). Contains Odes *To Psyche, To a Nightingale, On a Grecian Urn, To Autumn, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes*, etc. The most finished products of his genius, and sufficient to make his name imperishable. Evoked praise from even *The Edinburgh Review*.

(8.) **DEATH.** His disease forced him to leave England in the fall of 1820. On the way to Italy with his friend Joseph Severn, he wrote his last sonnet, "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art." Died at Rome. The inscription on his tomb is, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

## II.

## DEFECTS OF HIS POETRY.

The faults of youth: excess, sentimentality, unrestrained fancy. Uses words fantastically; talks of a "feel" and a "shine"; sprinkles his pages with "Lo!" and "Oh heavens!"; is too fond of "debonaire," "luxurious," etc. His diction is often "lush." In his early work, many lapses from good taste.

## III.

## QUALITIES OF HIS LOVE OF BEAUTY.

(1.) *It is frankly avowed and boldly maintained.* In *Endymion* he says; "A thing of beauty is a joy forever;" and in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."

(2.) *It is an active love.* He seeks for beauty in all things. Not a feminine quality, but a masculine one. (See "The poetry of earth is never dead," and the Odes to *Fancy* and *Robin Hood*.)

(3.) *Not sensual.* Not even merely sensuous, but ennobled by a strong faith in the value of beauty, which he considered a guide to truth.

(4.) *Merely a preliminary stage* in his development. He looked forward to "a noble life, where I may find the agonies, the strife of human hearts." Thus Keats stands as the characteristic poet of youth. His poetry is a perfect expression of that period of life, because he himself felt that it was preparatory to a fuller development, which his untimely death prevented.

## IV.

## LAMIA.

(1.) **CLASS:** narrative poem, brief epic, in which story predominates.

(2.) **METRE:** five-stress iambic, rhymed in couplets, occasionally in triplets and once in quatrain (I. 209-212). Six-stress lines (Alexandrines) introduced for variation (*e. g.*, I. 26, II. 131). This is "Heroic verse", as seen in Dryden. Irregular line: I. 244. Twenty-five defective rhymes in Part I.

(3.) **DEFECTS:** *lilly* (I. 24); *intricacies* (II. 141); *daft* (II. 160); *infest* (II. 166); *shine* (II. 188). Occasional over-luxuriance.

(4.) HISTORY. Written in summer of 1819; published 1820 in *Hyperion*, etc. Composed partly in imitation of Dryden.

(5.) SOURCE AND THEME. Founded on passage in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which is drawn from Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius*. Lamia = vampire; a female demon, half-woman, half-serpent. Compare theme of Goethe's *Die Braut von Corinth* and Kipling's *Vampire*. Keats added to story:

- i. The element of beauty in descriptions.
- ii. The dramatic interest:
  - (a) Change of serpent into woman.
  - (b) Love of Lycius and Lamia; desire of acknowledgment on part of Lycius, fear on part of Lamia.
  - (c) Conflict of Lamia with Apollonius.
  - (d) Death of Lycius.

(6.) MORAL (a) The evanescence of love (II. 1-8); (b) the disenchantment of Science (II. 229-238).

## V.

## ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

(1809—1892.)

Contemporaries and friends: Hallam, Fitzgerald, the Brownings, Carlyle, Gladstone, Jowett, F. D. Maurice, Dean Stanley, Tyndall, Thackeray, Aubrey de Vere, F. T. Palgrave, Locker, Lampson, Millais, C. F. Watts, Ruskin.

## I.

## HIS POETIC DEVELOPMENT.

(1.) *The Imitative Impulse: boyhood, 1817-1827.*

T.'s boyhood passed in his father's home, the rectory at Somersby in Lincolnshire—poetic atmosphere—brothers, Charles and Frederick, minor poets. T. began to make verses early; at eight he imitated Thomson; at twelve, Scott; then Byron, for whom he had passionate admiration. *Poems by Two Brothers*, (Charles and Alfred), 1827.

(2.) *The Artistic Impulse: college life, 1828-1832.*

At Trinity College, Cambridge, T. the recognized poet of brilliant circle of young men—"The Apostles," a club devoted to "religion and radicalism." T. won gold medal with poem, *Timbuctoo*, 1829. Experiments in new styles of poetry, fanciful, lyrical, daintily finished, free and musical metres, richness of ornament, influence of Elizabethan lyrics, Spenser, Milton's early poems, Keats, and Greek and Latin poets.

*Poems Chiefly Lyrical, 1830: Claribel, Mariana, Recollections of the Arabian Nights, Ode to Memory, &c.*

*Poems 1833: Lady of Shalott, Lotos-Eaters, Palace of Art, Dream of Fair Women, Oenone, Mariana in the South, &c.* 1831, T. left Cambridge without a degree. In 1833 his best friend Arthur Henry Hallam died



suddenly in Vienna. The grief caused by this death was the crisis of Tennyson's life.

(3.) *The Religious and Personal Impulse*: young manhood, 1833-1842. T. lived much alone, studying, writing, thinking, but published nothing for ten years. In this period the soul came into his poetry. Religious conflict; interest in humanity. Poems written at this time: *Two Voices*, *Vision of Sin*, *Locksley Hall*, *Dora*, *Ulysses*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Gardener's Daughter*, *Talking Oak*, "Break, break, break," &c.

*Poems* in 2 Vols., 1842, at once gave T. his rank as popular poet. Recognized in England and America as leader in poetry.

(4.) *The Social Impulse*: 1843-1855, T. coming into touch with the life of his age and country. 1847, *The Princess*, a long poem on the place of woman in society. 1850, *In Memoriam*, an elegy on Hallam, and an answer to the religious questions of the age (written largely before 1842). 1852, *Ode on the Death of Wellington*, his greatest patriotic poem. 1855, *Maud*, a poem on love and war. In 1850, T. married Miss Emily Sellwood, and was appointed Poet Laureate, to succeed Wordsworth.

(5.) *Maturity*: 1855-1892. The Artistic, Religious and Social Impulses, blended and harmonized; remarkable prolongation of poetic force and fertility. Versatility. Three general periods, (roughly outlined) in each of which a certain method had the predominance.

✓ a. *Epic*: 1859-1872. *The Idylls of the King*.

b. *Dramatic*: 1875-1879. *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, *Becket*.

c. *Lyric*: 1880-1892. *Ballads*, *Tiresias*, *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, *Demeter*, *The Death of Oenone*.

The poem entitled *Merlin and the Gleam* describes Tennyson's poetical career.

## II.

### THE UNFOLDING OF TENNYSON'S ART AND ITS RESULTS.

A. Certain controlling elements in this unfolding.

(1.) *Not developed under fixed and definite theory of poetry.*

A follower neither of Pope nor of Wordsworth; after early imitative period, T. worked out his style and manner according to his own personal impulse.

(2.) *Love of Beauty, the most powerful positive element.*

Pure and passionate love of the beautiful, at first for its own sake, then for its relation to order and harmony in the visible universe; T. a beauty-worshipper like Keats, but went beyond K. in perception of Spiritual beauty as supreme, and in touching the secret of symmetry in harmony with moral law; first poems little more than melodies and pictures (*Claribel*, *Adeline*, *Mariana*, *Sea Fairies*); later, however deep the meaning or passionate the feeling, always careful in perfection of form, colour and music.

(3.) *Next to Milton, most scholarly of English Poets.*

Poems full of references, allusions, reminiscences; most from English Bible, then from Greek and Latin poets, then from English masters; T.'s art conceived in the spirit of the Renaissance, which interweaves elements of beauty from the past. Classicism may be felt even in T.'s romantic poems.

(4.) *Versatility.*

Interest in nature as well as humanity: wide range in choice of subjects; variety of metres, novel, delicate, free; continually experimenting in rhythm, and added many new metres to English poetry.

(5.) *First hand study of subject.*

Direct and clear observation of nature; investigation of sources in history: familiarity with modern discoveries in science.

B. Certain characteristic results in Tennyson's style.

(1.) *Lucidity, smoothness, melody in diction.*

T.'s poetry easily understood because he made the language a translucent medium for the thought; but for variety of metre and rhyme, might often be cloying in its sweetness of diction; has the effect of being composed for the ear.

(2.) *Wealth of language, richness of epithets, and variety of artifices to heighten the effect of the words.*

Many antique words recovered and brought into use again. Colour-words plentiful. Alliteration. Emphasis of a word by repetition.

(3.) *Truthfulness, delicacy and breadth of touch in natural description.*

(4.) *Harmony of epithets and descriptions with prevailing sentiment of the poem.*

Perfection of idyllic style; idyll, a picture coloured by an emotion; often applied to poems of light character, T. uses it in wider meaning; some of his idylls are grand, stately, heroic; landscape always in harmony with subject. (*Enoch Arden* 568 ff., *Ulysses*.)

(5.) *Fullness of Allusions to history, science and literature.*

*Palace of Art. Dream of Fair Women, Princess, Locksley Hall, In Memoriam, By an Evolutionist, To Virgil.*

### III.

#### TENNYSON'S FOUR CHIEF CONTRIBUTIONS TO LITERATURE.

(1.) *A group of songs, small, perfect, pure lyrics.*

T.'s choice of seven "best songs of the deeper kind": *In the Valley of Caunteretz*; "Courage, poor heart of stone"; "Break, break, break"; *The Bugle Song*; "Tears, idle tears"; "Ask me no more"; *Crossing the Bar*. To these may be added: "Sweet and low"; *The Throstle*; *Song in Queen Mary*; "Turn Fortune, turn thy wheel"; "Late, late, so late"; "In love, if love be love."

Qualities of excellence.

- a. Melody of words, especial fondness for long vowels in short words.
- b. Freedom of rhythm (blank-verse songs, and the new metres in *Maud.*)
- c. A single emotion, delicate, subtle, but clearly expressed.

(2.) *A group of ballads, lyrics with a story.*

*The Revenge; The Charge of the Light Brigade; The Charge of the Heavy Brigade; Rizpah; Locksley Hall; The Lady of Shalott; Sir Galahad; The May Queen; In the Children's Hospital; Oriana.*

Qualities of Excellence.

a. Clearness and fluency; directness and simplicity of expression; fitting of rhythmic movement to thought.

b. Breadth and depth of human sympathy; fitness of speech to character. *Sir Galahad—Rizpah—Despair.*

(3.) *In Memoriam.*

An elegiac poem composed of distinct lyrics; dedicated to Arthur Henry Hallam; subject, the poet's grief for his friend changed to hope by religious faith; philosophical problems in connection with the mystery of death; conflict between doubt and faith, victory of faith; compared with other elegies it gives a fuller disclosure of personal relations, and a deeper treatment of underlying problems.

A. METRE: iambic; four accents to each line; stanzas of four lines; rhyme structure, a | b | b | a; a pensive form of verse, giving impression of slow movement and recurrent thought.

B. STRUCTURE: a proem (1849), summing up poet's Christian faith; 131 cantos, tracing progress from sorrow to serenity; an epithalamium, symbolizing the return from lonely grief to social joy. Turning point of poem: LXXXV.

C. QUALITIES: diction more obscure than usual in T.; didacticism relieved by richness of illustration and imagery; scientific allusion (*vide* IV., XXI., XXIV., XXXV., XLV., LV., CXVIII., CXX., CXXII.); grace and tenderness of style; passages of condensed power (*vide* XXVII., XLVII., LXXXVIII., CVI., CXX., CXXVI., CXXVII., CXXXI.)

D. MEANING: "A Divina Commedia ending with happiness."

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

(4.) *Idylls of the King.*

An epic poem composed of 12 parts, each a complete story in itself, but all bound together by unity of treatment and connection with story of King Arthur.

A. MATERIALS the Arthurian legends, taken from Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and the Welsh *Mabinogion* or "red book of Hergest;" freely handled in the modern romantic manner, and made into a tale.

B. METRE: blank-verse; movement dignified and musical, a stately harmony; rich effects in tone-colour.

C. MEANING: each idyll is a parable of a phase of conflict between man's higher and his lower nature; his kingdom is shattered by sin and selfishness, but his end is crowned with honour, the poem closes with a distant echo of joy, and the hope that Arthur will return.

## IV.

## TENNYSON'S MESSAGE: THE HARMONY OF LIFE.

He was more many-sided than Wordsworth: better balanced than Browning: less intense than either. His ideal of perfection was a certain symmetry of character and action. See the character of *King Arthur*. Strong sense of law.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control."

Violence and extravagance of passion break the music of life. (*Locksley Hall*, *Maud*.) Sensual indulgence brings its own punishment. (*A Vision of Sin*. *The Last Tournament*.) Selfish refinement and luxury separate the soul from humanity and turn the palace into a prison. (*The Palace of Art*.) The key-note of life's harmony is a pure and steadfast love, unselfish and loyal. (*Enoch Arden*, *Dora*, *Enid*, *Elaine*.) The universe is under a Divine reign of law; its development is upward though its progress is slow; our peace must be found in willing obedience to that law.

A. Tennyson's answers to certain practical questions of the age.

(1.) THE RELATION OF MAN TO WOMAN. Love is the best thing in the world; but it must be obedient to law. Conventional marriage is a mockery: free-love is a degradation: true wedlock is the harmony of manhood and womanhood. Reverence is essential to love. The emancipation of woman is not to be sought by the destruction of womanliness. Man is at his best when he respects and honours her.

(*The Princess*, *Love and Duty*, *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, *Maud*, *Aylmer's Dream*, &c.)

(2.) THE RELATION OF MAN TO HIS COUNTRY. True patriotism is a great virtue, but it must be sane, thoughtful, just. A man must love his country soberly, intelligently, unselfishly, for the sake of liberty and righteousness. (*Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*. Dedication of *Idylls of the King*. *Love thou thy land with love far-brought*, *England and America in 1782*.) This love rises to deeds of heroism, for a good cause. (*The Revenge*. *The Defence of Lucknow*. *The Light Brigade*. *The Heavy Brigade*.)

(3.) THE RELATION OF MAN TO SOCIAL PROGRESS. The onward movement of humanity is sure but slow. The evils of society are clearly recognized. There is no panacea for them. Violent revolutions do more harm than good. The world will never be reformed by act of Parliament. Each man must do his best to help his fellowmen. (*Sea Dreams*, *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, *Freedom*, &c.)

B. Tennyson's answers to problems of doubt and faith—religion.

(1.) Belief in all-wise, all-loving God, a necessity of the human heart. Strong emphasis on argument from the religious feelings. God unsearchable; not to be defined. But prayer a reality. *The Higher Pantheism, Two Voices, The Human Cry, Enoch Arden, The Passing of Arthur* (close.) *In Memoriam*, [Proem, CXXIV,] *Doubt and Prayer, Faith.*

(2.) Reality of man's spiritual nature. Free-will and personal responsibility. (*De Profundis, Will. Song in The Marriage of Geraint. In Memoriam, CXX. CXXXI.*) Free-will is the main miracle, the proof of human kinship to the Divine.

(3.) Personal immortality. This Tennyson's strongest article of faith, repeated and emphasized. *Two Voices, Ode on Wellington* [last strophe.] *In the Children's Hospital, Wages, Vastness, In Memoriam, XLVII, LV, LVI, CXXVI, CXXIX, Epitaph for Lionel Tennyson, Silent Voices, God and the Universe, Crossing the Bar.*

"One God, one law, one element,  
And one-far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves."

## VI.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

(1822-1888.)

"THE ELEGIST OF FAITH."

### I.

A WRITER OF POETRY AND PROSE.

(1.) ABANDONMENT OF POETRY FOR PROSE. Resulted from an earnest desire to preach culture, expound critical principles, and wage war on dogma and superstition. For this prose was a better vehicle of expression.

(2.) CONTRAST BETWEEN POETRY AND PROSE. His essays are confident, militant, aggressive, and at times exultant in their demand for the surrender of the old faith. But his verse is sadly musical, full of pathos and regret; its emotional element is the source of its charm—the longing for something that is gone; the poetry of the after-glow of faith.

(3.) POETRY EXPRESSES HIS EMOTIONAL SIDE. Agnosticism appeals to the intellect only, as is shown by his essays. The whole man does not appear in them. His poetry comes from the heart, and is a transcript of his inner or "buried" life.

(4.) HIS POETRY SUPERIOR TO HIS PROSE; because it is a more complete and therefore a truer expression of human experience. It appeals to the imagination more strongly than the prose appeals to the reason. It is the most perfect expression of the sorrow of 19th Century skepticism.

## II.

## OUTLINE OF ARNOLD'S LIFE.

Born at Laleham on the Thames. Son of Thomas Arnold, head-master of Rugby. Successful both at school and university; a typical academic man of the best kind. Graduated from Oxford, 1844. Private secretary to Lord Lansdowne 1847. Government Inspector of Schools 1851-1886. Happy marriage 1851. Professor of Poetry at Oxford (1857-1867), where he delivered as lectures some of his best critical work. Gov't position led him to travel much at home and abroad. Active in bringing French influence to bear on intellectual life of England. Visited America in 1883 and 1886, and did not like the country. Died suddenly of heart disease.

## III.

## HIS POETIC CAREER.

(a) Began with the Rugby prize poem, *Alaric at Rome*, and the Oxford Newdigate Prize poem, *Cromwell* (1843.) (b) *The Stray'd Reveller and Other Poems*, by "A" (1849). (c) *Empedocles on Etna and oihcr Poems* (1852), including *Tristram and Iseult*. (d) *Poems* (1853) contains reprints from former volumes (omitting *Empedocles*) and adds *Sohrab and Rustum*, *The Scholar Gipsy*, etc. (e) *Poems, Second Series* (1855) contains more reprints and adds *Separation* and *Balder Dead*, a narrative poem of 1200 lines. (f) *Merope* (1857), a classical but tiresome tragedy. (g) *New Poems* (1867), including *Thyrsis*, *Dover Beach*, *Rugby Chapel*, etc. These poems are among his best, but give no promise of fuller development. (h) After 1867 wrote (in poetry) only *Westminster Abbey* on the death of Dean Stanley, and three elegies on pets.

## IV.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS POETRY.

(1.) THE POETRY OF TRANSITION. His poetry voices the sad passage from youth to age. Contrast with Keats. Full of the pathos and disappointment of growing old. Applies this to mankind as well as to his own life, and contrasts the abiding youth of Nature. (vide *The Youth of Nature*, *The Youth of Man*.)

(2.) SUBJECT-MATTER,—of two kinds:—

(a). Modern and subjective. Most of his poems are personal monologues expressing the alternate despondency and self-dependence of his inner life. e. g., *Resignation*, *Dover Beach*, *The Buried Life*, *Youth's Agitations*.

(b). Antique and objective. Old legends are treated as, e. g., in *Mycerinus* (Egyptian); *Balder Dead* (Scandinavian); *Empedocles* (Greek); *The Church of Brou* (Mediæval). But in these as in (a) there enters the sense of unrest and disillusion.

(c). Favourite subject in both fields is the passive endurance of the inevitable and unwelcome. Does not believe in action as an escape from

discontent (contrast Browning). Preaches resignation. Says (Preface to *Poems* of 1853) that no poetical enjoyment can be derived from situations "in which the suffering finds no vent in action." But these are the situations of his own poetry, which is enjoyable, (1) because it is true to a real experience, (2) because endurance itself is a kind of action, and (3) because it is beautiful in form.

(3.) QUALITIES OF POETIC FORM.

(a) Clarity of Diction. "A sad lucidity of soul." Never disturbed by rush of feelings, always clear, transparent, limpid. Sometimes the simplicity in anxious and the devotion to purity slavish. Excellent in *Requiescat*.

(b) Freedom of metre. Experiments in new and irregular forms, not always with success. Fond of unrhymed measures (vide *The Strayed Reveller, The Future*). *Tristram and Iseult* has 6 different metres. At his best in free and simple rhymed measures (e. g. *Obermann*), and in sonorous blank verse (e. g. *Sohrab and Rustum*) the finest since Milton.

(c). Academic flavour. A. never forgets his books and culture. His poetry deals largely with estimates of other writers, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Emerson, Heine, Senancour, etc., and appeals mainly to cultured readers. Goethe and Wordsworth his chosen masters. Influence of Tennyson felt in *The Forsaken Merman, Tristram and Iseult*, etc. Chief teachers were the Greek and Latin classics, in restraint, lucidity, choice of epithet, attention to detail, concrete illustration from Nature.

(d). Felicity of phrase. An exquisite choice of words, which does not suggest inevitableness or inspiration (as with Wordsworth), but study and reflection. e. g. "Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole." (*Sonnet To a Friend*); "The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea." (*Isolation*); "the naked shingles of the world" (*Dover Beach*).

(4.) TONE OR SPIRITUAL ACCENT.

(a). Maturity. No *juvenilia* among his works. Free from the faults and merits of youth. Little rapture or passion; sober, thoughtful, resigned. (vide *Sonnet, Quiet Work*).

(h). Sorrow. Caused by the solitude, impotence and doubtfulness of life. A. dwells on separation and regret. Seen in (i) his love poems (*Switzerland; Faded Leaves*), (ii) his narrative poems. Of the latter, *Sohrab and Rustum* probably the best. The Tartars and Persians are encamped beside the river Oxus. Sohrab, a hero in the Tartar host, is the son of Rustum, the great Persian warrior, but his birth has been concealed and he has long sought his father in vain. He challenges a Persian champion to single combat, in hope that his bravery may reach R.'s ears. Unhappily R. himself has just arrived in the Persian camp, and accepts the challenge. They fight and R. kills S., only to find, as he expires, that S. is his own son. Poem closes with magnificent passage on the Oxus, describing the baffled course of life and the tranquillity of death.

(c). Fortitude. Preaches resolute and patient endurance. Offers two consolations:—

(i). Contemplation of Nature, which calms and steadies. Wordsworth finds in Nature a tonic, to stimulate joy and faith; A., an anodyne, to quiet pain.

(ii). Fidelity to duty. His philosophy is “agnosticism *plus* asceticism.” (vide *The Better Part*.)

(d.) Elegy of Faith. A.'s Poetry is invariably elegiac. No other 19th century poet of high rank has written so many fine elegies; as *e. g.*, *Rugby Chapel*, *Heine's Grave*, *Obermann*, *Haworth Church-yard*, *Thyrsis*, *The Scholar-Gypsy*, etc. In various forms he has treated death, but the accent is always melancholy and hopeless. His whole poetical product is in effect an *Elegy of Faith*.

## VII.

### WILLIAM MORRIS.

AESTHETE AND SOCIALIST.

(1834—1896.)

#### I.

##### THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT.

In the middle of the 19th Century certain young Englishmen were stirred by an enthusiasm for beauty, and revolted against the ugliness, dullness, and commercialism of modern life. They found beauty in Nature and in the legends of Greece, chivalry, and the early Renaissance. In poetry, painting, and the decorative arts, little groups began to preach the “aesthetic movement.” Three sources:—

(1). In poetry, the charm of the youthful worship of beauty in Keats and the early verse of Tennyson.

(2). In painting, the Pre-Raphaelites (Ford, Madox Brown, Rossetti, Millais, Holman Hunt), with their disregard of convention, exaltation of sincerity, fidelity to Nature, idealism of conception, and elaborate realism of treatment.

(3). In criticism, John Ruskin, crusading against artificial laws and standards of Art, and preaching a return to Nature.

Of this whole movement William Morris, painter, designer of furniture and wall-paper, maker of stained-glass windows, weaver of carpets and tapestries, printer of beautiful books, poet, prose-romancer, and socialist, was a typical representative.

#### II.

##### LIFE AND CHARACTER.

(1.) EDUCATION. The son of wealthy parents. Intended for the clergy. At Oxford he met Edward Burne-Jones, Falford, Faulkner and others, who formed a sort of literary brotherhood. Read with them mediæval church literature, and later the modern writers, especially Ruskin, whose



*Modern Painters* inspired them with the gospel of a new age. Impelled toward art by influence of Burne-Jones and vacation tour in Belgium and France. Begins to write verse and prose-romances. Founded *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, which ran for a year.

(2.) AESTHETIC PERIOD. Comes under influence of the Pre-Raphaelites, and tries his hand at architecture, painting, clay-modeling, embroidery, etc. Designs "intensely mediaeval" furniture for his home with Burne-Jones in London. Becomes a Bohemian in dress and habits. Publishes his first volume of poetry (1858) *The Defence of Guenevere*, also "intensely mediaeval," and typically "aesthetic," expressing the desire to escape from the dull world of to-day into a world of romance. Marries Jane Burden, 1859, and builds "Red House," an aesthetic dwelling near Upton. Out of the necessity of furnishing this house grew the famous firm of "Morris and Company, Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture and the Metals," which did much to revolutionize the decorative arts in England. M. the leading spirit and hardest worker in it. Business rapidly increased. In 1890, set up the Kelmscott Press at Hammersmith, which printed the finest books of the 19th Century. This period overlaps—

(3.) SOCIALISTIC PERIOD. When M. realized that art alone could not reform the world, he embraced socialism. Became successively a leading member of (a) the Social Democratic Federation, which preached a Revolution for 1889, but dissolved before that date; (b) the Socialist League, which he left in disgust after the silly Trafalgar Square Riot of 1886; and (c) the Hammersmith Socialist Society. Wrote socialist songs. His socialism sincere, but more creditable to his heart than his head.

### III.

#### POETIC CAREER.

M.'s poetry was but one of the many ways in which he sought to make life interesting, charming, and lovely. Not his main pursuit. Most of it written 1867-1877. Each volume inspired by some literary spirit or form of the Past.

(1). *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858)—mediaeval; influenced by Rossetti.

(2). *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867)—early Renaissance.

(3). *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870)—influenced by Chaucer.

(4). *Love is Enough* (1872)—influenced by 13th Century morality plays.

(5). *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876)—influenced by Icelandic sagas.

(6). Translations of *Aeneid* (1875) and *Odyssey* (1887).

## IV.

## THE EARTHLY PARADISE.

## A. MODEL—POETRY OF CHAUCER.

Aesthetic school always has a model. Here M. takes Chaucer. (vide *L'Envoi*.) Resembles Chaucer in (1) narrative spirit; (2) details of costume; (3) delight in nature; (4) metres [viz. (a) The Rime-Royal, a stanza of 7 iambic 5-stress lines rhyming *a b a b b c c*. (b) Heroic couplet of iambic 5-stress lines. (c) Swift couplet of iambic 4-stress lines.] But M. lacks (1) Chaucer's strong humour and common sense; (2) prevailing cheerfulness of spirit; (3) sturdy ethical and religious faith; (4) creative imagination.

## B. STRUCTURE.

Calculated to achieve the aim of the author, viz., to revive in modern verse mediæval and classical legends, mingled in a dreamy, mystical atmosphere. Time—14th Cent. Scene—Nameless island in the Aegean Sea, inhabited by people who preserve Greek traditions, modified by mediæval influence. A party of Norse adventurers fleeing from the plague and seeking the fabled Earthly Paradise, pass through many hardships and disappointments, learn that death cannot be escaped, and at last come to the island where they settle down in peace to wait for the end of life. Together with the Greeks, they tell twenty-four stories, remote and dream-like, two for each month of the year. Between the stories are beautiful descriptions of the months in England.

## C. METHOD AND DICTION.

Little difference in the various parts. Some slightly more epical (*e. g.*, *The Lovers of Gudrun*); others more romantic (*e. g.*, *The Man Born to be King*). Old familiar tales are covered with a new texture of bright colours and graceful forms.

(a) *Atalanta's Race*:—The Greek tale of the princess, who, out-running her lovers in a foot-race, has their heads cut off. Milanion defeats her by the use of three golden apples, and wins her for his bride. M. adds exquisite pictures and a keener sense of romantic love.

(b) *Ogier the Dane*:—A Celtic story. The hero, at birth, is promised by six fays courage, strength, courtesy, success in war and in love, and that at last the sixth fay will love and live with him. When his death is near, the sixth fay takes him to Avallon, where his youth is restored. Subsequently he returns to France to fight and win the crown, but on the eve of coronation he goes back to Avallon with the fay. The transience of the real world is contrasted with the permanence of the dream-world.

## D. STYLE.

Fluent, easy, picturesque, with a slight flavor of archaism, and a notable prevalence of short Anglo-Saxon words. It is defective in its

(1) carelessness and diffusiveness, owing to the rapidity with which he wrote; (2) lack of penetrative imagination, fails to discover the real meaning of things; (3) lack of memorable expressions, noble thoughts in noble language. Few quotable lines in M.'s poetry.

#### E. SPIRIT AND SIGNIFICANCE.

Two main elements of feeling: (1) passionate love of life, and (2) fear and hatred of death. (vide *Prelude* and *L'Envoi*). Out of the conflict of these arise the pathetic beauty of human experience and the sole aesthetic maxim,—draw pleasure from the passing hour, forget life's brevity and conflicts in a world of visions. This conception of life is neither noble nor healthy, and great poetry cannot rest in it. Proved by Morris himself who said, "Poetry is tommy-rot," and called himself "The idle singer of an empty day."

### VIII.

#### ROBERT BROWNING.

(1812—1889.)

Immediate predecessors Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats. Contemporaries: Tennyson, Landor, E. B. Browning, Hood, Arnold, Clough, Morris, Swinburne. Period of production 1832-1889.

### I.

#### OUTLINE OF BROWNING'S LIFE.

##### 1. HOME AND TRAVEL.

Browning's father successful bank clerk: comfortable middle-class home: bookish influence of father: religious influence of mother, a Scotch Presbyterian of German descent. B.'s education irregular, chiefly at home with tutors, a few lectures at London University. An active-minded boy, curious, intelligent, a great reader, strong inclination towards art. Early passion for Shelley's poetry—period of boyish eccentricity—professed atheism—practiced vegetarianism—reaction to common-sense and strong religious feelings. First poem *Pauline*, (1832) a psychological rhapsody in blank verse, published anonymously at the expense of his aunt. Encouraged by small circle of friends. Travels in Russia and in Italy. Second poem *Paracelsus*, a dramatic poem in blank verse on the inner life of the mystical philosopher, published at the expense of B.'s father, 1835. Admired by a few. No attention from the public. But B. now launched as a poet and admitted to literary circles.

##### 2. DRAMATIC PERIOD.

1837, B. wrote *Strafford*, a tragedy, for Macready: *succès d'estime*. 1838, went to Italy. *Sordello*, a dramatic poem, the most obscure of B.'s works, 1840. 1841-1846, *Bells and Pomegranates*, a series of poems,

chiefly dramas, published in cheap pamphlet form. *Pippa Passes*. *King Victor and King Charles*. *Return of the Druses*. *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*. *Colombe's Birthday*. *In a Balcony*. *Luria*. Eight numbers published, sale increased, but still not popular, though praised by best critics.

### 3. LYRIC PERIOD.

1844, B. met and loved the poet Elizabeth Barrett, an invalid. Opposition of both families. Secret marriage 1846. Elopement to Italy. Happy married life. Partial restoration of Mrs. Browning's health. Birth of a son. Home in Florence. Influence upon her husband's poetry. Published, *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, 1845; *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, 1850; *Men and Women* (50 poems), 1855. In 1861 E. B. B. died in Florence. Her husband's great sorrow.

### 4. LATER LIFE.

B. returned to live in England, house in Warwick Crescent, London. Still traveled much in France and Italy. *Works* in 3 vols. 1863: *Dramatis Personae*, 1864: *The Ring and the Book*, 1868, B.'s longest poem, 21,000 lines. Social life: a great diner-out: fluent and excellent talker: fond of city life: interested in people: in politics, first radical, then liberal. 1871-1889 published 14 volumes: increasing eccentricity and difficulty of style. Foundation of Browning Society, 1881. Growing fame. Died at his son's house in Venice, on the day of publication of his last book, *Asolando*. Buried in Westminster Abbey.

## II.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF BROWNING'S MIND AND ART.

1. Dominant intellectual traits: curiosity and optimism. His wide interest in life, in various forms of art, in different characters. Poems touch on all sides of human activity: painting, music, politics, religion, love, theology, mesmerism, etc. His fondness for the strange, the unfamiliar, the eccentric.

2. Favorite topic: the history of a soul. His portraits of men and women strongly individual, like Renaissance statues. Yet almost always in contrast with background of society. Sense of crowded life in B.'s poetry. Contrast with Wordsworth.

3. Chosen method: psychological drama. The intensity of his poetry. Passion and action. His lyrics are dramatic.

4. Consequences of all this in his style.

(a) Not a great Nature-poet. Cared for man more than for Nature. Landscapes often like stage-scenery. At his best in describing sky and clouds.

(b.) Obscurity of diction. With him clear and simple poems are the exception. (e. g. *Cavalier Tunes*, *The Pied Piper*.) His language is

usually condensed, while his thought is copious. Interest in psychological problem makes him careless of expression. Elisions and compressions. B. neglected the *art* of poetry.

(c.) Rapidity and fluency of rhyme. Extraordinary feats: curious combinations: "spare-rib"—"Carib": "Fra Angelicos"—"hellicose," etc. The play of a curious and exuberant mind.

(d.) Sense of humor, joined to depth of feeling, found utterance in the grotesque. The odd, incongruous, fantastic ending of several of his poems, e. g. the verses on Keats (*Popularity.*)

As a writer B. is original, striking, stimulating, vigorous: sometimes musical; but usually caring little for form, and occasionally perverting it out of pure caprice. Too diffuse, too unfinished, too obscure, a large part of his work lacks the perfection of art, which is the only guarantee of literary endurance.

### III.

#### TYPICAL POEMS OF BROWNING.

The immense quantity of B.'s work—over 100,000 lines—difficulty of classifying—combination of lyric, epic and dramatic elements—preponderance of dramatic spirit.

1. *EPIC: The Ring and the Book.* Symbolism of the title. Story:—Pompilia, a young wife, leaves her cruel husband, Count Guido of Arezzo, and takes refuge with her parents near Rome. Guido pursues her with hired assassins, breaks into the house, kills the father and mother and wounds Pompilia mortally. Caught, and tried for murder, he accuses her of infidelity with a young priest who had befriended her. Condemned by secular court, appeal to Pope, again condemned, finally executed. This story is outlined in Book I; then retold from 10 different points of view; finally commented upon in Book XII. Best passages, in Books VI, VII and X, and the dedication to Mrs. Browning in Book I. "O lyric Love, half angel and half bird." A work of great power, but chaotic and unpruned.

2. *Drama: Colombe's Birthday.* A fine, high spirited comedy of love and ambition, but too subtle in motive for the stage.

*A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.* Theme: conflict between pride of birth and love which errs but is pure at heart. Plot: Earl Mertoun applies for the hand of Mildred, the beautiful young sister of Lord Tresham (the type of pride). His suit is favoured by T., but in reality he has long been her secret lover, and she has already yielded him her honour. An old servant, Gerard, tells T. that he has seen a disguised man enter Mildred's chamber on many nights. She confesses that it is true, but conceals her lover's name. When she refuses to break off her prospective engagement with Mertoun, T. denounces her unsparingly. At night T. meets Mertoun beneath Mildred's window, fights, and kills him. Repenting too late, T.

begs Mildred's forgiveness, which she grants as she dies of a broken heart. He takes poison.

3. *Lyrics*: Subjective: *Prospice, One Word More, My Star, Home-thoughts from Abroad, Memorabilia.*

Ballads: lyrics with a story: *An Incident of the French Camp, How they Brought the Good News, Herve Riel, The Pied Piper of Hamelin, The Boy and the Angel, Cavalier Tunes.*

4. *Dramatic Poems*: *Pippa Passes*. Plot: a peasant girl of Asolo spends her New Year's holiday in a ramble, singing as she goes. She thinks of the four happiest people in the town, wishes she might in some way come into their lives. It happens that as she passes each one of these four, it is a moment of crisis, of sin, of shame, of peril, or of temptation. Pippa's song, heard at a distance, influences each life, though she does not know it. This is a rich, vivid, interesting poem, with prose passages.

5. *Dramatic Monologues*: poems in which an historical or imaginary character is expressed in a single speech. Renaissance group: *Fra Lippo Lippi, Andrea del Sarto, The Bishop Orders His Tomb, My Last Duchess*. First Century Group: *Karshish, A Death in the Desert*. Modern Group: *Bishop Blougram's Apology, Mr. Sludge the Medium*.

6. *Dramatic Lyrics*: Character expressed in song; emotional element predominates. Here some of B.'s best work.

*Abt Vogler, Evelyn Hope, The Last Ride Together, Love Among the Ruins, Rabbi Ben Ezra, Saul*. Analysis of *Saul*. Perhaps B.'s first poem. Compare with Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality* and with Tennyson's *Morte d' Arthur*.

#### IV.

##### BROWNING'S MESSAGE: THE GLORY OF THE IMPERFECT.

B.'s interest in life greater than his interest in art: the poet of aspiration, action, endeavour. "Man partly is and wholly hopes to be." His characters are seen in movement, conflict, development. He regards life as probation, discipline, education. It is precious, not because it is perfect, but because man feels its imperfection and fights through it to something higher. (*Paracelsus: Saul: Childe Roland: Abt Vogler: Book X., The Ring and the Book.*)

(1.) Life's discontent and upward struggle are its glory. (*Andrea del Sarto: Easter Eve: Epilogue to Asolando.*)

(2.) Optimism: the greatest Power in the world is Love: therefore the end of the conflict must be the victory of good. (*Apparent Failure, Reverie, Rabbi Ben Ezra.*)

Weak points in Browning's view of life.

(1.) A tendency to lay too much stress on value of moments of high excitement in personal experience; too little on steady, prolonged, equable

reflection and resolution. The Dramatic Fallacy. B.'s poetry too spasmodic. Results of life depend on slow processes as well as on sudden crises.

(2.) A tendency to exalt passionate action above obedience to law: to make the individual independent of, and hostile to, the social order. (*The Statue and the Bust; Fifine at the Fair.*) B. sometimes seems to teach that love has a right to realize itself in any way it chooses.

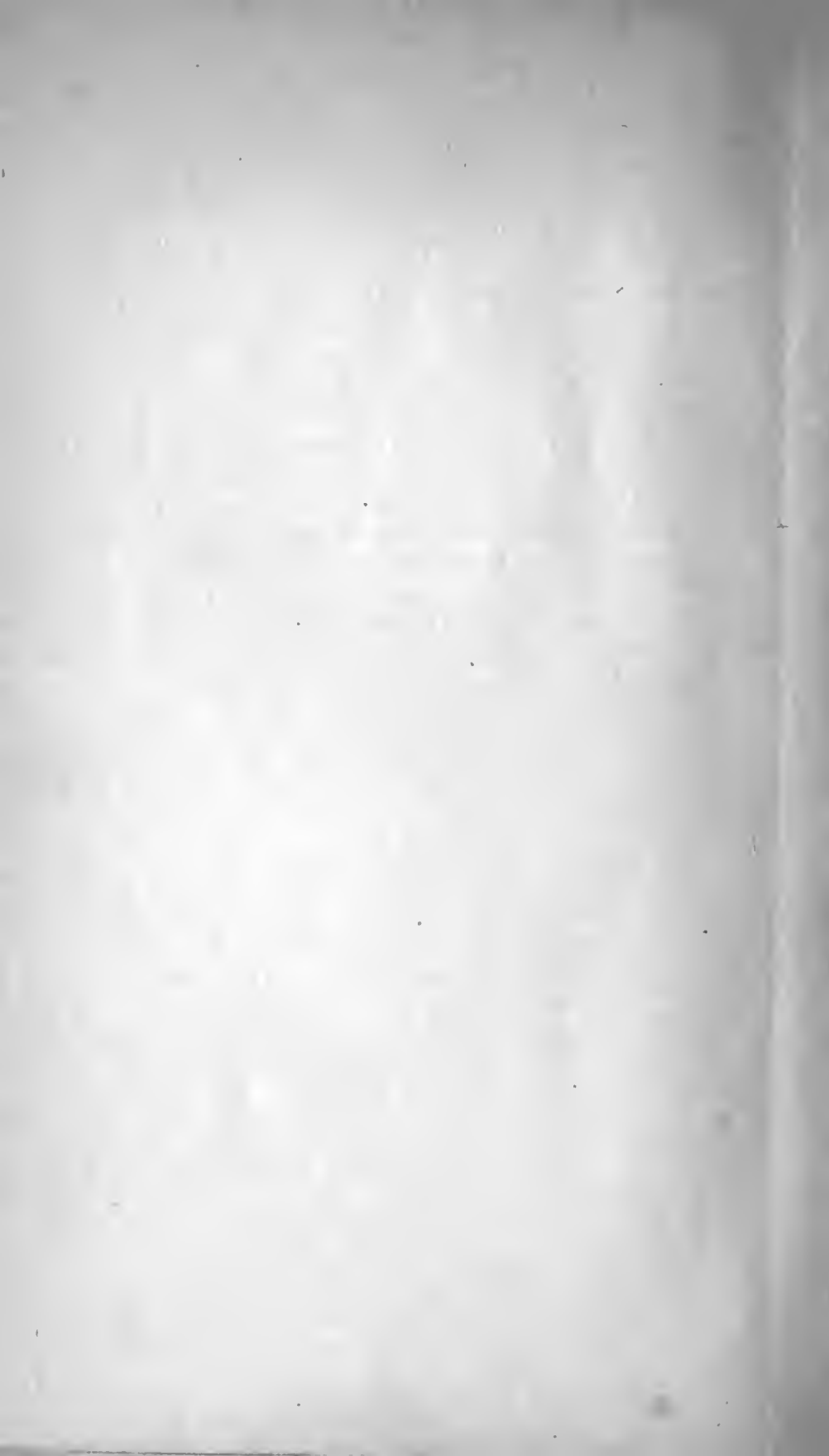
(3.) A tendency to regard evil as a necessary condition of good, a disguise of good, therefore an illusion, existing only to call out man's sense of struggle. This method confuses evil with good, and makes the conflict of life, which seems real to feeling, unreal to reason. Ethics become impossible. The basis of moral effort is destroyed. (*Ferishtah's Fancies.*)

Strong points in Browning's view of life.

(1.) His emphasis on the need and value of personal courage and fidelity to ideals. (*Rephan; Epilogues to Ferishtah, and Asolando.*)

(2.) His firm faith in God's power and goodness. (*Paracelsus; Pippa Passes; Rabbi Ben Ezra, etc.*)

(3.) His trust in Christ as the very revelation of God that man's heart most needs. (*Saul; Strange Epistle of Karshish; A Death in the Desert; Christmas Eve: Epilogue to Dramatis Personae.*) Browning emphatically a Christian Poet.







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