

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON: SOCIAL CRITIC

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF

ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY

MARY LOU HOWELL, M. A.

DENTON, TEXAS

JULY 30, 1971

Texas Woman's University

Denton, Texas

JULY 30, 19 71

We hereby recommend that the THESIS prepared under
our supervision by MARY LOU HOWELL
entitled ALFRED LORD TENNYSON: SOCIAL CRITIC

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the Degree of

Committee:

J. Dean Bishop
Chairman

Gurner S. Kohler

Laron B. Felwiler

Accepted:

J. L. Morris
Dean of Graduate Studies

PREFACE

In looking back upon the months spent in writing an analysis of two of Tennyson's major works as social criticism, I find that my first reaction is that it has been extremely satisfying to me personally, because of the two pleasures that are always present in Tennyson: the comfortable renewal of rediscovering the familiar, and the exhilaration of finding the altogether new within the framework of the familiar. The loveliness and beauty everywhere in Tennyson never fail to refresh the spirit.

Along with the enjoyment, there has been a great deal of work, which I would never have been able to complete had it not been for the understanding and encouragement of both my friends and my sometimes beleaguered family.

A very special thanks must be extended to Dr. J. Dean Bishop, the director of my thesis, for his patience and cooperation. In addition I extend my appreciation to Dr. Kobler and Dr. Fulwiler for serving on my thesis committee.

To Dr. Autry Nell Wiley must go a most appreciative and special thanks for her kindness and encouragement during all the years I have been a part of Texas Woman's University.

July 30, 1971

Mary Lou Howell
Mary Lou Howell

CONTENTS

PREFACE	iii
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER	PAGE
---------	------

I. A NEW LOOK AT TENNYSON AS SOCIAL CRITIC	1
--	---

Early Poems Concerning the Role of the Poet	1
---	---

Decision to use his art for social criticism	1
--	---

Misunderstanding by the critics	2
---	---

The Relationship of the Artist to his <u>Milieu</u>	3
---	---

Tennyson's Commitment to Ethical Uses of Art	3
--	---

Rejection of an Artist as Social Critic by Later Critics	3
--	---

Tennyson's Association with the Victorian Era	4
---	---

Problems of the Victorian Era	4
---	---

Urbanization problems	5
---------------------------------	---

Rural problems	7
--------------------------	---

Passage of the Reform Bill of 1832	7
--	---

"Locksley Hall" as early social comment	8
---	---

Religious problems	9
------------------------------	---

Scientific developments and accompanying problems	10
---	----

"In Memoriam" as religious affirmation . .	11
Tennyson's Popularity with His Contemporaries .	12
Nicolson's evaluation of the Victorian element in Tennyson's works	12
Popularity as a distraction from later valid evaluation	13
Criticism during his lifetime	13
Misunderstanding of Tennyson's efforts as social critic	15
Early Works as Steps Toward a Philosophy . . .	16
Restricted View of Tennyson as Social Critic .	16
"Locksley Hall"	17
"Locksley Hall Sixty Years After"	18
Public image as a moralist	19
II. THE WOMAN QUESTION IN THE VICTORIAN ERA: REAPPRAISAL IN <u>THE PRINCESS</u>	21
Use of Tennyson's Work to Support Feminist Cause	21
Early Influences	22
His mother, eulogized in "Isabel"	22
Changes during college	23
Shifts in attitude 1839-1847	24
Events Influencing Tennyson During the Late 1830's	24
Article in <u>Metropolitan Magazine</u> 1838 . . .	25
Custody of Infants Bill in Parliament . . .	25

Caroline Norton divorce case	25
Rebuttal article in <u>The British and Foreign Review</u>	26
Friendship with John Kemble	26
Reflections of Public Issues in <u>The Princess</u> .	27
Influences of Socialistic Movements on Tennyson	29
General social climate	29
Influence of Arthur Hallam	30
Acquaintance with liberal men and women . .	31
William and Mary Howitt	31
Lucie Duff Gordon	31
The Brownings	31
Criticism of the Structure of <u>The Princess</u> as Unsuitable to Serious Criticism	32
Purposes and Inspirations for the Structure . .	33
Charles Tennyson's Explanation of the Poet's Motives	34
Killham's Structural Analysis	34
Setting of the Poem	35
Ancient and Present Juxtaposed	35
Introduction of the Lady-Knight as Heroine . .	36
Introduction of the Prince	38
Physical description	38
The quest of the Prince	39

Ida's Woman's Rights Theories	39
Analysis of the Characters	40
Prince's seizures	40
Resemblance to traditional woman-role	41
Minor Characters as Reflection of Current Attitudes Toward Women	42
The Prince's father	43
The Princess's father	43
Intercalary Songs as Interpreters of the Theme	44
Characters as Fragmented Personalities	45
Theme of Relationship of the Sexes	45
Misapplication of Education by the Princess . .	46
Discovery of the Prince	47
Psyche's family loyalties	47
Blanche as Embittered Woman	48
Reversal of Male-female Roles	49
Ida's Views on Woman's Role	49
Ida's Feelings of Regret.	51
Exposure of the Prince	52
Prince's father's threats	53
Disintegration of the women	53
Ida's disdain of the women	53
Prince's expulsion	54
Role of the Seizures in the Poem	54

Change in Tone of Poem at Interlude	55
War Between the Prince and the Princess	55
Ida's Care for Psyche's Child	56
Resumption of Traditional Male-female Roles	57
The Prince as warrior	57
Forgiveness of Psyche by Ida	58
The Princess as nurse	58
Ida's Rejection of Intellectuality for Love	58
Structure Called "Diagonal"	59
Jerome Buckley's interpretation	59
Tennyson's intent	60
Fusion of views through structure	61
III. THE SOCIAL INDICTMENT OF AN AGE: <u>MAUD</u>	62
Effects of Tennyson's Philosophy of Political Changes	62
Tennyson's Concern over Social Conditions	63
Appreciation of past achievements	63
Concept of love as a guide to reform	64
Concern for people bypassed for sake of progress	64
Idealized View of Individual	65
Controversy over <u>Maud</u> as Social Criticism	66
Public and private criticism	66
<u>Anti-Maud</u> by W. C. Bennett	67

War passages criticized	67
Tennyson's reaction	68
War Theme as Expression of "Unreason"	68
Autobiographical Elements Considered	69
Tennyson's Insight on Effects of Money	70
On the family unit	71
On marriage	71
On his brothers' mental conditions	72
<u>Maud</u> as Analysis of the Effect of Social Forces on Human Behavior	72
The main character as a <u>persona</u>	72
Distortion of society and distortion of character	73
The hero as a distorted character	73
Importance of Self-destiny	74
Effects of Society on the Main Character	74
Father's death	74
Imagery of animal and machine as society	75
Peace as Disguised Warfare	76
Hero's Fear of Becoming a Part of Society	76
Maud's Return to the Hall	77
His obsession with Maud	78
Gem-stone imagery associated with Maud	78
The dream of Maud	78

Association of Maud with Life	79
Nature viewed as warfare	79
Fear of love of Maud	80
Imagery of rose and blood associated with Maud	80
Maud as a manifestation of society	81
The hero's temptation	83
Rejection through duel and death of Maud's brother	83
Hero's Madness	83
Inner conflict and inertia of will	84
Withdrawal from society	84
Returning awareness of world	84
War as Positive Action	84
Development of concept of salvation through action and involvement	85
Misapplication by critics of war theme	85
Accusation of lack of universality of poem	86
<u>Maud</u> as Artistic yet Valid Social Criticism Retaining Universality	86
Conclusion	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	88

CHAPTER I

A NEW LOOK AT TENNYSON AS SOCIAL CRITIC

Alfred Tennyson's preoccupation with the problem of the poet's role in public affairs, and his inner anguish as to whether or not the poet should treat current social problems through his work, caused him to explore these feelings in several of his early works. "The Palace of Art," "The Poet's Mind," and "The Poet" are all constructed around this theme, but nowhere is the essence of Tennyson's final decision better reflected than in the opening lines from "The Poet":

The poet in a golden clime was born
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn
of scorn
The love of love.¹

With these lines Tennyson takes his stand on the question: Is it the poet's business to state or restate

¹The Complete Poetical Works of Tennyson, ed. W. J. Rolfe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1898), p. 14, ll. 1-4. All subsequent poems are taken from this same edition, which hereafter will be cited as Poetical Works.

the "articles of faith"² of a generation, and if he does, should he merely present and summarize them without adding to, changing, or enriching them? Tennyson's struggles with this question resulted in his becoming convinced that it was not only the poet's prerogative, but indeed his duty, to use his art for man's sake. To him art must serve an ethical end; it must be a vehicle for the good. Paradoxically, some critics blame him for being too much concerned with the worldly problems of his day to the detriment of his art, while others say he treats too casually or superficially the important changes of his time.³

Whatever position is adopted on the question, one must admit that artists do not create in a vacuum. A man is a part of the world in which he lives, part of the times in which he is placed. Tennyson is considered so dominantly a part of the Victorian era that Wolfe says of him:

He did definitely contribute to the thought of his time, so much so that we cannot think of the Victorian mind without thinking of Tennyson. . . . Great poets have always addressed themselves to questions of concern to people of their time.

²Humbert Wolfe, Tennyson, The Poets on the Poets, No. 3 (London: Faber & Faber, 1930), p. 16.

³Edgar Finley Shannon, Jr., Tennyson and the Reviewers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 3-6.

Just as Milton, concerned with God in an age when theology was a prime concern, and Byron, concerned with the new Romantic movement, address themselves to these ideas, so Tennyson, in an age concerned with the upheavals of new ideas in industry and society, addresses his pen to them.⁴

Indeed, it would be difficult to find a sizeable amount of literature of any period that can be completely divorced from the questions of the time in which it was written.

Tennyson became fully committed to the belief that a poet must not work "'without a conscience or an aim' and his aim must be primarily an ethical one. It is his business, through his art, to help men live this life as it ought to be lived."⁵

The rejection of this concept of art in the period following Victorianism has hindered an impartial evaluation of Tennyson's place in literature, especially in those works devoted largely to social criticism about specific problems. Harold Nicolson, in his important modern evaluation of Tennyson's poetry, says that if Tennyson's work is to survive, it must survive "in spite of the Tennyson legend" and "in spite of the instructional and objective tenour which was forced upon

⁴Wolfe, pp. 16-17.

⁵E. Hershey Sneath, The Mind of Tennyson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), p. 24.

it by the Victorians."⁶ This Tennyson legend which Nicolson seems to regret as an obstruction to impartial evaluation is a direct consequence of Tennyson's almost astonishing popularity that constitutes much of the problem in allowing a later generation to view Tennyson in any sort of perspective. Since he is closely associated with the society of that time, as the Victorian age passed into a period when it was viewed with skepticism, indignation, and even humor, later critics seem to say that if the Victorians liked him, he can hardly be a significant artist. Obviously both the period and the poet have been misunderstood, and both have suffered from the misunderstanding.

Although it is true, of course, that Tennyson was popular with the Victorians, a closer look at the Victorian society might indicate that this fact alone does not condemn Tennyson. The Victorians have long been characterized as self-seekers and practioners of smug self-satisfaction, when in reality the period from 1830 to 1860 was a "time when faiths and beliefs were being tested"⁷ and the established order of

⁶Harold Nicolson, Tennyson: Aspects of His Life, Character and Poetry (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 16.

⁷Ibid.

society seemed to be giving way to alarming new changes; indeed, sometimes these changes must have seemed to many almost tantamount to chaos. The Victorians were anything but self-satisfied. Young calls the age one whose "practical ideals were at odds with its religious professions, and its religious belief was at issue with its intelligence."⁸ This was hardly a time likely to produce poets who could ignore the smoke stacks of the cities to rhapsodize over the field flowers, or who could overlook the changes in society and the family unit to dwell only upon the changes in the seasons. At times Tennyson seems to have tried to ignore current issues for the sake of "pure art," but he could not maintain the stance; he could not divorce himself from contemporary problems.

Undeniably, the Victorian age, of which Tennyson was such an important part, as seen by Nicolson so clearly, was one of many deep and dividing changes. The evolution from a civilization based on industry and the semi-feudal landowning system to a civilization based on industry and the factory system continued until the middle of the nineteenth century. Although the working classes had made great gains, they shared

⁸G. M. Young, Victorian England: Portrait of an Age (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 16.

very little in the enormous profits of the century, and their living conditions, particularly in the mining areas and the large industrial centers, were abominable. In the nineteenth century, also, more mechanical progress was made than in the whole earlier history of man, especially in the areas of transportation and cheap power for manufacturing.⁹ The problems which the rapid urbanization brought were suddenly forced on the public consciousness in 1830 when cholera, long rampant in Europe, appeared in London. A Central Board of Health was established in London and local boards in the provinces. The report of the secretary of the Manchester board is "one of the cardinal documents of Victorian history."¹⁰ For the first time the actual condition of the masses in the urban centers was brought to public attention. It became quite apparent that much of the population of England was living under conditions which were "not only a negation of civilized existence, but a menace to civilized society."¹¹

⁹Edward H. Weatherly, et al., The English Heritage (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1945), I, 275-76.

¹⁰Young, p. 26.

¹¹Ibid.

The conditions in the rural areas seemed little if any better than those in the cities, and the Labourers' Rising in 1830 brought this fact to public notice as the cholera scare had for the cities. In addition, the Poor Law degraded those it was written to support, but it was the cities that were suffering most acutely because of the migration to the industrial areas. As Young notes, "Machinery had so reduced the value of labour that at any moment the workman might find himself starving in the midst of a plenty which his own hands had helped to create."¹²

To protect and fortify the country against the possibility of these masses of people becoming insubordinate, the Reform Bill was passed in 1832, admitting "the respectable class" to the franchise. After the establishment of the Poor Law Commission of 1832, the country was veritably flooded by inquiries followed by mountains of statistics. Young notes that "No community in history had ever been submitted to so searching an examination."¹³ By 1839 the problems of the poor and the unemployed were foremost in the public mind. If smugness and self-satisfaction had existed previously, it was

¹²Ibid.

¹³Young, p. 33.

impossible for any thinking man to deceive himself after these deplorable and horrifying facts came to light.

All of the facts and figures thus uncovered provided material for the pens of the novelists, playwrights, and poets. The excesses of the owners of factories, the commercialism and greed of the bankers and financiers in bringing about these wretched conditions and their accompanying social ills were attacked by writers like Dickens and Thackeray. Tennyson also expresses bitter dissatisfaction with this age of commercialism. In "Locksley Hall" (1842) he sees the age as one in which "money talks," and he does not like what it says:

What is that which I should turn to, light-
 ing upon days like these?
 Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens
 but to golden keys.¹⁴

This preoccupation with earnings and progress, he writes, distorts society:

Cursed by the social wants that sin against
 the strength of youth!
 Cursed by the social lies that warp us from
 the living truth!¹⁵

While "Locksley Hall" is justly famed for its spirit of optimism and hope for the future, it is obvious that Tennyson is not

¹⁴Poetical Works, p. 92, ll. 99-100.

¹⁵Poetical Works, p. 91, ll. 59-60.

blind to the industrial and social ills of the time. Although Tennyson has been often judged a second-rate thinker, he shows here an awareness of the problems which the social dysfunction of the times created in the family unit and in the individual; in fact, his concern has an intensity which surpasses that of many of his contemporaries. He is as much concerned with the loss of vitality in the nation's youth and the changing of beliefs and values as he is with the physical deficiencies. "Locksley Hall" is an early poem treating this concern, but only in a general way.

Another area of deep concern to Tennyson and his contemporaries was the state of flux in which religion, long a dominant stabilizing force in English society, found itself. The Puritan Revolution in the seventeenth century had been but the beginning of attacks, splits, and reforms. Lord Robert Montagu compiled some statistics in 1860 that, if not completely accurate, reflected the number of different congregations of the time: Baptists, Congregationalists, Jews, Mormons, and other, 16½%; Wesleyans and Roman Catholics, 16½%; Church of England, 42%; and Irreligious Poor, 25%. To counteract the creation of new sects, the Oxford Movement was formed to brace and fortify the Church against what it foresaw as a

time of trial for the Anglican Church.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the gradual spreading of rationalism downwards through the masses had begun to create a problem concerning strict interpretation of the Scriptures. The emphasis of the church began to shift, and by the beginning of the Victorian age the Evangelical faith that gave to England a creed which was "at once the basis of its morality and the justification of its wealth and power"¹⁷ had begun to harden into a code. The advancement of its ethic had moralized society and "made social disapproval a force which the boldest sinner might fear."¹⁸ Its ethical force, important though it was, as a moral code in a time of violent change had largely dissipated in a spiritual sense and ceased to meet the spiritual needs of many. It was this replacement of spiritual life by social concerns that grieved Tennyson.

To add to the woes of the Church, the scientific findings of the period, especially the work in theories of evolution, seemed to strike at the very heart of man's faith in God. The natural sciences in all their branches had become almost a national pastime and the church leaders were hard-pressed to correlate scientific discoveries concerning the natural world

¹⁶Young, pp. 66-68.

¹⁷Young, p. 4.

¹⁸Ibid.

with the traditional story of Creation as contained in the Bible. Religion had been able more or less to come to terms with astronomy as this particular science could be said to "declare the glory of God" through telescope, but it was poorly equipped to assimilate the findings of the geologists and archeologists who attacked the very roots of the Mosaic belief in the origin of the universe. Nine years before the publication of the Origin of the Species, Tennyson gathered up all the doubts of Christianity and immortality which the findings of science had aroused and answered them, or seemed to, in In Memoriam through "a pantheistic and yet personal faith in progress."¹⁹ Tennyson seems to have understood quite well the new scientific findings and was the natural spokesman of an age characterized by moral conservatism and intellectual expansion and progress. Is it any wonder, then, that when Tennyson worked out a personal answer to his own religious doubts in In Memoriam the average Victorian was glad to accept the statement of faith as an aid in the solution of his own doubts and questions?²⁰

¹⁹Young, p. 75.

²⁰Weatherly, p. 279.

Indeed, Tennyson became so popular as a spokesman for the times that G. M. Young cites the instance when Lord Morley, wishing to make a point clear about social stratification, divided the public "into those who had a Tennyson at home and those who had not."²¹ Young further states that it would be almost impossible to determine upon how many points he touched the current interests of his time. In Victorian England, "poetry meant Tennyson."²² It is this popularity, when seen in conjunction with the distorted picture of Victorians themselves, that has created the Tennyson "legend" that Nicolson seeks to dispel. Nicolson feels, however, that a true evaluation of Tennyson's works can be obtained only by determining through careful analysis the Victorian element in his poetry and then by isolating this element from consideration in evaluating his poetry.²³ Such a view is not tenable. A poet must rise or fall, stand or sink into oblivion, by all of his poetry, and by both content and form. The Victorian element cannot be taken from Tennyson's work because to do so would leave only at best a partial body of work, and at worst, a shell of form divorced from much important content.

²¹Young, pp. 161-62.

²²Young, p. 162.

²³Nicolson, p. 9.

While Tennyson did undoubtedly enjoy enormous popularity with the public during most of his lifetime, he was by no means unanimously admired for his view of the function of a poet. It was largely this very consideration of the suitability of a poet's involvement in current problems that caused critics to direct attention to Tennyson's work. Amazingly enough, however, there was no consensus among the critics on what he was doing wrong. Some reviewers felt he was too didactic and much too involved with current social problems, while others characterized his poetry as too withdrawn and remote from the world and its social ills.²⁴

An article by Milnes in The Westminster concerning the edition of 1842 stated that "the function of the poet in this day of ours is to teach still more than he delights."²⁵ Although this feeling seems to have been shared by the general public, many critics did not accept this viewpoint. W. W. Robson is one of those that did not subscribe to Milnes' views, and evidently disagreed with Tennyson's statement that the two Locksley Halls might prove of historical interest. In "The Dilemma of Tennyson" he says that the Locksley Hall poems

²⁴Shannon, pp. 3-4.

²⁵Shannon, p. 73.

were famous in their day, but that he feels they are "damagingly and damningly dated."²⁶ This viewpoint is one which treats them somewhat as if they had been written as a newspaper account. Although he concedes that if they are "looked at without prejudice . . . considerable power"²⁷ can be found in them, this condescending tone hardly constitutes praise. It is almost as if one declined to accept Beowulf since one no longer can believe in Grendel. Even though Robson can concede that the reader cannot mistake the very real anguish in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" and even agrees that the horrors in the poem are quite real to Tennyson, he still sees the poem "as an extreme case of the breakdown of relation between Tennyson's 'art' and his 'social conscience'" ²⁸

If critics agree to Robson's statement that Tennyson was unable to confront the world both as a poet and a concerned citizen, then they limit the poet to certain prescribed subjects and place others out of his realm.

On the other hand, Hugh I'Anson Fausset's later

²⁶W. W. Robson, "The Dilemma of Tennyson," in Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, ed. John Killham (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 161.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Robson, p. 163.

evaluation of Tennyson as "representative" of the establishment of his day²⁹ is not completely valid. Because the establishment of his day found something of value in his work and accepted him did not mean that he was always in agreement with that establishment. He assailed his society, often harshly. But if Tennyson sometimes seems the perfect example of his age, as Nicolson pointed out, the forces which shaped the Victorian age also shaped Tennyson and certainly it is "futile to blame an artist for the facts of history."³⁰ The establishment did not always agree with Tennyson, however, and much of the sharpest criticism of his career was leveled at Maud and The Princess, which are probably his two most serious endeavors in social criticism.

Even those who did not criticize Tennyson for his efforts at social criticism often misunderstood them or failed to see them at all. H. A. Taine, in an article written in 1864, praised him for being steadfast in a time of change, standing firm on his Christian morals, and not revolting against his society.³¹ Inasmuch as this article was basically written

²⁹Hugh I'Anson Fausset, Tennyson: A Modern Portrait (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1923), p. 300.

³⁰Nicolson, p. 5.

³¹H. A. Taine, "Tennyson: The Poet of Victorian England," in Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D.

concerning The Princess, this is strange comment for a poem extolling woman's rights. Taine, like many other critics, chose to ignore the main idea in the poem and to concentrate on the songs which were inserted between the parts. Taine, despite his apparent misinterpretation of the poem, said that The Princess was Tennyson at his best. Perhaps it was, but not for the reasons which Taine noted.

Charles Peter Chretien, a critic for the Christian Remembrancer, took quite the opposite attitude. He thought Tennyson's outstanding quality was his excellent diction, called him a "sweet singer,"³² but felt a poet should be something more. He recognized Tennyson's concern with his age, particularly in scientific fields, but said Tennyson was entirely too vague in how a higher state of society was to evolve from the conflicts of the age. His review of The Princess writes Tennyson off completely as a social critic:

"It is not then as a poet of our common humanity that Mr. Tennyson can hope for lasting fame . . . He has raised no structure of mighty verse on the platform of philosophy."³³

Tennyson's early work, however, contains poems which suggest that he was feeling his way toward a philosophy in which social concern could be a legitimate part of art, and

³²Cited in Shannon, p. 111.

³³Ibid.

this philosophy seems to have become fully developed by 1842. At this time, after a ten-year period in which little was published, a noticeable change in range of subjects becomes apparent in his work, with emphasis on the internal struggle between the poetic imagination and moral duty.³⁴ His previously published Poems Chiefly Lyrical and Poems by Alfred Tennyson contain some of his better work but also contain many poems that were later suppressed. The former contains fifty-three poems, of which thirty-two were removed in subsequent editions. The collection also contains "The Poet," which is of special interest, since it indicates the high ideal of the poet's art with which Tennyson began his career.³⁵ The second volume mentioned above was published in 1832, and contains "The Palace of Art," which seems to indicate that for him the struggle between artistic isolation from the world and involvement in it had been decided at this time. It is in the collection simply entitled Poems that the first solid evidences of his social philosophy appear, notably in "Locksley Hall."

This poem, together with "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," is generally taken as Tennyson's most serious attempt

³⁴Shannon, pp. 46-48.

³⁵See notes on introduction to Poetical Works, p. xiii.

on social commentary. The first, published in 1842, and the latter in 1885, span a period of more than forty years in the poet's production. These two poems span the change that occurred in his outlook over this long period. It was only natural that the first, written at the middle of the century when so much hope was held out for the betterment of life by new political, scientific, and industrial changes, should be so optimistic in nature. The second, after the disillusionments of the latter part of the century, reflects the disappointment that he felt that social awareness and imagination had not kept pace with scientific advancements. Tennyson himself felt that the two poems would some day prove of great historical interest "as descriptive of the tone of the age at two distant periods."³⁶ And so they do. But critics have been too much content to let Tennyson's role as social critic ride on these two poems. Much enlightenment is to be gained by examining two poems that partially span this forty-year period. Although the two Locksley Halls are useful, they do not tell the whole story; in fact, they serve more as book ends, bracketing off poems that deal with specific problems of the time. To get to the real and deep

³⁶Jerome Buckley, Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 233.

understanding that Tennyson is entitled to, one must progress past the book ends and investigate what stands between.

Although the critics may not have been able to agree on their evaluation of Tennyson's role as a social commentator, he seems to have been placed in the unenviable position of being "type-cast" by the public in the role of preserver of religion and the nation's morals. His reputation as a popular poet was solidified with his readers after the publication of In Memoriam, and they did not take too kindly to his efforts to break free of this mold they had fashioned for him. More than criticizing, however, his public tended to ignore or misunderstand the social criticism in his poetry and to concentrate on the parts they felt shored up crumbling religious faith. His two most serious attempts to focus on what he considered important social problems were, in one instance, The Princess, misunderstood and wholly dismissed or laughed at, and in the other, Maud, misinterpreted as an advocacy of war. Maud, though Tennyson's personal favorite,³⁷ was never highly popular with either public or critics. The Princess did enjoy wide popularity because the social question was largely ignored by the public which saw it as a charming

³⁷Charles Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 225.

tale and who took the beautiful songs to its heart.³⁸ The poem even today continues to be discounted as serious social criticism, and a true evaluation of Tennyson as a social critic cannot be made until both Maud and The Princess are examined in this light.

A consideration of both these poems, separated in Tennyson's career by a period of almost ten years, is essential to any attempt to determine the effectiveness of Tennyson as a critic of the problems which beset society of his era. That a poet may occupy himself creatively with current perplexities can hardly longer be argued, but it is important to determine if this can be done concurrently with the creation of great poetry. Thus, an examination of a part of what Tennyson produced between the two points in his career represented by the Locksley Hall poems can cast a new and clarifying light on the true role of Alfred Lord Tennyson's poetry as valid social comment.

³⁸John Killham, Tennyson and "The Princess": Reflections of an Age (London: The Athlone Press, 1958), p. 5.

CHAPTER II

THE WOMAN QUESTION IN THE VICTORIAN ERA: REAPPRAISAL IN THE PRINCESS

In 1837 when The New Moral World printed the article "Woman," several lines from Tennyson's "A Dream of Fair Women" (1833) introduced the essay:

In every land
I say, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

In every land I thought that, more or less
The stronger sterner nature overbore
The softer, uncontrolled by gentleness
And selfish evermore.¹

Tennyson thus became one of the growing number of poets "who could be quoted by the Socialists in support of their feminist crusade."² The influences which as early as 1833 led Tennyson to appreciate the importance of woman's cause in England can be traced to his days at Cambridge, long before

¹Cited in Killham, Tennyson and "The Princess": Reflections of an Age, p. 56.

²Killham, pp. 56-57.

the publication of The Princess (1847),³ which is indeed Tennyson's major statement on the subject of woman's rights.

To understand the serious element of social criticism contained in The Princess, however, it is helpful to trace both Tennyson's personal interest in the problem and the social developments concerned with feminism during the period before the poem was written. From all indications Tennyson's concern with the woman's cause began during his stay at Cambridge. There in 1828, when Charles and Alfred Tennyson enrolled in Trinity College, Alfred came under the influence of a group of young men of literary and intellectual interests. Up to this time Tennyson's attitudes toward women were derived primarily from his own experiences at home. It was probably Tennyson's mother who impressed him most deeply, for in his own family he was all too painfully aware of the suffering his mother went through in her marriage to a brilliant but unstable man.⁴ One of Tennyson's earliest poems, printed in 1830, called "Isabel," is a portrayal of his mother. His ideal of womanhood is evident here:

Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity

.

³Ibid.

⁴Charles Tennyson, p. 222.

The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to with-
hold;
The laws of marriage character'd in
gold
Upon the blanch'd tablets of her heart;
.....
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.⁵

Even at this early age, Tennyson saw marriage as woman's most important relationship.

But it is hardly to be believed that once at Cambridge Tennyson and his circle of avant-garde friends were unaware of the ferment in the nation concerning woman's rights,⁶ and he undoubtedly changed in some of his youthful attitudes toward women. When work was first begun on The Princess Tennyson was striving for a form which would make its tone reminiscent of a fairy tale or fantasy, and thus Ida's ambitions were to be mocked. This stance is, of course, at variance with his earlier attitude shown not only in "Isabel" but also in "A

⁵Poetical Works, p. 7, ll. 7-27.

⁶Morton Luce, A Handbook to the Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson (London: George Bell and Sons, 1895), p. 232.

⁷Buckley, p. 295.

Dream of Fair Women." Before The Princess was completed, however, a change in tone occurred and the mood became serious, indicating a shift in Tennyson's attitude toward his subject. Since the poem was begun, or at least considered as a subject, in 1839, and was not published until the end of 1847, there was ample time for soul-searching and a development of a more mature attitude toward the feminist problem. Tennyson himself mentions this change in tone and said that the Prologue and Conclusion, written after the main work of the poem was completed, were an attempt to unify the narratives and to reconcile "the mockers and the realists."⁸ Probably the questions of unity and reconciliation arose because the poet himself changed his approach to the theme as a result of the events in the 1840's.⁹

It is important to ascertain what events in this period led Tennyson originally to conceive the idea of a college for women as an object of ridicule, however much he may have meant it in a good-natured way. Any suggestion at this time of a college for women would in all probability have been thought so bizarre that it is reasonable to infer that such a proposal would have received an inordinate

⁸Buckley, p. 94.

⁹Killham, p. 144.

amount of publicity. But such a proposal was made in The Metropolitan Magazine in May of 1838. It stressed the idea that women were no better than slaves before the law and that they could gain power only through education. Had the proposal ended there it might have quickly been forgotten after the initial stir, but it was accompanied by the revolutionary idea that women should organize for agitation on a large scale. Women were advised that they should form associations to further their ambitions to have a woman's college. Shortly afterwards, a rather heated rebuttal came in the form of a review in The British and Foreign Review.¹⁰

The Metropolitan article, though, gained an interest with the general public which it might not otherwise have received had it not been for its timeliness. Emotions were already inflamed since a controversial bill called the Custody of Infants Bill, sponsored by Serjeant Talfourd, largely at the instigation of Caroline Norton, had just passed the House of Commons in May, 1838, and was to be considered by the Lords in August. Since Caroline Norton was the defendant in a notorious divorce case involving the Prime Minister, her association with the bill kept it much in the public eye. Moreover,

¹⁰Killham, pp. 144-45.

it was assumed by many persons, including, evidently, the writer of the review in The British and Foreign Review, that Caroline Norton was the author of the article suggesting the furthering and broadening of woman's education.¹¹ The vehemence of the rebuttal article reveals how strong were the feelings that could be aroused by the "inflammable subject of higher education for women" ¹² Equally strong feelings were aroused in Caroline Norton herself, who vigorously denied her authorship of the article in question and supported her denial with a published letter from the proprietors of The Metropolitan Magazine. The letter reveals the interesting fact that the rebuttal article which specifically heaped score on the idea of a woman's university had been allowed to appear in the magazine by an old friend of Tennyson from Cambridge, John Mitchell Kemble, the editor of The British and Foreign Review.¹³ Of course, it is not definitely known whether Tennyson received a copy of the article from Kemble, "though the habit of circulating their compositions was well-established among the Apostles set."¹⁴ That another of the Apostles, W. B. Donne, corresponded with Kemble

¹¹Killham, pp. 149-50.

¹²Killham, p. 156.

¹³Killham, p. 161.

¹⁴Killham, pp. 167-68.

concerning the article is documented. Also during 1839 Tennyson mentioned to Emily Sellwood in a letter that he had dined twice with John Kemble, and it was also mentioned by him that they had discussed among other things the "moral barbarism" in France. This remark could be a reference to the doctrine of the liberated woman in that country, and an allusion in the Conclusion to The Princess seems to indicate Tennyson's disapproval of that doctrine. Furthermore, considering the furor aroused by Kemble's article, "it would be most unlikely that he would not have talked of [it] to Tennyson, too."¹⁵ These events then would certainly help to explain the derisive attitude that Tennyson adopts at the beginning of the poem when his earlier work indicates a much more tolerant view.

Echoes of the influence of the incidents may be seen in the striking correspondence between the type of heroine admired by Lilia, that of the noble lady-knight who strongly defended her castle against a male army, and the militant author of the article in The Metropolitan Magazine. The rebuttal article to the original essay calls its author a "nineteenth-century Bradamante" who is "living not in the

¹⁵Killham, p. 169.

real world of practical bargaining for charters for new colleges, but in a world of romance"16 Although Tennyson did not make his princess herself such a militant heroine, there is explicit allusion to such a heroine in the Prologue, and it is this earlier heroine who inspires the party in its characterization of the Princess in the story they tell. Princess Ida defied men by setting up a woman's university instead of by using arms; however, her brothers do wage war on her behalf. The author of the controversial article "Woman" was accused in the rebuttal review of having misanthropy as motivation in establishing a woman's college, just as Ida herself seems to be motivated in the beginning. The university in the poem also begins "in a world of romance," set as it is in a castle. The person who introduces the idea of the university in the poem's Prologue is the flirtatious, light-hearted Lilia, separated from "the real world" represented by the people below at the Mechanics Institute, just as Ida is separated from the "real world" by her castle walls. Both Lilia and Ida seem in great part to mirror the image which the writer of The Metropolitan Magazine projected of the unrealistic, idealistic mystery author of "Woman."

¹⁶Killham, p. 168.

In addition to the specific incidents revolving around the controversy of the projected woman's university, various socialistic movements afoot in England during the preceding years had caused considerable public reaction, and these movements invariably gave a central place in their discussion to feminist problems.¹⁷ These movements became violently controversial, and many Victorians interpreted the feminist movement as an assault on the institution of the home itself. If Tennyson came to college with a tender but naive concern for women and an appreciation of their position as being inferior to that of men, these events probably had a profound effect on his thinking. The early parts of The Princess reflect a phase in which Tennyson seems to have been somewhat disenchanted with the methods advocated by both groups and individuals for instant equality. He saw the problem as being much more complex than simply emancipating woman.

Beginning in the early 1840's and continuing to the time when Tennyson's poem was published, a gradual change in society's attitude toward woman's rights and her relationships to society and the family began to be reflected in the writing of the period. Countless volumes and essays began

¹⁷Killham, pp. 44-52.

to appear that were intended to dispel the eighteenth-century notion that women should "submit patiently to the role which had been fixed for them."¹⁸ Education had largely meant for women a grounding of morals, manners, and accomplishments in the womanly arts of needlework and the like. These studies were taught in preparation for the one acceptable career open to women--that of marriage.¹⁹ These outworn ideas were constantly under bombardment in the current literature. Arthur Hallam had written extensively on the subject, and of course, it is highly probable that these views of Hallam came to have a greater import as time passed and Tennyson considered them in retrospect.²⁰ Thus the influences of the exciting events of 1839 began to be counteracted in Tennyson by a growing maturity, a mellowing attitude in public opinion, and, as his horizons broadened, an acquaintance with prominent liberal men and women of his time.

Some of the friendships Tennyson developed during this period which may have affected his ideas toward woman's place in society are mentioned in books by both his son, Hallam, and his grandson Charles Tennyson. In 1844 Tennyson developed a

¹⁸Killham, p. 86.

¹⁹Young, p. 91.

²⁰Killham, p. 67.

friendship with William and Mary Howitt that became quite close, and Charles Tennyson states that "Alfred had many talks with Mary Howitt about the education and social position of women; for . . . he had taken up again an idea (which he had often discussed with Emily Sellwood) of composing a poem on these subjects."²¹ Another friend of this period was Lady Lucie Duff Gordon, a most intriguing and unconventional woman. Charles Tennyson is of the opinion that the character of the Princess may have been influenced by her to some extent, as she was of high intellect and deep humanity.²² The Brownings were also included in his circle of liberal and progressive friends, as well as many other well-known literary figures of the time. Hallam noted in his Memoir that his father's friends remembered him as stating that the two greatest social questions of the time were "the housing and education of the poor man . . . and the higher education of women."²³ It was during this later period, in a more mature and reflective attitude, that Tennyson began to work seriously on the long-deferred poem which he still

²¹Charles Tennyson, p. 202.

²²Charles Tennyson, p. 220.

²³Hallam Tennyson, Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1899), p. 249.

referred to as The Woman's University. In 1847 after long planning, this project, so important to him as his considered social comment on a timely and vital question, at last began to assume the proportions in which it was to be published.

Tennyson's poem was the first of a veritable rash of poems that began to appear at the time seeking to explore and clarify the age-old theme of love and marriage in the light of modern social theory. Many contemporary critics were convinced, however, that the poem was intended as nothing more than a pleasing tale because of its unusual structure. They expected Tennyson to treat contemporary problems in a serious way, and its label of "Medley" and its fantasy-like setting distracted them from realizing its serious theme. This early criticism seems to have set the trend for this opinion of the poem's structure, for Fausset in his book in 1923 devotes several pages to an evaluation of The Princess as social criticism, but sees it as a failure in this respect. He calls the poem "a bid for popularity," saying that it "sympathised with progress in theory and at the same time disproved it by caricature."²⁴ He feels that Tennyson was providing the public with the self-satisfaction of Liberal sensations while failing

²⁴Fausset, p. 127.

to call forth any sacrifice from them. His final analysis of the poem is that "The pill . . . was so coated with sugar as to lose its value"25

Nicolson, in a later criticism, continues to follow the path taken by previous reviewers. He also deprecates Tennyson's attempt in The Princess to formulate a new concept of equality between men and women by saying, "What we resent is that he should have consented to incorporate in his poetry the current Victorian fallacies as to the relation of the sexes, and to preach a compromise which has little justification either in honesty or even in eugenics."26

Nicolson concedes that Tennyson realized the "illogical basis" on which the relations of the sexes rested, but accuses him of deliberately making sure that the poem would not be taken seriously by its structure, that of a tale being told in a game.²⁷ Even as late as 1970, James D. Kissane refers to The Princess as "a poetic freak, unlikely in subject"28

The failure to take the poem seriously as social criticism has continued despite rather solid evidence to the

²⁵Fausset, p. 131.

²⁶Nicolson, p. 249.

²⁷Nicolson, p. 250.

²⁸James D. Kissane, Alfred Tennyson (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 20.

contrary. For example, Charles Tennyson saw the motives concerning the poem in an entirely different light than the reviewers. He says of Tennyson:

He had begun to think that a poem should reflect the hour and therefore wished to deal with some question of urgent present importance. He was running considerable risk by this new departure, for the public, whose support he had won with such difficulty, had come to think of him as a lyric poet and might easily resent so great a change. But the consideration of popular demand influenced him very little.²⁹

Of course, the last sentence specifically refutes the charge leveled by Fausset that the poem was a bid for popularity.

Killham, almost alone of the reviewers, specifically disagrees with the idea that Tennyson did not intend the poem to be taken seriously. He sees the poem as "a serious attempt, artfully disguised, to change an outworn attitude to an important human problem."³⁰ Concerning the criticism that the structure of the tale is improper for a serious subject, Killham felt that Tennyson was portraying the age by fantasy "so that he could move into the realm that really mattered--that of the far future."³¹ This opinion of Tennyson's choice of structure is supported by Charles Tennyson's comments concerning the poem's structure:

²⁹Charles Tennyson, p. 219. ³⁰Killham, p. 3.

³¹Killham, p. 14.

The method which he chose for presenting it was most original. The subject was one which aroused hysterical enthusiasm in the supporters of women's rights and, too often, a sense of ridicule in their opponents; He therefore decided to remove his treatment of it as far as he could from the modern world³²

Tennyson's immediate inspiration for the setting seems to have been an actual incident which he witnessed while visiting in the home of E. L. Lushington. Festivals of the kind described in the Prologue were typical of the time,³³ and including this one in the Prologue serves three purposes: First, it portrays the working class, which in the Victorian mind was aligned with women insofar as their needs were concerned, and the scene shows the public interest in science and inventions; next, the diversions of the crowd in its enjoyment of the blending of science and recreation contrast with the more intellectual and slow-paced kind of amusements enjoyed by the college set or the gentry; and finally, and probably most important, the fusion of differing times, by the juxtaposition of the modern festival against the picnic in the almost medieval setting of the ruins, intensifies the "fairy tale" motif that Tennyson had settled upon to use in the poem.

³²Charles Tennyson, p. 219. ³³Killham, p. 64.

As the poem begins, the poet-speaker explains that he is visiting Walter Vivian, a classmate at college, and proceeds to a description of the house, which is of Grecian style, and whose grounds contain the ruin of an old abbey. As Walter describes the arms and armor of his ancestors, it becomes apparent that he is from a distinguished family, and it is here that the story woven around the character of a lady-knight is introduced:

And mixt with these a lady, one that
 arm'd
 Her own fair head, and sallying thro'
 the gate,
 Had beat her foes with slaughter from
 her walls.³⁴

Walter reads the description of her deeds from an ancient book which eulogizes her as a "miracle of noble womanhood" (l. 48)! Thus the stage is set in the Prologue for a woman who fights for her rights against invading men, even to the use of arms, and who is extravagantly praised.

The two then move down through the park, and the festivities of the Institute come into view. The speaker describes the Festival in detail and summarizes: "Strange was the sight and smacking of the time" (l. 89), and it is from this modern

³⁴The Princess, Poetical Works, p. 116, ll. 32-34. All further references to The Princess are from this edition and hereafter will be cited in the text.

scene to one of antiquity that the two now turn.

A gay party of youths, including Walter's sister, and for a more sober note, an aunt, is gathered for an afternoon's amusement at the old Abbey ruins. Walter's sister, Lilia, "half-child, half-woman" serves as a contrast to the more serious character of the Princess later in the poem. Being characterized as half child, Lilia is Tennyson's portrait of the woman of his own time. She is detached from the scientific developments and changes of Tennyson's time as Lilia is from the Mechanic's Institute which is going on far below her. Her "ancestral heritage" separates her from the group below as effectively as tradition keeps the Victorian woman from any life outside her home in the broader society man enjoys. The boys, also, in their tales of college hijinks, serve as a foil for the more dedicated girls later in the poem in the Princess's University. The conversation now turns to the question of whether a woman such as the lady-knight earlier described by Walter lives in modern times. Lilia answers in lines which essentially set forth one of the premises of the poem:

. 'There are thousands
 now
 Such women, but convention beats them
 down;
 It is but bringing up; no more than that.
 You men have done it--how I hate you all!

Ida whom he knows by picture and hearsay only. When the Prince's father considers that the time has come for the Prince and Princess to be wed in actuality as well as proxy, he is informed that the Princess refuses to wed. The king goes into a colossal rage and threatens to send an army to bring her into his kingdom. Meanwhile, the Prince and two of his friends, Florian and Cyril, set out secretly to win the Princess. When the boys arrive in the foreign capitol, the Princess's father explains how the Princess has been influenced by two widows, Lady Psyche and Lady Blanche, to become an ardent champion of woman's rights:

They fed her theories, in and out of place
 Maintaining that with equal husbandry
 The woman were an equal to the man.
 They harp'd on this; with this our banquets
 rang;
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of
 talk;
 Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
 To hear them. Knowledge, so my daughter
 held,
 Was all in all; they had but been, she
 thought,
 As children; they must lose the child, as-
 sume
 The woman.

(I, 128-37)

To prove her theories of the equality of woman, Ida sets out to establish a school. At last the old king gives in to Ida's constant demands for a summer-palace in which to begin a university. The boys determine to find Ida and after another

journey they stop at last at an inn. The inn-keeper is sent to purchase women's clothes so that the three boys, disguised as women, are able to enter the college of the Princess.

Several points are significant in analyzing the events and characters of Part I. The character of the Prince has been a puzzle to critics since the poem was introduced, and much speculation has arisen over why Tennyson should cause him to be afflicted with "weird seizures." That these lines were inserted for some specific purpose is shown by the fact that they were not added until the fifth edition of the poem. The editor of the Cambridge volume concedes that the poet must have had some reason for inserting the lines, and conjectures only that they may have been added to "indicate the weakness and incompleteness of the Prince."³⁵ The Canadian editor of The Princess, however, thought the additions were "not only unnecessary and uncalled for, but . . . actually injurious to the unity of the work."³⁶ Kissane, in an interesting modern psychological interpretation says that the seizures "testify to the contradictions and frustrations inherent in [the Prince's] desire to possess the unattainable."³⁷ This

³⁵Poetical Works, p. 812.

³⁶Cited in Poetical Works, p. 812.

³⁷Kissane, p. 96.

theory seems inadequate, however, since the Prince is said to have inherited the affliction. In actuality, the seizures, when considered as only a part of the entire description of the Prince, resemble nothing so much as the Victorian "vapors" to which ladies of the day are said to have been subject. These seizures in which the Prince "seem'd to move among a world of ghosts" (I, 17), and felt himself "the shadow of a dream" (I, 18), serve quite effectively to keep him apart from the world of reality, just as the "vapors" enabled the Victorian maiden to avoid unpleasantness.

The hero, however, resembles the typical Victorian maiden in more ways than this. The physical description of the Prince has already been mentioned as seeming more like that of a woman than a man. In fact, Tennyson has managed to switch the roles, although not the sexes, of the hero and heroine. This reversal of roles explains not only the physical description, which Tennyson probably intended as a clue to his aims, but also the Prince's medieval-maiden-like devotion to one he did not know. The token of the picture and the lock of hair which the Prince so reveres and his acceptance of his prospective wedding to a stranger serve to highlight subtly the traditional role assigned to woman in Victorian society. The Prince is not described as having

any other pastime except waiting to become married, and all his thoughts center on this, just as the Victorian woman was expected to find in marriage the one suitable, indeed only "natural" life for a woman. The Prince's obsession with marriage despite the fact that it was devoid of real love and the seizures that separate him from reality present a perfect picture of Victorian womanhood in her restricted role, as she was expected to fulfil it by society. Because of this function, the character of the Prince is fragmented, incomplete, and even rather unnatural. Only at the end of the poem, when the Prince and Ida resume their natural male-female roles, enlightened as they become, does the bewildering reversal end.³⁸

The other characters in Part I are also well drawn to reflect the varying attitudes toward women that were held at the time the poem was written. The father of the Prince is moved to rage when he receives the letter from Ida's father of her refusal to marry; he "Tore the King's letter, snow'd it down, and rent / The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof" (I, 60-61), as though he could crush feminism as he does the letter and the gift. This heavy-handed forceful

³⁸Kissane, p. 95.

approach to insubordinate woman is further developed in Part IV in the form of a letter to Ida after the Prince's father becomes aware that his son is at the University. When the King demands the return of his son, he seems more concerned with Ida's heretical beliefs than with his son's safety. He rather ludicrously demands that the Princess fulfil her marriage contract despite the fact that a state of war exists and comments ". . . tho' indeed we hear / You hold the woman is the better man; / A rampant heresy, such as if it spread / Would make all women kick against their lords" (IV, 390-93). It is this danger to the established order rather than the Prince's precarious position that causes him to threaten to raze the palace.

The Princess's father, though, shows the other side of the coin insofar as the male attitude toward women is concerned. He does not understand the Princess's theories, but to maintain peace he finally accedes to Ida's demands for a location for her university. His character is skillfully drawn to reflect those men who condescendingly agree to let women try their little schemes but all the while look upon them as unimportant and insignificant. Of Ida's songs and odes concerning the role of woman, he says:

. . . Then, sir, awful odes she wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
 But all she is and does is awful; odes

 and dismal lyrics, prophesying change
 Beyond all reason . . .

(I, 137-42)

Despite the various conflicts and opposing ideas of the characters introduced in Part I, the section closes with a song, as do all the parts. For many years the songs were a puzzle to critics and readers alike, seeming to be inserted simply as delightful interludes. Their importance, however, is established by the fact that Tennyson said, "The best interpreters of the poem are the songs between the parts."³⁹ Yet, since the songs are concerned with the love of man and woman and a child as the token of that love, the songs would seem to have little bearing on the theme of woman's education. But if it is truly, as Tennyson said, the songs that carry the thread of the deeper theme of the poem, then the theme must go beyond a plea for equal educational opportunities. Charles Tennyson states that the poet's aim in the work is to illustrate

the immense field open to woman's achievement and the richness and beauty which she could bring to human life if her capacities were fully developed and she were freed from hampering restrictions. He must illustrate, too, the danger of any policy which ignores the facts of Nature.⁴⁰

³⁹Buckley, p. 99.

⁴⁰Charles Tennyson, p. 219.

The first song simply sets forth in broadest outlines the theme that is to be developed in more detail later. A man and wife quarrel, and the two are brought together at the grave of their dead child:

We fell out, my wife and I
 O, we fell out, I know not why,
 For when we came where lies the child
 We lost in other years,
 We kiss'd again with tears.

(I, 248, 249, 255, 256, 259)

Man and woman are meant to live together in harmony, but when either regards the other sex with scorn or disdain the relationship is torn apart. Ida, in her seeking of an "absolute intellectual and aesthetic self-sufficiency," is "guilty of a deathful pride"41 Like the husband and wife in the song, she has forgotten that the togetherness of both is more important than either alone. The dead child signifies that the fruitfulness of their relationship is dead. The two can be only reunited when they accept the common bond of the family as transcending the absolute independence of either.

In this theme of bringing woman into the mainstream of human relationships as an equal, the characters presented in Part I assume an importance beyond their roles in the story

⁴¹Killham, p. 16.

itself. They may be seen as fragmented personalities with distortions that afflict both men and women caused from the restricting role occupied by woman. Neither male nor female can be his best or true self under such unnatural conditions of society. Tennyson believes that moral character is a development, founded upon education and experience, not upon restrictive rules of society.⁴² It becomes apparent as the poem progresses that education for women should be a tool to help them to build a rightful place as equals with men in society, but that if they use it as a weapon against men, an unnatural situation again arises.

The other six parts of the story and the connecting songs gradually unfold this deeper theme: the true relationship between men and women is predicated upon equality. The woman's university, as a means to this equality, is important, but Tennyson plainly does not want to see education subverted as a divisive force between men and women. In Part II the misapplication of education that Tennyson fears is first evident in the restriction to keep men from entering the University. The penalty of death is symbolic of the spiritual death when either sex "rules" the other. It is also in this

⁴²Sneath, p. 101.

part that the men are discovered by Lady Psyche, who, despite her lofty principles, cannot bring herself to inform upon them. The fact that one of them is her brother puts the burden of family ties squarely upon her, and her natural love for her brother is stronger than her loyalty to the rules of the University. Thus the first crack appears in the wall that Ida has attempted to construct between herself and the society of men. The family must not be divided or destroyed by woman's new liberties. The choice Psyche makes reveals her as the "ideal" woman. This quality is further developed by the fact that she is the mother of the child whose presence serves as a motif through the poem. The section ends with the lullabye "Sweet and low" which serves as a contrast, in its simplicity and love for the child, to the "older sort" (II, 439) of girls in the garden who wish to marry, and worry because "Men hated learned women" (II, 442). On a deeper level the song, through its tenderness of mood, reasserts the biological truths about men and women that education cannot change.

Part III finds the men discovered, inadvertently betrayed by Melissa, Lady Blanche's daughter. It is in this part that the crack in Ida's isolationist wall widens, as dissent erupts between her two disciples, Blanche and Psyche. Lady Psyche had previously been described in Part II as a

beautiful, impassioned tutor and a devoted mother, who has her child beside her as she teaches. Her lecture in the poem shows her to be a learned woman, devoted to the cause of advancing womankind, so that " . . . everywhere / Two heads in council, two beside the hearth" (II, 155-56) shall be the state of the future. She, and not Ida, has the better vision of woman's place in the world. Lady Blanche, on the other hand, serves to illustrate a distorted attitude. She is described by her daughter Melissa as feeling relegated to an inferior place by Psyche. She says her mother is "Too jealous, often fretful as the wind" (III, 64), and also that her mother says "she was wedded to a fool" (III, 67). Melissa summarizes Blanche's attitude toward life with the statement, "she rail'd against the state of things" (III, 68). Both women are widows, but Psyche had evidently been happy in her marriage, while Blanche had not, and these patterns of happiness and unhappiness continue even in their widowhood.⁴³ Tennyson evidently wants his reader to see that education alone does not produce the complete woman. That it has failed to fulfil Blanche is obvious from her jealousy and discontent.

⁴³ Ailsey Forester, "The Psychology of Feminine Behavior in Tennyson's Dramas and Narrative Poems" (unpublished M. A. thesis, Texas Woman's University, 1937), p. 140.

She is delighted when she discovers the presence of the boys, and her motives for wishing to reveal them to the Princess is misanthropy rather than loyalty to the university or to Ida. All appeals to Blanche fail to move her from her purpose until Florian promises to help put her in first place in the University in exchange for her promise of silence.

While Florian attempts to reason with Lady Blanche, the Prince finds opportunity to talk with the Princess, as a large party from the University sets out upon a geological field trip. Under cover of his disguise he pleads his cause, but to little avail. The Princess reinforces the impression given in the Prologue that the traditional male-female roles have been reversed. In discussing the Prince as she has heard of him, she comments that "To nurse a blind ideal like a girl; / . . . he seems no better than a girl" (III, 201-02), and in this line she reveals her own ambiguity concerning the status of women, for she, herself, is guilty of what she charges the Prince with.

Nevertheless, Ida reveals her true feeling and beliefs in this conversation with the disguised Prince. She admits to the Prince that she was once like other girls, but has come to the belief that education will lift woman up in society to occupy an equal place with man. The Prince warns her that her

work may avail little, because if a lesser leader follows her then all her efforts "May only make that footprint upon sand / Which old-recurring waves of prejudice / Resmooth to nothing . . ." (III, 223-25). He warns her that if her only husband is Fame and her only children are Deeds, she will miss "Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due, / Love, children, happiness" (III, 228-29). Although she does not despise these things, she is willing to sacrifice them for her ideal. She reminds him that deeds cannot die, but that children can prove a disappointment. She does not work for fame, but she considers that a person who influences someone who in turn changes the world is truly great. She sorrows that change must come slowly and gradually and is so touched by the condition of women in the world that she would gladly give her life if this one great act could gain women their liberty. When the Prince questions Ida concerning a lack of a school for medicine, her ambiguity is again evident concerning the role of woman in society. Ida said the thought of women performing operations sickens her and makes her shudder, and yet she herself, foreseeing that the need might arise, had studied the craft of healing. Her fears that the changes that can be brought about by her University will be slight and slow, and her own vagueness concerning the role of woman in the

larger society outside the University suggest that Ida is beginning to realize that she has been misguided.

The scientific exploration that the group had begun in Part III continues in Part IV with the pitching of the tents for the evening. One of the girls sings the beautiful song, "Tears, idle tears" as the party rests before retiring. Through the song, nostalgic and yearning in mood, the reader gains insight into the feeling of the Princess that signal the beginning of spiritual awakening. In her blind devotion to the cause of liberating woman, Ida has overlooked her own basic human needs, which the Prince has tried to explain to her in Part III. However, it is not logic which can reach the soul, and here Tennyson puts into lovely verse what the Princess will not allow herself as yet to recognize--that she has lost her sense of "woman-ness" in her headlong, headstrong pursuit of equality. It is this unrecognized loss which causes the tears, called "idle" because they are from the soul, not the mind. She is not yet completely aware of the cause of her divided spirit, as consciously she is completely dedicated to her ideal. The mood of the song has been called "frustration,"

⁴⁴Frederick L. Gwynn, "'Tithon,' 'Tears, Idle Tears,' and 'Tithonus,'" Publications of the Modern Language Association, 67 (1954), 572.

but regret would be a better term, as the maiden sings:

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.'
(IV, 21-25)

The tears are "idle" only in the sense that the cause for them is not yet consciously known. A regret deeper than consciousness manifests itself through the tears that fall. The autumn imagery suggests fruitfulness and harvest, which, associated with family and children in a woman's life, suggests that Ida can only look upon these things since she has neither of them.

As the group moves from this nostalgic song to those of a happier nature, the boys' charade is exposed as Cyril begins to sing a bawdy tavern song. In a scene of wild confusion the Prince saves the Princess's life when she is plunged into a river. Later, after determining from Melissa that both Psyche and Blanche knew of the boys' deception, Ida calls the two women before her for an explanation. Psyche is not to be found, but in a long speech Blanche airs her grievances and lays the blame on Psyche. She threatens that if the Princess dismisses her the University will collapse without her experience. Into this scene of disorder and

indecision a messenger arrives with two letters. The first is from the Princess's father, telling Ida that he is being held as a hostage by the Prince's father until his son is returned to him. The second letter, which is from the Prince's father, demands not only the return of his son but also the fulfilment of the marriage contract between the Prince and Princess. The women dissolve into a noisy argument at this first test of their loyalty and bravery. The disillusioned Princess chastises the women for their fear and lack of resolution and upbraids them:

. . . then shall they
 That love their voices more than duty,
 learn
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame
 to live
 No wiser than their mothers, household
 stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the
 clown,
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of
 Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and in
 their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to
 thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to
 scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.

(IV, 490-500)

With this she dismisses the women, and turning her attention upon the Prince, Ida wrathfully tells him she would not be

his wife for all the gold in the world and commands him to be banished from her sight.

As the Prince is thrust out the gates, he suffers a seizure; he describes it in this manner:

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous womanguard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.

(IV, 539-45)

The time of the seizure is important, as it has come upon him at a moment when the scene he witnesses is so divorced from reality that his mind cannot accept it. An earlier seizure mentioned in the poem had also come at such a time. The previous attack had occurred at the time he first saw the Princess. As he had approached her, standing high above him on a porch, tame leopards playing about her feet, he recounts:

I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure
came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house.
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not . . .

(III, 169-73)

In each instance, the Prince views a scene that simply defies reality. Through this device of the seizures, Tennyson makes

graphic the dualism of the Victorian world. The divided society, with its foolish and demeaning restrictions on women, presents to the intelligent man something of the unreality that the Prince experiences in his seizures. Woman's place in the Victorian world is as unreal as it is in Ida's turn-about world.

The Interlude introduced between Parts IV and V returns the reader momentarily to the picnic scene where the story is being devised. Lilia, caught up in the story, demands a more serious tone toward the subject. This change in attitude is reflected not through difference in setting or plot, but in the increasing reality of characterization. The Prince and Princess are no longer presented to the reader in such a way that the male-female roles seem almost reversed. The Prince never wears his woman's clothes again, and in fact, takes part in actual battle; nor does he ever again suffer from the seizures that have plagued him. The Princess disbands her University; the pet-leopards are not mentioned again, and Tennyson begins developing her character toward a more realistic and balanced whole, as the problems of the story are moved toward a conclusion.

After the Interlude, actual war is imminent as Part V begins. The breakdown in communication between the men and

women is complete. The Prince's father's unyielding, cynical attitude toward women is a summation of a philosophy of Tennyson's time: "Man is the hunter; woman is his game / . . . We hunt them for the beauty of their skins; / They love us for it, and we ride them down" (V, 147-150). As a natural result of this chauvinistic attitude toward woman, he advocates force to subdue the troublesome Ida, but the Prince demurs, saying that gentleness would be better than war to solve the problem for he truly loves the Princess. A plan is devised, however, that each side shall field fifty knights to decide the issue, a sort of medieval parliament.

Some of the threads of the still-unresolved problem of the ultimate relationship between the Prince and Princess begin to fall into place in Part V. Cyril now tells the Prince that in the confusion in the women's camp he had run away, and during the night he had come upon the weeping Psyche and had taken her to the encampment of the father of the Prince. There, Psyche weeps and cannot be comforted, both for her betrayal of Ida's cause and for the loss of her child, left at the women's camp. However, the child has been claimed by Ida, and in a letter to the men explaining her feeling about the rights of woman, she adds a postscript that betrays her womanly feelings that are beginning to assert themselves in

Ida's nature. She tells her brothers that the little child is their greatest comfort now. At the same time the Prince begins to feel the arousal of emotions associated with the male role. He says:

And I that prated peace, when first I
 heard
 War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of
 force,
 Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
 Stir in me as to strike . . .
 (V, 255-58)

Thus, at the crucial moment of coming battle the two principal characters begin to assume their more normal sexual identity. The Princess has thoughts of the child foremost in her mind, while the Prince arouses himself from his dream-like inactivity to assume an active, if dreaded, role in the coming battle.

During the ensuing battle the Prince is wounded, and the section closes with the song "Home they brought her warrior dead," and it is significant that the song proclaims that the warrior is now worthy to be loved. The Princess, holding the child, sings a song of victory, although it is soon apparent that the victory is a hollow one. With her University in ruins, Ida turns almost instinctively to Psyche's child for comfort. It is, in fact, the child that acts as the catalyst in causing Ida to gain a complete and broad idea of the role of woman as woman, not as a different kind of man. Ida finally

is persuaded to return the child to its mother, and all the company, even Ida's simple warlike brother, beg her to forgive her friend Psyche. She is unable to do so, however, until the Prince's father says he is afraid for the Prince to be tended by one so cruel who "might mix his draught with death" (VI, 260). It is this threat that causes her to plead Psyche's forgiveness at last, and the Prince is taken to be nursed by her. Until the Princess could rid her heart of the resentment of Psyche and her hidden jealousy of Psyche's motherhood, she could not truly love anyone. Ida is learning that idealism cannot supplant human relationships. The section ends with a song of surrender to the reality of love, "Ask me no more."

When the Prince at last regains consciousness, Ida sits by him at night and reads "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height" (VII, 177 ff). It is in this beautiful lyric that Tennyson sums up the concept of woman's inability to live alone on the cold mountain of intellectuality. The real world and the love so necessary to complete woman are symbolized by the valley, and the woman is admonished to "let the torrent dance thee down / To find him in the valley" (VII, 194-95). What the woman leaves is only "water-smoke" in air, but to rejoin life through love will bring all the lush

and sensuous pleasure of the "valley." Woman must not give herself blindly , however. The two sexes should be matched, with neither the master of the other, but both united by love. This equality Tennyson sees as the way to true and complete fulfilment for both man and woman, and the Prince now assures Ida that their hopes are one.

Thereafter, the Conclusion returns the scene to the picnic at the abbey ruins. The men, in reviewing how the story should be retold, request it be a mock-heroic tale, while the women ask for a solemn close. This little feud, symbolizing what Tennyson felt to be the opposing attitudes of society toward woman's rights, resulted in the structure of the story as a medieval tale, removed from the current time, but not from current problems. He calls this solution "a strange diagonal" (Conclusion, 27), by which he hoped "to please them both" (Conclusion, 25).

It is precisely this "strange diagonal" that has kept the poem from being accepted as the serious social critique of the woman's question that it is. Jerome Buckley perceives what Tennyson is trying to achieve through his use of fantasy and through the blending of solemnity with the satiric mode, but he does not feel that Tennyson has been

altogether successful.⁴⁵ The trouble, however, is that Tennyson succeeded altogether too well. Each reader feels free to choose his own "diagonal" of interpretation, admiring the parts which reflect his own beliefs and ignoring those which do not. Some readers admire the songs and divorce them from the poet's content, dismissing the rest of the poem as drivel. Some prefer to think that Tennyson thought women should not strive for higher education and should be content in the traditional role of wife and mother. That Tennyson's approach to the problem should be oblique is inevitable; the two extremes of opinion of the times, represented by Ida and the Prince's father, must be drawn together in harmony. The wall closing women off from equality of participation in society must be breached, but it cannot be replaced by another wall of their own making. Tennyson wants education for women to enable them to take their place in the world, not to supplant the world with an intellectualism devoid of human relationship. Tennyson would never want women to replace the heart with the mind, but to use each to its highest capacity. Both sides of the feminist question had been

⁴⁵Louis Untermeyer, The Lives of the Poets (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), p. 509.

pleaded fervently and ferociously in clashing words, charges, and counter-charges, but it remained for Tennyson to try to bring the two viewpoints together through his use of the "strange diagonal" instead of the head-on approach that had availed so little in real progress. Consequently, Tennyson's poem on woman's place in society is social criticism in the truest sense of the word criticism: it is a careful evaluation of all points, with a balance and temperance of perspective far in advance of the time in which it was written. In its deeper theme of the wholeness of woman it is as valid as social criticism today as it was in 1847.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL INDICTMENT OF AN AGE: MAUD

The changes which took place in the life and social institutions of England, especially from the early 1830's through the 1880's, were so powerful and pervasive that even today from a perspective of more than fifty years they almost stagger the imagination. The government control had passed from the hands of the aristocratic Whigs, through middle-class Liberalism, to a democracy, and Nicolson says that "during those fifty-five years Tennyson, for his part, passed from an early suspicion of democracy, through a wholesome dislike of democracy, to a loathing of democracy so fierce and violent that it upset not only his health and his temper, but even his prosody."¹

But it was not democracy itself that Tennyson grew to hate and fear; it was the haste with which changes were coming about. In a note to the poem "Plowmen" published in 1886 he stated that he did not dislike democracy. He put the

¹Nicolson, p. 252.

blame for social conditions not on democracy, but on those who engaged in feud and deluged common sense in demagoguery. He was never against change, but always against precipitous and ill-considered change. Tennyson was forward-looking, but mindful of the achievements of the past. He had envisioned a future of "natural fulfilment of the prophecies of the present and past"² in a Golden Age, but the conditions of the present, as he saw them, gave rise to fears for the future. The Victorians had begun the century of change and expansion in the belief that civilization would improve and progress by its scientific discoveries and the accompanying industrial prosperity. As year followed year, however, it became obvious that some undiagnosed, indefinable canker was eating away at the very roots of society and blighting the progress so confidently expected. Radicalism and poverty of the working classes became common, and the Victorians were no more able to pinpoint the trouble than those in later years in similar times of violent change have been able to agree on causes of their problems or on specific remedies. If Tennyson advocated

²William Clark Gordon, The Social Ideals of Alfred Tennyson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1906), p. 101.

"Love" as a means to "conquer at the last"³ is this not but another way of stating an old maxim of politics? It would seem that nearly all reform programs have been basically rooted in a love for man and a concern for his condition. By love, Tennyson never meant a static or impotent emotion, but one whose precepts would move man to help his fellow man and work to bring him from his degradation to a place of worth and self-reliance. This Tennyson concept of love is evident in the poem written for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Queen's accession:

You, that wanton in affluence,
Spare not now to be bountiful,
Call your poor to regale with you,
All the lowly, the destitute,
Make their neighborhood healthfuller,
Give your gold to the hospital,
Let the weary be comforted,
Let the needy be banqueted.⁴

Even on this joyous occasion and in a poem that lauded the reign of Victoria, Tennyson could not forget those who had not progressed as the nation progressed. In many ways Tennyson was, as Nicolson has called him, "the mirror of his

³Poetical Works, "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," p. 524, l. 280.

⁴Poetical Works, "On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria," p. 527, Part VI.

age,"⁵ but in his self-searching and idealism he was vastly more than simply a reflection of an era.⁶

Tennyson's ideal of society was determined by his ideal of man himself; as a part of his society man aspires after greater things than he has attained. The private dream and the social dream must be one if a true balance is to be reached between the needs of man and his society. The public good can be served only through the individual good.⁷ Tennyson evidently believed that the nineteenth century could bring about this ideal society, and it was with increasing bitterness that he perceived that man was self-seeking and divided from himself as he had ever been. In 1862 Tennyson wrote in the "Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition":

. . . praise the invisible universal Lord,
Who lets once more in peace the nations meet,
Where Science, Art, and Labor have out-
pour'd
Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.
.
Till each man find his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood.⁸

⁵Nicolson, p. 242.

⁶Buckley, p. 137.

⁷Gordon, p. 101.

⁸Poetical Works, p. 257, I, 3-6; V, 6-7.

Tennyson believed firmly and strongly that society was only as good as its effect on the individual man, and in his growing uneasiness about the state of society, it is only natural that this uneasiness should be expressed in a form that shows how deeply society can influence the life of one particular man. This he has chosen to do in Maud in which he explores the effects of society on a youth of sensitivity.⁹ Tennyson himself called the poem "the history of a morbid, poetic soul, under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age."¹⁰ In the course of his history Tennyson issues a serious indictment against the trends he perceived in the society of nineteenth-century England.

From the time Maud first appeared, it has been the subject of violent controversy. That Tennyson himself favored it over all of his other works is well documented, as Charles Tennyson comments:

Alfred had thrown the whole passion of his being into Maud, which remained through life his favourite poem, the one which he loved best to read aloud . . . He had never written with more fire or originality, or given his genius freer rein, and he had high hopes of

⁹George Brimley, "Maud," in Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D. Jump (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967), p. 196.

¹⁰George O. Marshall, Jr., A Tennyson Handbook (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 129.

its reception. Unfortunately, these were doomed to bitter disappointment. The public were frankly bewildered . . .¹¹

Much to Tennyson's dismay, the poem was attacked by the critics as well as the public; in fact, the poem was received "with almost universal reprobation."¹² Even Tennyson's aunt took exception to it, feeling that her late husband had been attacked in it. The press attributed each sentiment and opinion in the poem to Tennyson himself, and the attacks "culminated in a violent and quite effective parody by W. C. Bennett . . . under the title of Anti-Maud, which savagely attacked the Government's Crimean policy, defended the social progress of the past forty years of peace, and accused the poet of deliberately fomenting a war in which he had no intention of risking his own life or safety."¹³ The war passages were particularly condemned, as were the lines on Mammonism in England. Most of the few reviewers who approved the poem did so primarily because they believed it was an endorsement of the Crimean War.¹⁴ Despite the storm of

¹¹Charles Tennyson, p. 285.

¹²Charles Tennyson, p. 286.

¹³Charles Tennyson, p. 387.

¹⁴R. J. Mann, "Tennyson's 'Maud' Vindicated," in Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D. Jump (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967), pp. 197-198.

criticism, Tennyson would not withdraw the poem, and it is certainly his most concentrated and heart-felt effort as a social critic. From its reception, he felt he had overestimated the temper and social attitudes of his audience¹⁵; his public was not ready to accept the idea that the social forces of the time could so condition and influence human behavior.¹⁶ Thus, it is certainly valid to infer that insofar as Maud is concerned, the poem acted as a criticism of society far more than as a reflection of it. This indictment of "the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age" tends to dispel the "conventional view that persists in regarding the Laureate as the complacent apologist for the whole order of Victorian society."¹⁷

After close analysis, the interpretation of the poem as a personal advocacy of war is invalid. Far from advocating war, the poem presents war as an expression of unreason, both in the person and in society. The original title of the poem was "The Madness," and perhaps it is unfortunate that it was not retained; the poem's theme is the hero's madness, engendered by the madness of the society in which he lives.

¹⁵Shannon, p. 414.

¹⁶Buckley, p. 142.

¹⁷Ibid.

The war motif is a continuing thread throughout the poem and has a deeper and more symbolic meaning than as a mere exhortation to take part in a specific conflict.¹⁸ This motif can be apprehended thoroughly only as the reader follows it as it deepens and intensifies in the poem. Those critics who see only a war message in the poem have failed to perceive the greater import of its far-ranging social criticism that touches on multiple layers of Victorian society.

Some later critics have attempted an interpretation of the poem as autobiographical in nature, disregarding the social implications found in it or interpreting them in the light of Tennyson's own experiences. That there are echoes of personal experiences of the poet contained in the poem can hardly be doubted, but the work is much larger in scope than a purely autobiographical interpretation would permit. To consider it an accurate reflection of Tennyson's life is to underrate his imagination and overrate his sensitivity to much larger and very real social problems. Rader has written an extensive study of the events and person in Tennyson's background that he sees reflected in the characters in the

¹⁸Ibid.

poem, especially in the character of Maud.¹⁹ That Tennyson might have drawn description and even personality traits from women he had known, and perhaps loved, is not unrealistic, but that he would construct a poem whose story concerns an unhappy love affair, based on his own experiences, written as it was during the early years of his own quite happy marriage, is to stretch credulity and to disregard Tennyson's character. It seems possible, therefore, to discount the idea that specific incidents and characters in Maud were drawn primarily from experience. Although Charles Tennyson feels that this poem has "more than a little reference to Frederick,"²⁰ Alfred's brother, the main character actually shows little concrete correspondence to Frederick other than in his mental state. Also there is no doubt that Alfred, like the character in the poem, was plagued with money difficulties for many years, but the speaker in the poem is much too sharply etched in his madness to be a self-painted portrait. While his own financial difficulties and his brother's insanity undoubtedly gave Tennyson a perspective that he might otherwise never have

¹⁹See Ralph Wilson Rader, Tennyson's "Maud": The Biographical Genesis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

²⁰Charles Tennyson, p. 194.

gained, the poem has a much deeper social significance than here autobiography would lend it.

Certainly Tennyson learned all too well the dissension that money can cause within a family from his grandfather's disregard for the tradition of primogeniture; an action which resulted in the subsequent division of the family into two separate branches. Largely because of these events, Tennyson's father was an embittered man during much of his adult life, and the lack of money often complicated life for Tennyson. One example of the frustrations he felt because of the emphasis on money and outmoded social mores concerned the long postponement of his marriage to Emily Sellwood. It was from such events as these that Tennyson became contemptuous of the Victorian reliance upon money, and on one occasion he gave vent to his rage. Charles Tennyson relates this incident in which a young woman at a dinner party mentioned a penniless marriage. Thereupon Tennyson took a penny from his pocket, slammed it upon the table, and told the startled young lady, "There--I give you that, for that is the God you worship."²¹ Consequently, understanding the problems of family disharmony and the thwarted dreams

²¹Charles Tennyson, p. 225.

caused by society's obsession with money Tennyson had an insight into social concerns which those more fortunate might lack. Moreover, he credited financial worries with at least part of the troubles of his unstable brothers: Edward became insane, Septimus suffered from a nervous affliction, Charles became an opium addict, and Arthur suffered a nervous collapse.²²

Although Tennyson undoubtedly drew upon the knowledge gained from his brothers' misfortunes in creating the main character in Maud, the poem is nevertheless not presented as a realistic case history of madness, but as an exploration into the social forces that effect such human behavior.²³ For this reason, the characters who fall victim to social forces are generalizations or abstractions, and only one character in the poem is in any respect a real person, although he, too, is actually the essence of many real people. The character is not Tennyson, or his brothers but a persona, a voice without solidarity or substantial identity, who yet manifests emotions and feelings as a real person.²⁴ The hero

²²Charles Tennyson, pp. 127, 197-98.

²³Buckley, pp. 145-46.

²⁴Richard H. Horne, "Alfred Tennyson" in Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D. Jump (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967), p. 164.

is not a normal person, and Tennyson never intended that he should be.²⁵ The key to the understanding of the poem lies in recognizing what society has done to make the hero what he is. As an indictment of society, the theme depends on the presentation of a man alienated from a society which Tennyson saw as governed by materialism. His point is that the society man has created through greed and materialism is evil and distorted, and it in turn breeds people who are capable of great evil, who are distorted and ugly in spirit, and infected with the same disease that afflicts society at large. The squalor of the cities, the treachery of tradesmen, the greed of the factory owners, ugly as they are, become most hateful to Tennyson, not for what they do to the human body, but for how they begrime and twist the human soul. It is this tortured cry from such a twisted soul that Tennyson wants the world to hear and heed in Maud.

Tennyson's hopes for the forwarding of the society of man, his expectation that the discoveries of the age would allow man the scope, imagination and knowledge to build his society to a future greatness that he had not heretofore known were based on the conviction that these things are

²⁵Rader, p. 115.

possible only if man has the freedom to choose his own destiny.²⁶ Tennyson felt that life was not worth living without this freedom of will. If man is at the mercy of vast forces of society that have no pity nor sympathy for him, that use him only as a type and deny his individuality, then man is something less than man. This is the kind of force that Tennyson saw society becoming in its obsession with progress, commerce, and wealth.

It is such a picture of society as the force which has operated to ruin the young man's family that Tennyson presents in Part I of Maud. The embittered speaker in the opening stanzas alludes to the diverse ways in which society has preyed upon the people, and in his eyes, it is society that is responsible for hounding his father to his death. The father's death, which seems to have been suicide, he attributes to the treachery and greed of his father's business associate and former friend and neighbor. The speaker is filled with hate for the society that he considers responsible for the financial ruin and death of his father, and sees the world about him in heightened tones of red, indicative

²⁶ Solomon F. Gingerick, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning: A Study in Human Freedom (New York: Gordian Press, 1968), pp. 153-54.

to him of the death and despair brought about by a permissive social structure:

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the
 little wood;
 Its lips in the field above are dabbled
 with blood-red heath,
 The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent
 horror of blood,
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her,
 answers 'Death.'²⁷

The two images of the hollow and the blood combine to present a chilling and desolate picture which is both the speaker's view of the world and the state of the speaker's mind. Life to him is hollow and empty, but it is also a place of strife and murder. Moreover, the "lips" that are "dabbled" with blood-red create a beast image of an animal over his kill, thus giving the reader an impression of a society that is animalistic and inhuman. The description of his father's body as "mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground" (I, 71), even though realistically explained as being caused by a fall with a rock, is also suggestive of an image of society as a soul-less machine crushing those within its path. His father's ruin had been brought on by treachery in the person of his father's friend, now lord of a great estate,

²⁷ Maud, Poetical Works, p. 199, ll. 1-4. All further references to Maud are from this edition and hereafter will be cited in the text.

who "Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd" (I, 20). Society is again pictured as a beast, in this instance that of a parasite who drains his victim of its lifeblood.

The anguished thoughts of the boy then turn to the broader aspects of society's influence. He sees the "blessings of peace" as a "curse" (I, 21), and the state of society as a kind of warfare:

But these are the days of advance, the works of
the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a trades-
man's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and
that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the
sword.

(I, 25-28)

In this kind of war there are injuries and deaths, as for example his father, but since one cannot know his enemy as all are in disguise, brother distrusts brother and neighbor fears neighbor. In a real war, at least one can identify his enemy.

His worst fear, however, is that he, too, may become as those who live in "the golden age" (I, 30), and that his heart will become "as a millstone" and his "face as a flint" (I, 31). The stone imagery intensifies the horror he has of becoming so hardened to the terrible events which occur that

he will no longer hate them.²⁸ This "peace" or "golden age" is one in which the poor are "hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine" (I, 34). The human have become inhuman animals, and the inanimate becomes a life force in this time "When only the ledger lives . . ." (I, 35). Other crimes of this undeclared war are enumerated, such as lying, wife-beating, adulterated bread sold to the poor, fear of one's fellow man, and the killing of infants for the burial fee. In his distraught mind these things are truly acts of war, but of an insidious kind that would be better supplanted by actual war, for at least neighbors would cease to see each other as the enemy. That these are not truly realistic opinions, even though the events he names are real enough, Tennyson makes quite clear, because the speaker begins to question his own sanity. The speaker is intended as a character who presents a criticism more by his state of being, by his distortion as a product of society, than by what he says.

The poem then turns to the reopening of the Hall, the home of the man who had been his father's business associate and the cause of his father's ruin. The speaker's thoughts

²⁸ John Killham, "Tennyson's Maud: The Function of the Imagery in Maud," Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, ed. John Killham (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 232.

stray then to the daughter of that family, the beautiful Maud, remembered in a childhood scene as "purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes" (I, 71), thus establishing at the outset that Maud is to be associated with the money-grasping commercialism of the family. Later, when he actually sees Maud again he describes her as "Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null, / Dead perfection, . . ." (I, 82-83). Soon the protagonist becomes obsessed with a dream of Maud. He envisions her as cold, passionless, pale and star-like in her unreachable cold perfection, and in his dream he describes her effect upon him:

Growing and fading and growing upon me without
a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half
the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could
bear it no more.

(I, 94-96)

The dream in the poem is a premonition of the outcome of his devotion to her, and as he can stand the dream no longer, he arises and walks outside, where nature is also a deathlike reflection of his dream.

Suddenly a shift in the mind of the speaker is reflected by his changed view of nature. The death-like images are replaced with those of pulsing life, the reds fade away or are transformed, and all about him he sees the green of life.

He sees "A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime /
In the little grove where he sits . . ." (I, 102-03, and
although he longs to be one with the season, to lose his
hatred and distrust of life, he cannot force himself to see
the world as a comfortable place. Even now he again observes:

. . . nature is one with rapine, a harm no
preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the
sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit
is a world of plunder and prey.
(I, 123-25)

To him it seems that man's nature is like the beasts and birds
of nature:

. . . we cannot be kind to each other
here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and
grin at a brother's shame;
However we brave it out, we men are a
little breed.
(I, 129-31)

He yearns for the quiet life of the philosopher, but he knows
he will never find it in the "cruel madness of love" (I, 156).
Instinctively he realizes that Maud is "all unmeet for a wife"
(I, 158). From the association of Maud with the imagery of
gems, stones, and stars, it would seem that she represents
something quite different from the agent of redeeming love

that she is generally taken to be.²⁹ For example, E. D. H. Johnson's examination of the rose-lily imagery in the poem has resulted in a rather widely accepted view of Maud as a potentially redeeming force, the rose typifying love, and the lily purity. In his view, as Maud fades into the background, the rose remains "to symbolize the lover's strenuous endeavors to come to terms with his fate."³⁰ Rader, however, sees the symbolism of the rose as denoting "ecstatic passion,"³¹ But these explanations of the rose symbol seem inadequate because of the often ambiguous use of the rose, and also because of the strange transformation the rose assumes in the beautiful passage "Come into the garden, Maud" (I, 850 ff). Here the protagonist talks to the roses, and they, like the hero, have been waiting and listening to the strident revelry in the hall. The rose image becomes divided as the red rose tells him, "She is near" (I, 912), while the white rose "weeps, 'She is late'" (I, 913). He has already stated that "the soul of the rose went into my blood" (I, 882), and hence, the division comes after the essence of the rose,

²⁹E. D. H. Johnson, "The Lily and the Rose: Symbolic Meaning in Tennyson's *Maud*," Publications of the Modern Language Association, 64 (1949), 1222-1227.

³⁰Johnson, p. 1225.

³¹Rader, p. 107.

or what it represents, has been taken into the Speaker's soul. In the last line the rose symbol undergoes change into simply the color red, juxtaposed with purple, as the Speaker declares his undying love:

My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;
 My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead,
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.
 (I, 918-23)

The reason for the division of the rose symbol into red and white becomes more apparent when the protagonist's early feelings about Maud are recalled. His feelings toward her have been divided also, in part because of his intuitive knowledge that she represents all that he hates in society. He recalls the strife between their families (I, 709-26), and he is both attracted and repelled that their fathers had intended them for each other since they were children:

. . . Maud's dark father and mine
 Had bound us one to the other,
 Betrothed us over their wine,
 On the day when Maud was born;
 Seal'd her mine from her first
 sweet breath!
 (I, 720-24)

To him the blood that has been spilled has dissolved the seal of the old contract, and the part of the relationship that is represented by the white rose weeps because there can be no

lasting love between them. But this part of the symbolism fades away, to be replaced wholly by the red of the red rose, and it is this red that has entered the Speaker's soul. Thus, although the rose image functions on both the levels that Rader and Johnson assign to it, it also seems to hold a much broader and deeper meaning, especially if the reader sees the rose originally appearing as a transmutation from the red of the hollow at the first of the poem and blossoming again into red and blood in Part II in the duel between the lover and Maud's brother. It is not the rose, then, that is the basic image, but blood.

Even with this symbolic value, the rose is still emblematic of Maud and the love that the young man both hopes for and dreads, as this love, and indeed Maud herself, have meaning different from that of a love that would redeem the morbid hero. When the other images that appear such as stones and jewels and the recurring motif of war and strife are considered to be a part of the imagery associated with Maud, as well as the rose, then an entirely different and more complex view of Maud begins to emerge. Earlier the hero says that she has "fed on roses," a remark which, if roses are a part of the over-all blood image, gives a new insight into Maud's character. She has been weaned on the milk of

ill-gotten gains, a product of the society her father supports. Furthermore, the first time the lover hears her voice she is singing a martial song, and the culmination of their relationship is in the bloodshed of a duel between the protagonist and Maud's brother. Maud represents, then, a call to join or accept the very society that he has rejected. Consequently, he can never wholeheartedly and actively pursue Maud. Since his heart is divided, he sees society's pleasures, but he rejects its values. Since he cannot join in the dance in the Hall, he waits outside for Maud to join him, and when she does the two cannot be reconciled. The frustration of his inner struggle, or his temptation, erupts into violence. Society has again brought death, both of body and soul. Tennyson certainly does not condone this violence, as the hero suffers such guilt concerning his part in the duel that he loses his tenuous grip on reality. That society could induce this state in man is its ultimate horror.

The abrupt change from the garden, representing the kind of ideal life which the hero can never enjoy within conventional society, to the anguished introspection within the mind of the protagonist, indicates by its lack of transition and structure the disorientation and madness of the hero. He cannot embrace society, but neither can he fight it. The

inertia of the youth and his failure to resolve his violent inner conflict cause his complete disintegration. Moreover, in his anguish over his killing of Maud's brother, the lover tortures himself with his guilt and eventually in his madness sees himself as a dead man whom society refuses to bury. He can find no place or function in the world, yet he cannot escape it.

After a period of time, the speaker begins a slow recovery, and gradually becomes aware of the world around him once more; he becomes an impassioned supporter of a war which he sees as a cure for his alienation from society. In the people's common endeavor of war he feels that he and others can unite in activity in which "No more shall commerce be all in all . . ." (III, 23). In the "blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire" (III, 53) he finds the answer to the peace that he never saw as real peace in society:

We have proved we have hearts in a cause,
 we are noble still,
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to
 the better mind.
 It is better to fight for the good than
 to rail at the ill;
 I have felt with my native land, I am
 one with my kind.

(III, 55-58)

It is the protagonist's decision for action to work for what he considers good or right that Tennyson gives his injunction

to the age. That the waging of war is seen as beneficial is vital to the poem, for this commitment to action proves the hero's salvation since it puts an end to his morbid introspection. The first step toward recovery is to take action in what he individually believes may be a help to improving society instead of "railing at the ill." Now he realizes that inactivity and ambivalence are the roads to destruction. Just as Tennyson found his own individual answer to his question of the true function of the poet was an involvement in the world, so his hero expresses the belief that the individual can overcome the wrongs of society also through involvement, not through a morbid retirement from society and its problems.

No work of Tennyson's was ever so misunderstood, misinterpreted, and maligned as Maud. Many of the critics felt it was "an endorsement of not only the Crimean War, but war in general."³² Goldwin Smith in an unsigned article in Saturday Review gave the poem a scathing review. He said the main character relied on "external sensations instead of internal efforts for a moral cure."³³ R. J. Mann's discerning

³²Marshall, p. 130.

³³Goldwin Smith, "The War Passages in Maud," in Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D. Jump (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967), p. 188.

review, however, came as a welcome relief to Tennyson because Mann understood his aim and purpose,³⁴ and Tennyson wrote a note of appreciation to him.³⁵

The Athenaeum review, although not particularly critical, could certainly have given Tennyson no motivation for a note of thanks, as it consistently developed war as the main theme of the poem; however, the review does state that "A truth, if it be a truth, must be universal."³⁶ With this there can be no quarrel, but universality can hardly be denied solely on the basis of the use in art of real places and events. If this were true, there could be no universal truth in James Joyce's Dublin stories nor Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrimage. Although perhaps it is not practical nor possible to divorce the Victorian element from Tennyson's art, as Nicolson suggests, this element does not nullify its universality. Paradoxically, the poetry's timely social message is not blunted by its universality. Tennyson's social criticism indeed reflects his concern with contemporary life, its shortcomings, and its cruelties,

³⁴Mann, p. 211.

³⁵Hallam Tennyson, p. 394.

³⁶Moxon, "Review of Maud and Other Poems," The Athenaeum, August, 1855, p. 893.

but whereas social criticism in rhyme is not necessarily art, social criticism in Maud and The Princess is art in its finest form. In these poems on contemporary problems Tennyson considerably enlarges the range of social subject matter,³⁷ and for this addition surely he need not be censured. Art is flexible enough to cover all aspects of both body and soul. To Tennyson, the highest service of art was to point the way toward the improvement and enrichment of his fellow man in the society in which he lived, and to this end he dedicated the best that he had.

³⁷A. C. Bradley, The Reaction Against Tennyson, English Association Pamphlet 39 (Oxford: The University Press, 1917), p. 16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alden, Raymond Macdonald. Alfred Tennyson. Indianapolis: The Bobb-Merrill Company, 1917.
- Barker, George. "The Face Behind the Poem." Poetry, 97 (February, 1961), 310-15.
- Bowden, Marjorie. Tennyson in France. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930.
- Bradley, A. C. The Reaction Against Tennyson. The English Association Pamphlet No. 39. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917.
- Brimley, George. "Maud." Tennyson: The Critical Heritage. Edited by John D. Jump. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967.
- Brooke, Stopford A. Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894.
- Brooks, Cleanth. "The Motivation of Tennyson's Weeper." Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson. Edited by John Killham. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Buckley, Jerome H. Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.
- Eidson, John Olin. Tennyson in America. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1943.
- Fausset, Hugh I'Anson. Tennyson: A Modern Portrait. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1923.
- Forester, Ailsey. "The Psychology of Feminine Behavior in Tennyson's Dramas and Narrative Poems." Unpublished M. A. thesis, Texas Woman's University, 1937.

- Gingerich, Solomon F. Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning: A Study in Human Freedom. New York: Gordian Press, 1968.
- Gordon, William Clark. The Social Ideals of Alfred Tennyson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1906.
- Gwynn, Frederick L. "'Tithon,' 'Tears, Idle Tears,' and 'Tithonus.'" Publications of the Modern Language Association, 67 (1954), 572-75.
- Gwynn, Stephen. Tennyson: A Critical Study. London: Blackie & Son, Ltd., 1899.
- Hill, Julian. Great English Poets. London: E. Grant Richards, 1907.
- Hopkins, Kenneth. English Poetry: A Short History. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1962.
- Horne, Richard H. "Alfred Tennyson," Tennyson: The Critical Heritage. Edited by John D. Jump. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967.
- Johnson, E. D. H. "The Lily and the Rose: Symbolic Meaning in Tennyson's Maud." Publications of the Modern Language Association, 64 (1949), 1222-27.
- Killham, John. "Tennyson's Maud: The Function of the Imagery." Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson. Edited by John Killham. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.
- _____. Tennyson and "The Princess": Reflections of an Age. London: The Athlone Press, 1958.
- Kissane, James D. Alfred Tennyson. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970.
- Lounsbury, Thomas R. The Life and Times of Tennyson. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962.
- Luce, Morton. A Handbook to the Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson. London: George Bell and Sons, 1895.

- Mann, R. J. "Tennyson's 'Maud' Vindicated." Tennyson: The Critical Heritage. Edited by John D. Jump. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967.
- Marshall, George O., Jr. A Tennyson Handbook. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1963.
- [Marston, J. W.] "Review on The Princess." Tennyson: The Critical Heritage. Edited by John D. Jump. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967.
- Moxon. "Review of Maud and Other Poems." The Athenaeum, August, 1855, p. 893.
- Nicolson, Harold. Tennyson: Aspects of His Life, Character, and Poetry. London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1949.
- Rader, Ralph W. Tennyson's "Maud": The Biographical Genesis. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.
- Robson, W. W. "The Dilemma of Tennyson." Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson. Edited by John Killham. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Shannon, Edgar Finley, Jr. Tennyson and the Reviewers. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952.
- Smith, Goldwin. "The War Passages in Maud." Tennyson: The Critical Heritage. Edited by John D. Jump. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967.
- Sneath, E. Hershey. The Mind of Tennyson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900.
- Taine, H. A. "Tennyson as the Poet of Victorian England." Tennyson: The Critical Heritage. Edited by John D. Jump. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967.
- Tennyson, Alfred, Lord. Complete Poetical Works of Tennyson. Edited by W. J. Rolfe. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1898.
- Tennyson, Charles. Alfred Tennyson. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949.

- Tennyson, Hallam. Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1899.
- Untermeyer, Louis. The Lives of the Poets. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959.
- Weatherly, Edward H., and others. The English Heritage, I. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1945.
- Wolfe, Humbert. Tennyson. The Poets on the Poets Series No. 3. London: Faber & Faber, 1930.
- Young, G. M. Victorian England: Portrait of an Age. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.