

FOUR GREAT ELEGIES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

^{Book}
THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS, LYCIDAS,

IN MEMORIAM, and ADONAIS.

A Comparison and Study

by

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FOUR GREAT ELEGIES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

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There is no question that Lord Tennyson first earned his great standing as a poet by the publication of his In Memoriam. The appearance of this elegy in 1850 sent serious and thoughtful men back to his early writings to see if there were any trace of power there such as might have given promise of a riper maturity. To the astonishment of many, a mine of great richness lay before them, which they had passed by almost unnoticed.

But few poets offer an elegy as a prelude, because this form of poetry is a sort of crucial test of ability. A poet whose genius prompts him to come forward and write an elegaic poem, offering it as a serious work, throws it down as a gauntlet at the feet of all critics, and challenges investigation into his literary status and character. An elegy is, in many respects, an utterance which it seems a kind of presumption to give to the world at all, being primarily of a personal and individual nature. A man should stand high indeed to warrant his expecting the public to listen to his wailing with any sort of patience. For the

most part they have never seen, perhaps never heard of, the person who is made the subject of all these outpourings. The world is wide, they think, and abounds in good men worthy of a tribute, who never get any; and too, they consider the homage accorded to a dead man somewhat superfluous and probably rather too much strained. The elegy, therefore, except in the case of a great public character, would seem to lack the essential ingredient of interest, and the choice is a rather dangerous one to make, even in the case of a beloved friend. Byron's monody on Sheridan, for instance, is tame and uninteresting, although the subject of the poem was a distinguished public man and a writer. One can hardly remember a good monody worthy of a second reading, except those whose titles we have placed at the head of this paper, and perhaps Matthew Arnold's monument to Clough, Thyrsis.

However, the elegaic form of poetry is one which may evoke the poet's highest powers. It must touch upon the eternal and profound problems of the earth and the beyond, the problems in which mankind is always ready to take an interest. Death, immortality, love and friendship---these are the themes which find the pro-

*Coleridge's
"The Rime of
Ancient Mariner"
written in
1798, and
"The
Ancient Mariner"
written in
1798.*

foundest response in the human heart, and they are the themes which confront the poet when he begins to write an elegy. It would seem, then, that there is no middle ground for the elegy---it must be either exceptionally good and worthy, or it will fall into unusual mediocrity.

The elegy has come down to us from antiquity, like many another good thing. The earliest Greek elegies which we have, however, are not funereal. They are often dedicated not to death, but to war and love. Callinus of Ephesus, of the seventh century, and Tyrtaeus of Sparta, are the earliest elegaic writers of whom we have record. The form rose to a high level of merit in Alexandrian times, but still the poems were of an amatory nature. The funeral dirges of Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, those which establish the type for us, were not called elegies at all, but idylls. In Latin times the elegy flourished and came to its highest development in Ovid. Then, in English literature, beginning with Chaucer's Book of the Duchesse in 1370, and later with George Gascoigne's Complaint of Philomene in 1576 and Spenser's Daphnaida in 1591, the elegy has had a prolific vogue. In the seventeenth century the composition of elegies became

universal on every occasion of public or private grief, and many examples may be found as well in France, Italy and Portugal. The German idea of an elegy seems to be entirely different from those of the countries mentioned. In American literature, perhaps the most notable example is Emerson's Threnody on the death of his child.

Having thus considered the general nature and something of the background of the elegy, let us enter upon a more direct consideration of the four particular examples which we have taken as representing the greatest elegaic verse in our own language. It is our purpose to give, as well as we may, a general comparison and study of the four poems as regards the occasions upon which they were written, the sources drawn upon by the writers, their general form, versification, purpose and spirit, as well as their differing treatments of death and immortality, love and friendship, their uses of nature, etc. We consider each poem a masterpiece which cannot be successfully imitated, due to the author's personality, philosophy of life, and purpose. It is easy to become so enthralled in the beauties and excellencies of one or the

other of the poems as to overlook the excellencies of the others. We are to consider briefly four great men, all of whom belong to certain literary groups---if we may consider Chaucer a complete "school" within himself. Chaucer and Tennyson are farthest apart in point of time, and are the undisputed masters of epochal periods. Milton dominated his time, while Shelley was one of the most conspicuous figures in the romantic group. We should expect to find, then, that the greater portion of the differences in the poems are due, besides the individuality of the authors, to the demands of the times of their composition and to the character of the relationships of the poets to their respective friends, whose deaths occasioned the writing.

In the case of the four persons who form the subjects of The Book of the Duchesse, Lycidas, Adonais and In Memoriam, one was a woman---the subject of Chaucer's poem. It was in 1369 that Blanche, the wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was stricken by the plague. The good duchess, who is said to have been indeed a very beautiful and remarkable woman, was mourned by many. Froissart wrote a few graceful lines about her, beginning,

"Elle morut jone et jolie."

John of Gaunt was a friend of Chaucer's, and the poet was

at the time connected with the court. Whether the prince requested Chaucer to write an elegy on his wife, we know not, but even if he did we may readily believe, from the instinct sadness expressed in the poem, that Chaucer himself was truly among the mourners. In this case, then, the office of the poet was that of a close friend to the husband of a charming and popular lady of the court who had been prematurely stricken.

Of the three men who are the subjects of the monodies of Milton, Shelley and Tennyson, two of them, King and Hallam, ^{were} ~~was~~ almost unknown, and the fame of the third, Keats, was known only among the poets of his day.

Edward King, whose death is commemorated in Lycidas, was lost by shipwreck in August, 1637. King was a fellow student of Milton at Cambridge, but somewhat his junior. It would appear that Milton was well acquainted with King, and that he had a sincere admiration for both his character and his ability, but how close a friendship existed between them we can only gather from the poem. King was something of a poet, having

written a few poems in Latin verse, but he was primarily a student for the ministry, looking forward to a place as a priest in the Church of England.

John Keats, the subject of Adonais, died at Rome in February, 1821, after a long illness. The poet was only twenty-three years old at his death, which Shelley and others believed, wrongly, to have been due largely to the savage criticisms of the young poet's productions, Endymion and Hyperion. It is known that Shelley and Keats were not close friends, although Shelley had great admiration and respect for the young poet, and was ready to offer more friendship than Keats was ready to return.

In Memoriam was written in memory of Arthur H. Hallam, a fellow student and a most intimate friend of Tennyson. His untimely death at Vienna in 1833 cut off a companionship whose genial influence had been of great value to Tennyson in the early part of his career, and his loss caused the poet much grief. Their friendship, in the words of Tennyson, "almost surpassed the love of woman." Hallam was a young man of extraordinary character and of rich endowment, showing promise of true

greatness. He was, at the time of his death, engaged to be married to Tennyson's sister.

From these brief accounts we can see, then, that In Memoriam is the only one of the elegies which may be called a monument to an especially close friend of the writer. The other poets were strong admirers of their subjects, but personal bonds were not so strong. This fact shows itself in the different poems. Blanche is the type of womanly nobleness; King, a promising clergyman and something of a poet; Keats, a poet; Hallam, a dear and noble friend.

We might stop here long enough to consider the elements of personal tribute in the four poems. The personal tribute to Blanche, as given by the black knight in Chaucer's dream, attests to the high perfections of the lady, both physical and spiritual. She is the highest type of virtue and beauty, and every good quality is attributed to her: moderation, "goodly speche," goodness, "trouthe," lack of coquetry, chastity, and perfect beauty. This is all, of course, in conformity with the conventional mediaeval idea, especially after

the French manner, of the lover's depicting his lady as a perfect being in all her attributes of mind and heart. But in spite of the use of this convention, Chaucer has put a touch of freshness and of individuality into the description so that, in the opinion of James Russell Lowell, it is "one of the most beautiful portraits of a woman that were ever drawn." Chaucer's imagination was surely quickened by the highest personal regard, and perhaps by more personal attachment than we had first supposed. It hardly seems possible that mere desire to compliment a patron could account for the impression conveyed, and we may feel certain that Chaucer loved and honored the duchess well, and himself was under the sway of her beauty and "womanly noblesse."

The personal tribute in Lycidas is short ~~by~~ *but* impressive. It shows, however, that the poet's relation ~~to~~ *rather* his subject was one of admiration than of personal friendship:

"For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
Himself to sing and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept"

Many lines of personal tribute might be cited from the Adonais, but a few verses will be enough to indicate that Shelley's grief was largely for the loss to poetry rather than for personal loss:

"He died
Who was the sire of an immortal strain."

"But now thy (Urania's) youngest, dearest one
has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood."

"Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom whose petals, nipt before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste."

The In Memoriam is so full of personal tribute that it is difficult to select the most significant lines. The poem in its entirety is a sublime expression of personal friendship:

"Known and unknown, human divine,
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, Mine, forever, ever mine.

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee."

We would call attention to the fact that on the basis of personal relationships, in one sense, the Lycidas and the In Memoriam bear a closer parallel than do the Blanche and the Adonais. Tennyson and Hallam were fellow collegians, as were Milton and King. We may see in more than one place that Tennyson,

in writing In Memoriam, had Lycidas in mind, but there is not the slightest trace of Adonais. On the contrary, the In Memoriam may almost be pronounced the antithesis of the Adonais, in respect both of the mode and treatment, and in the moral impression it leaves finally on the mind.

In form, the elegies present radical differences, in which are reflected the demands of the times in which they were written. Chaucer does not lament the death of Blanche in his own person, but places the words in the mouth of the black knight, representing her own husband. In this way, Chaucer detaches himself completely to concentrate our attention on the theme, doing so by a skillful use of the conventions of his time. The elegy is cast into the form of a dream.

First there is a proem of two hundred and ninety lines. Chaucer complains of not being able to sleep. This insomnia deprives him of all joy. One night when he could not sleep, he took up a book, the Metamorphoses of Ovid, and was reading the sad story of Ceyx and Alcyone when he fell asleep.

Like most of the poems of the time, Chaucer's dream begins with a beautiful May morning. He was awakened by the singing of a multitude of birds. He hears

the sound of a hunting horn under his windows, and learns from one of a party of hunters that they form the party of the Emperor Octavian. Chaucer joins the chase. He is led by a small dog into a beautiful lane, and there espies a man in black, leaning with his back to an oak. He is lamenting the loss of his loved one. The poet goes up to him, makes his presence known, and begs of the knight to tell him the cause of his sorrow. The black knight accuses perfidious fortune, who played a game of chess with him, took his queen, and checkmated him. The poet seems not to understand, and after some time the knight decides to speak without metaphor. He then tells of his youth, of his love, gives many lines to a minute description of her great beauty and charm, and describes how he had won her after much difficulty. The poet still pretends not to understand the cause of the knight's grief, and asks, "Where is she now?" "It is she that I have lost," replies the knight, "She is deed." --- "Nay!" --- "Yis, by my trouthe!" --- "Is that your loss? By God! hit is routhe!"

Then the hunt was over and the huntsmen suddenly returned. A bell sounded and the poet awoke, found himself still lying in bed holding the story of Ceyx and Alcyone in his hands, and resolved to turn his dream into verse at the first opportunity.

In point of fact, he wrote some thirteen hundred octosyllabics about it, which may seem a good deal. The work is indeed too long, and contains some accessories which obviously burden it. The proem has much charm, but forms a story complete in itself. As Professor Kittridge points out, however, the proem not only serves as a "felicitous introduction to the vision that is to follow, but gives us, in perfection, the atmosphere, the mood of the piece---love, sorrow and bereavement. It shows us, too, the dreamer in complete psychic sympathy with the subject."

The effusions of the sorrowing knight are marred by trivial antithesis, and exhibit a sort of pedantry which somewhat lessen the effect of his complaint. Throughout the poem we find a kind of loose verbosity, the matter is often too diluted, and there are many repetitions.

Chaucer's elegy is often put under obligation to French poets, even where the poem seems most personal and most life-like. The Romance of the Rose furnishes the description of the flowery path into which the little dog leads the poet in his dream, while the duchess owes many of the lines in praise of her body and soul to Chaucer's contemporary, Guillaume de Machaut, especially to his Fontaine Amoureuse and the Jugement du bon roi de Behaigne. From Froissart's Le Paradys d'Amours Chaucer got the situation which he presents in the prologue. Chaucer's originality appears forcibly, however, in the use of his borrowings. In the long description of Blanche he secures individuality and freshness by the unstudied, random manner of the story given by the mourning knight, just as these ideas would naturally arise in the mind of an agitated lover, and not in scientifically exact order as in Machaut. In the use of the dream, also, Chaucer's strong sense of fact enabled him to avoid the simple fairy-land effect of such situations when given by his contemporaries, and to make of The Book of the Duchesse a real dream. He introduced into the most facituous of all poetic styles a sense of reality and a dramatic force which brought life and color to the conventions he dealt with. The conversation

between the knight and the poet is, on the whole, brisk and natural. The dramatic tone of the narrative, moreover, tends to counteract the defects, which may even be turned to account and may add to likelihood---such as the verbosity of the mournful knight, his repetitions and his general desultory manner. The fact that his confidence is so prolific and disconnected imparts to it a certain touching pathos, which makes of a light and airy form a peculiarly appropriate vehicle for elegaic expression. In spite of its many defects, The Book of the Duchesse is a very beautiful and a very touching piece of art.

Of the three remaining poems, Lycidas and Adonais are cast in pastoral form, while In Memoriam is a direct, personal expression of the poet's sorrow, his thoughts and feelings. We shall now consider the form, argument and sources of Lycidas and Adonais, both of which follow the pastoral tradition.

The spirit of modernity, it seems, has taught us to smile at pastoral poetry. With the frigid pipings of Thyrsis and Corydon we are indeed out of tune. Nevertheless, there is deep humanity in these songs of shepherds and shepherdesses, and since the pastoral fascinated

Theocritus and Virgil, Petrarch, Boccaccio and Spenser, who wrote for all time, it behooves us to try to approach the form in a spirit of serious sympathy. Poetry must furnish at times an escape from life, not always the call to life's struggles.

In Lycidas, Milton represents himself as a simple shepherd, an "uncouth swain," in a fanciful Sicily or Arcadia, who complains of the loss of his companion shepherd. He begins with a prelude of fourteen lines, saying he had not intended to sing any more, but that he must do so because of the death of Lycidas. He then invokes the muses to begin their lament, and to

"Somewhat loudly sweep the string."

There are one hundred and ninety-three verses in the poem. The events of Milton's relationship to King, and the sorrow he experienced because of his death, are presented with singular aptitude in the pastoral symbolism.

To many modern readers, as we have said, the pastoral setting of Lycidas is far from being an element of beauty. It is doubtful whether anyone, on reading the poem for the first time, fails to

experience a feeling of strangeness which must be overcome before the poem can be fully appreciated; and sometimes the pastoral imagery continues to be felt a defect, attracting attention to its own absurdities and thereby seriously interfering with the enjoyment of the piece itself. One must learn to throw himself into harmony with the conventional sentiments and the tawdry imagery of the pastoral tradition if one is to appreciate Lycidas. For in Milton's eyes, the pastoral element in Lycidas was neither alien nor artificial. Being thoroughly familiar with poetry of this kind in English, Latin, Italian and Greek, Milton saw the pastoral as one of the most natural modes of expression, sanctioned by classic practice, and recommended by very considerable advantages of its own. The setting of Lycidas was to him not merely an ornament, but an essential element in the artistic composition of the poem. It tended to idealize and dignify the expression of his sorrow, and to exalt this tribute to the memory of his friend by ranging it with a long line of elegaic utterance from Theocritus and Virgil to Edmund Spenser.

It would be profitable if we could here give

something of the history of the pastoral elegy in order to indicate the origins of the elegaic tradition which appear in Lycidas, and to show in detail Milton's indebtedness to each of the greater examples of the type. However, we can here do no more than to point them out briefly. Of the idylls of Theocritus, the father of pastoral poetry, the first one seems to have had the most direct effect on Milton. In this idyll, Thyrsis sings the "Affliction of Daphnis." The singer first rebukes the nymphs, much as Milton does, for failing to save their Daphnis, and tells of the universal lament of nature for his loss. He also describes the visits of Hermes, Priapus and Cypris to the afflicted shepherd. That Milton adopted this idyll as one of the classical models for Lycidas seems practically certain.

The elegies of Bion and Moschus, which were used so directly by Shelley, do not seem to have had any material influence on Milton's composition. When we come to Virgil's Eclogues, however, we find a significant influence, especially of the fifth and the tenth. Other poems of especial pertinence are Sannazaro's lament for the drowned shepherdess Phyllis, in the mouth of a shepherd

named Lycidas, and the May, July and September eclogues in Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar.

Lycidas is, in a remarkable degree, the result of growth. It gathers within its compass whole centuries of pastoral tradition. In one important respect, Milton extends the pastoral tradition: in no previous poem of the kind had the author introduced so many illusions to his own poetic career. The opening passage, a digression on fame, and the concluding line,

"Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new,"
are purely personal.

One of the leading characteristics of Milton's poem, then, is his overflowing reminiscence of the classics and their happy adaptation to some of the incidents of his college friend's career; though we may detect here and there the too nice search for gems which, although choice in their way, do not come spontaneously, but are either more or less made use of as mosaic work.

The art of the verse in Lycidas is a study in itself. Milton shows a wonderful use of lines of irregular length, so grouped that the rhythm seems to echo the feelings of the speaker. Milton is said to have borrowed this device from the Italian poets. David Masson gives a very adequate criticism of the versification

as follows: "The lines are mostly the common iambs of five feet, but every now and then there is an excellently managed variation of a short line of three iambs:

'So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favor my destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace to be my sable shroud! §

Then the interlinking and inter-twining of the rhymes, sometimes in pairs, sometimes in threes or even fives, and of all varieties of intervals, from that of a contiguous couplet to that of an unobserved chime or stanza of some length, are positive perfection. Occasionally, too, there is a line that does not rhyme, and in every such case, though the rhyme is not missed by the reader's ear, in so much music is the line embedded, yet a delicate artistic reason may be fancied for its formal absence."

What, then, shall we say of Lycidas, in its form and development, as a work of art? Is it the less a perfect whole because it is composite? Does the fact that it is conventional make it any the less original in the highest sense, or make it any the less forceful as an expression of sorrow? If we know

Lycidas well and read it in a fitting mood, we find ourselves forgetting that its pastoral imagery is inherently absurd, because these conventions which may at first seem so incongruous with the subject gradually become a matter of course. And when once we have ceased to regard them as anything more than symbols, we find them no longer detracting from the beauty of the poem, but forming an essential element of its classic form and beauty. For the supreme beauty of Lycidas, as also of The Book of the Duchesse, lies partly in the very fact of its conventionality. Its grief is not of the kind that cried aloud; it soothes and rests one like soft music. After a moment of terrible indignation, Milton leads us to sink back again into the tranquil enjoyment which comes from the contemplation of pure beauty, unmarred by any newness of idea, unclouded by overmastering emotion.

Since Shelley's Adonais is also given a pastoral atmosphere and setting, much of what we have said about the from in general and its effect on the expression of a work may be applied to it as well as to Lycidas. Shelley was faithful to his highest doctrines of literary or

poetic form in giving a Greek shape to his elegy on Keats; but it may be left to many of his English readers to think that he thereby fell into a certain degree of artificiality of structure, undesirable in itself, and more especially hampering him in a plain and self-consistent expression of his real feelings concerning Keats and his resentment against those whom he believed to have cut short the career and the poetical work of his friend. Moreover, Shelley went beyond the mere recurrence to Greek forms of impersonation and expression, and took two particular Greek poems as his principal models. Before considering more fully this direct influence from the Greek, however, let us consider as briefly as possible the argument of Adonais.

The prelude to the poem is an indignant and almost hysterical cry, in which the poet calls on all to join in the sorrow:

"O weep for Adonais! 'Though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!"

Adonais is now dead. He was the son of the widowed Urania (the spirit of poetry), her youngest and dearest son. He was slain by a nightly arrow---"pierced by the

shaft which flies in the darkness." At the time of his death Urania was in her pleasure-garden, slumbering, while Echoes listened to the poems he has written as death drew near. Urania should now wake and weep; yet wherefore? "He is gone where all things wise and fair descend." Nevertheless, let her weep and lament. Adonais had come to Rome; death and corruption are now in his chamber, but corruption delays as yet to strike. The Dreams whom he nurtured mourn around him. Then came others, Desires, Adorations, Fancies, etc. Morning, Echo and Spring lamented. Misery aroused Urania, and she sought the death chamber of Adonais, enduring much suffering from "barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they." As she arrived, Death was shamed for a moment and Adonais breathed again; but immediately after, "Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caresses." Urania reproached Adonais for having, though defenceless, dared the dragon in his den. He should have waited until his maturity. Then came the Mountain Shepherds, the Lyrist of Ierne, and, among the others, one frail form, a pard-like spirit, referring to Shelley himself. Another Mountain Shepherds, "the gentlest of the wise," (Leigh Hunt) leaned over the deathbed. Adonais had drunk poison. Some "deaf and viperous murderer" had given him the draught, a "nameless worm" who alone was deaf to the prelude of the forthcoming song. Let him live in remorse and self-contempt. Neither should we weep that Adonais has fled "far from these carrion-kites that scream below." His spirit flows back to its fountain, a portion of the Eternal. He has indeed awakened from the dream of life; not he decays, by we. He is made one with Nature. In the "unapparent" he was welcomed by Chatterton, Sidney, Lucan, and many more immortals, and was hailed as the master of a "kingless sphere" in a "heaven of song." Let any rash mourner go to Rome and visit his burial place. And thou, my heart, why linger and shrink? Adonais calls; no longer be divided from him. The soul of Adonais beacons "from the abode where the Eternal are."

A close reading of the poem will show that it may be broadly divided into three currents of thought:

First, the sense of grievous loss in the death of John Keats, the youthful and aspiring poet, cut short as he

was approaching his prime; and the instinctive impulse to mourning and desolation; Second, the mythical or symbolical embodiment of the events in the laments of Urania and the Mountain Shepherds, and in the denunciation of the ruthless destroyer of the peace and life of Adonais; Third, the rejection of the mourning as one-sided and ignorant, and a reversal to the true estimate of the facts; a recognition of the eternal destiny of Keats in a world of mind, coupled with the yearning of Shelley to have done with the vain show of things in this cycle of mortality, and to be at one with Keats in the domain of the Everlasting. Such is the evolution of this elegy, from mourning to rapture; from a blind consideration of deathly phenomena to the illumination of the individual spirit which contemplates the eternity of spirit as the universal substance.

For the expression of his poem, Shelley chose the Spenserian stanza, a metre which he had previously employed in, *The Revolt of Islam. Shelley himself said of his selection of this metre for his poem, "I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful) not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity; you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed also

by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure."

Shelley is generally, and most justly, regarded as a peculiarly melodious versifier; but it must not be supposed that he is rigidly exact in his use of rhyme. Adonais is, in this respect, neither more nor less correct than his other writings. It would hardly be reasonable to attribute his laxity to either carelessness, indifference or lack of skill, but rather to a deliberate preference for a certain variety in the rhyme sounds---as tending to please the ear, and availing to satisfy it in the total effect, without cloying it by any tightly drawn uniformity. Concerning the composition and finish of the poem, the poet wrote in a letter to a friend:

"It (Adonais) is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better in point of composition than anything I have written." In another letter he says: "Adonais is finished. It is little adopted for popularity but is perhaps the least imperfect of my compositions."

It is our opinion that as a finished piece of artistic expression, Adonais is the best work of Shelley,

and perhaps the outstanding monument of the nineteenth century.

Recurring to the influence of the Greek on the composition of Shelley's poem, the elegies which seem to have had the most direct bearing upon him are Bion's Lament for Adonis and Moschus' Lament for Bion. Shelley at one time made a fragmentary translation of Bion's elegy, and the reader familiar with Adonais will recognize the similarity to these first lines from the Greek:

"I mourn Adonis dead---lovliest Adonis---
Dead, dead Adonis---and the Loves lament.
Sleep no more, Venus, wrapped in purple woof---
Wake, violet-stoled queen, and weave the crown
Of death,---'tis Misery calls,---for he is dead
The flowers are withered up with grief.
Echo resounds, 'Adonis dead!'
She clasped him, and cried . . . 'Stay, Adonis!
And mix my lips with thine!
Wake yet a while, Adonis---oh but once!---
That I may kiss thee now for the last time---
But for as long as one short kiss may live!"

Numerous other passages might be quoted to show an equally close connection, many of which are paraphrased or even translated from the two poems mentioned. However, to imitate is not to plagiarize, and Shelley cannot reason-

ably be called a plagiarist because he introduced these passages into Adonais. These passages, moreover, are not the finest things in the poem; their office is, for the most part, to fill out its ~~fabula~~ argument with brilliancy and suavity, rather than with nerve and pathos. The finest verses are to be found in the denunciation of the "deaf and viperous murderer"; in the stanzas concerning the "Mountain Shepherds," especially the figure representing Shelley himself; and in the solemn and majestic conclusion, where Shelley rises from the region of earthly sorrow to the realm of ideal aspiration and contemplation.

Passing to Tennyson's In Memoriam, the first thing which strikes the reader is that, while The Book of the Duchesse, Lycidas and Adonais are indirectly expressed and, in a way, act a part, In Memoriam speaks directly in its own character. It is a direct expression of the poet's own mind and feeling, straight from the heart of the poet. Such an expression will be especially pleasing to those who feel that in order to find the author's personality in the other poems he must first penetrate a disguise, and that the underlying idea must first be translated from imagery into literal form, although such a criticism seems to me to show nothing more nor less than a lack of appreciation for the

highest conception of the poetic art. However, In Memoriam does discuss real issues first hand, seeks a solution to universally acknowledged problems, and both the seeker and the object appear in the light of unfigurative expression.

Another essential difference between the three poems already treated and the In Memoriam is, that while they use the thought of death as their groundwork, the In Memoriam takes it as a starting point for a long, evolutionary inquiry into the real nature of death and the mystery beyond---as a progress to results which it verifies step by step. It might be said, therefore, that Tennyson's poem not only fulfills the characteristics of an elegy, as do the other poems under consideration, but that it goes further, in the character of its inquiry, in its progress to the solution of doubts.

The structure of In Memoriam is by no means obvious, and it is of such length and complexity that we can give here only the merest outline of it. To the eye, the work appears as a series of one hundred and thirty-one short poems, numbered, and made up of four line stanzas rhyming abba. How these many poems, or sections, group themselves, and how groups and single poems are related to each other so as to form a united

work of art, may be found only after careful study. It should be stated in this connection that the writing of the poem covers a period of seventeen years, from the death of Hallam in 1833 to the publication of the poem in 1850. The poem itself purports to cover a time of two and a half years.

Mr. Arthur F. Genung presents an almost mathematically exact analysis of In Memoriam. For our purpose here, however, we shall include only the following few paragraphs to indicate the progress of the argument:

The poem is prefaced by a prologue of eleven stanzas. It was written last, in 1849, and gathers into itself the greatest and highest achievement of the poet's thought; it is written in the form of a prayer.

In the Introductory Stage, stanzas 1-xxvii, which begins with the receipt of the news of Hallam's death, we see the poet overcome with sudden grief. He begins to find consolation in the consciousness that love is holy and worthy to be cherished, though its object be removed.

The First Cycle, or the Cycle of the Past, (stanzas xxviii - lxxvii) interprets the past love, for dead as for living. At Christmastide the thought is suggested that the dead friend is living in an unseen world. Two friends are before us; one is out of sight and may be recognized only by faith, while the survivor interprets the friend's state by his own love; both, though separated, are beheld as drawing influence from their past experiences together.

The Second Cycle, or the Cycle of the Present, (stanzas lxxviii - ciii) seeks the possibility of present communion with the immortal friend. But communion with the dead is obtainable in only one way, by cherishing such community of spirit with the living as the dead would have cherished had he lived. So this new relation to the unseen world is conjoined with a new friendship here.

The Third Cycle, the Cycle of the Future (civ - cxxxix),

views the time when all men shall find their highest manhood in the same holy love. The poet's sympathies here approach their broadest expression, in his hope for that nobler race, of which he regards his dead friend as a type. The poem then ends with an epilogue of thirty-six stanzas.

The poem that began with death and which, after long struggles found love triumphant, ends with marriage, the highest earthly illustration of completed love. The wedding-song which forms the epilogue was written on the occasion of the wedding of Tennyson's younger sister, Cecilia, in 1842. In all the lightness of the song, however, remembrance of the dead is cherished, not sacrificed; the dead is thought of as living, and perhaps present on this occasion, shedding unseen blessings on this crowning event of love.

As has been further pointed out by Mr. Genung, the poem may be placed in three main divisions: "In the beginning, In Memoriam fulfills predominantly the character of an elegy; in the middle part it appears predominantly as a memorial of friendship; and in the latter part it portrays the greater future of mankind. These three characteristics correspond roughly with the three divisions into which the poem, after its introductory stage, naturally falls." And further, "The three main characteristics which form the groundwork of In Memoriam are: First, the earnest inquiry into the mystery beyond and around us; Second, the idealizing of the love that has been and is; and Third, the clear view and prophecy of the world's great future."

Tennyson was peculiarly happy in his choice of a verse form for a poem of the length and import of In Memoriam, a stanza of four verses of four iambic feet, rhyming abba. This form of stanza had previously been used by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, a brother of George Herbert, and by Ben Johnson in his Underwoods. Rosetti ~~st~~ "claimed to have rediscovered the metre" in 1844, but Tennyson had already used it in two poems written in 1833, though not published until 1842 ("You Ask Me Why," and "Love Thou Thy Land.") Tennyson made the form his own, giving it a slow and solemn music which befits his complex moods and his grave meditations. There is every reason to believe that, as far as Tennyson knew then, he thought he had originated this metre, although, as Mr. J. C. Collins remarks, "some of the stanzas of Herbert are so similar to In Memoriam that even a nice ear might excusably mistake one or two of them for the Laureate's"--- for instance, this one:

"These eyes again thine eyes shall see,
These hands again thine hands enfold,
And all chaste blessings can be told
Shall with us everlasting be."

A study of Tennyson's early poems will show him slowly feeling his way toward the perfection of this

verse form. It may be found, though not in independent form, in his volumes of 1830 and 1833.

In respect of good English, nothing could be more choice and perfect than the language of the In Memoriam, a quality in which Tennyson has always been supreme among his fellows and contemporaries.

We have attempted to point out the influences of other poets on Chaucer, Milton and Shelley in the writing of their elegies. It is somewhat more difficult to show any direct influence on Tennyson. Mr. A. F. Genung points out that as a memorial to friendship, the most notable parallel to In Memoriam in English literature is Shakespeare's cycle of sonnets:

"That Tennyson himself, during the experience which In Memoriam records, felt the likeness of his love for Arthur Hallam to Shakespeare's love for the subject of his sonnets, would seem to be indicated by the remarkable allusion to Shakespeare, In Memoriam lxi 3:

"I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more."

"A detailed comparison of In Memoriam with the sonnets indicates also, by many striking turns of expression, and

still more by the general similarity of spirit, that Tennyson had given thorough and appreciative study to these works of the dramatist."

However, despite the fact that the position of the writers is somewhat the same, the likeness of In Memoriam to the sonnets is only superficial. In both works the singer speaks his love ~~in~~ his own character, and in both there is a strong introspective element and a disposition to define the love in poetic analysis and imagery. In both we find much said about the value of the companionship and much about the eternal quality of the love celebrated. A difference, however, lies in the fact that In Memoriam is not simply a memorial to love, but has a further purpose of interpreting its religious and philosophical depths.

Other critics have pointed out a distinct general influence of Dante, and still more of Petrarch, on the ideas and sentiments of parts of In Memoriam. There are also many borrowed phrases and expressions in the poem, a larger number than one would reasonably expect to find. Tennyson has been much criticised for this. These "borrowings," we believe, are partly mere coincidence, and partly the result of unconscious reminiscence.

If we should describe in the most general terms the movement of thought and feeling in these four elegies, we should find that the Lycidas, the Adonais and the In Memoriam bear very close parallelism. In each case the grief at the opening has passed at the close into triumph. In the throes of his first grief, the singer thinks only of his loss and of death; he then passes through a period of calmer sorrow and of increasing sublimity; and at the last, his eyes are fixed upon the vision of a new and greater life. In Lycidas and Adonais this change is expressed in one continuous strain of progress, and is therefore felt by the reader to occupy but a short time of concentrated experience. Especially is this true of Adonais, in which the impression of passionate rapidity in the transition from gloom to glory is essential to the concentrated effect. A similar change in In Memoriam is supposed to fill a period of two and a half years, which necessarily makes the effect less moving and of less emotional force. The impression of this gradual and difficult advance is none the less essential, however. Thus, many readers have been unable to feel that there is an essential unity in the one hundred and thirty-one poems of Tennyson. Each of the sections is felt to be a poem within itself; but in many cases, we may observe that

a single section is not thus independent of its predecessor and successor. Many are scarcely intelligible if taken in isolation, and again and again we find whole groups which have one subject, and in which the single sections are simply devoted to various aspects of this general subject. These clusters of poems correspond to single paragraphs of Lycidas, or to single stanzas or groups of stanzas of Adonais; their presence, in addition to the seasonal cycles of In Memoriam and the gradual evolution of its thought and feeling, add a certain amount of regularity and unity to the structure of the poem. The unity of In Memoriam, nevertheless, is a thing which has to be proved, while that of Lycidas and Adonais may be instinctively felt. In this respect, it is my opinion that the poems of Milton and Shelley have a distinct advantage over those of both Tennyson and Chaucer.

In Chaucer's work we do not find the progression of feeling we have noted in the other three elegies. We are first given the atmosphere of the poem in the proem; then we are given the dream, and are led up to the tragedy of the realization, "She is deed!" Chaucer leaves it there.

The differing treatments and expressions of the

poets' attitudes toward death and immortality, is interesting. Death is, of course, the primary moving force of all the poems. In Chaucer's work, the simple fact of death as a cruel depriving force is presented. No consolation is offered the desolate knight, and when the full fact of the loss breaks in upon the poet, all he can say is, "By god! It's a pity!" In the other poems, the singers rise above death and conquer it. After the first despair, Milton rises to this expression near the close of Lycidas:

"Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And yet tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walked the waves
(He) hears the unexpressive nuptial song
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes."

Here we have Milton's expression of the triumph of the eternal soul over death, moulded after the orthodox Christian conception. Milton's faith rises in his belief ^{happy} in/immortality through the power of Christ---

"Through the dear might of him that walked the waves."

He conceives of King as a continued personality in the realm of eternal song and bliss.

We shall also consider in this connection the various expressions of the poets on the idea of pantheism. Milton's only lines on this phase of immortality are those at the end of his poem:

"Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood."

Here we see Milton's conception of the spirit of King as an eternal presiding deity of the shore. This pantheistic idea was a favorite fancy with the Greek and Latin poets, and this element in Lycidas must be considered rather poetic than pantheistic in a true sense, being simply such a fancy as does not impair the poet's personal views. It is really a deference to the classical models he was following.

A few short quotations will indicate Shelley's attitude toward death and immortality in Adonais. The turning point in the broad current of sentiment in the poem comes in stanza thirty-eight. Up to that point, the tone has been continuously, through a variety of phases, one of mourning for the fact that Keats, the poetical genius, is untimely dead. But now the poet pauses, checks himself, and rises into a sublimer

attitude:

"Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same, --"

"Peace, peace! he is not dead; he doth not sleep---
He hath awakened from the dream of life."

"He has outsoared the shadow of our night.
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again."

"He lives, he wakes---'tis Death is dead, not he:
Mourn not for Adonais.---"

"And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil."

"From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?"

"Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments."

"The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

Here again we see a distinct triumph over death, but it is rather a different conception from that which we have found in Lycidas. The poet raises a sharply drawn contrast between the death of Keats as a mortal man falling before the "common fate," and the eternal quality of his spirit as an immaterial and vital essence surviving the death of the body. His terminology is such as might be

used by any believer in the immortality of the soul, as the phrase is commonly understood. But as a matter of fact, the poet's feeling on this great eternal problem was very acute, while his opinions regarding it were vague and highly unsettled. He certainly did not subscribe to the typical belief, such as that of Milton, that after the period of the combination of the body and the soul, the soul continues as an absolute individual identity; and that it passes into a condition of irreversible happiness or misery, according to the faith held or the deeds done in this life. His belief as stated by one eminent critic amounted more nearly to this:

"That a human soul is a portion of the Universal Soul, subjected, during its connexion with the body, to all the illusions, the dreams and the nightmares of sense; and that after the death of the body it continues to be a portion of the Universal Soul, liberated from those illusions, and subsisting in some state which the human reason is not capable of defining as a state either of personal consciousness or of absorption. And, so far as the human being exercised, during earthly life, the authentic functions of the soul, that same exercise of function continues as the permanent record of the soul in the world of mind."

The idea of "universal" immortality is doubtless

the dominant expression in Adonais. Yet, there is present also a very distinct element of eternal personality, which comes out especially in the lines in which Shelley pictures the reception of Keats into the abode of the eternal by his compeers of blighted fame:

"The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, ---his solemn agony had not ~~yet faded~~
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought ~~and as~~
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion, as they rose, shrank like a thing reprov'd. "

What could be more individual than this? The expression of these differing views may be taken as showing the vagueness of the question in the poet's mind. Indeed, such a question has ever been and must ever be vague in the human mind, and Shelley did not hesitate to present both views as his thought, and perhaps as poetic occasion and necessity, led him to do so. At any rate, immortality overcomes the fear of death, and makes of it a thing to be welcomed and desired rather than a thing to be feared. After all, Shelley declares, life is the real darkness, and death ushers one into the light.

Some of the most beautiful passages in Adonais are those of pantheistic import. We shall quote a few

lines which are justly famous:

"He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,---
spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

"He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull sense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear,---
Torturing the unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the
Heaven's light."

And an earlier and more material expression:

"The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath:
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor
Is changed to fragrance,-- "

Thus it is evident that the pantheistic element
appears pronounced and well-defined in Adonais. It is much
more compatible with Shelley's liberal unconventionalism
than it is with Milton's puritanic and orthodox doctrines.

Likewise, the In Memoriam rises triumphant over
death. In Tennyson's poem, however, his victory over the
sorrow of loss, the gaining of a triumphant perspective, as

well as his calm faith in immortality, is won only after a long struggle which has shaken the soul of the singer to the centre of its being. The struggle is portrayed in all its phases through months and years, until the highest faith is expressed in the prologue to the poem, which was written last.

As in the case of Shelley, Tennyson's ideas as to the exact nature of immortality are rather vague, although his faith is stronger and more concrete.

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

"Immortality" to Tennyson must have meant simply the conscious and indefinitely prolonged life of the soul after death. This was to him a matter of fixed belief, a fact of the same order as the existence of a God of love. God and immortality are not matters of proof or knowledge, but of faith. We must be capable of,

"Believing where we cannot prove."

Tennyson takes up thoroughly many of the questions which naturally arise when we consider the life of the other world, in its relation to the future and to the past. Among these questions is that of the progress of the soul in the future state directly after death, or whether the soul

after death may sleep until a "resurrection morning"; the question whether the soul retains its memory of this life in another world, or whether it may lose its personal consciousness and individuality necessary to memory, and is at last absorbed into the general soul.

The idea of Tennyson seems to tend largely in the direction of personal and individual immortality, as expressed in section xlvi:

"That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good."

And further, in another section:

"They do not die,
Nor lose their mortal sympathy
Nor change to us, although they change."

Over all there is his sound faith in

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

In Memoriam also presents a number of passages of a pantheistic nature, such as that in cxxx:

"Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But though I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love the less."

"Though mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more."

These lines taken alone would seem to indicate that Hallam's soul was, in Tennyson's thought, mixed indissolubly with God and Nature and completely lost in the "general soul," much as in the similar ideas in Adonais. However, the argument of the poem in its entirety denies this attitude and argues rather for a permanent state of distinct individuality of the soul.

Since we have seen the poets' differing attitudes on the subjects of death and immortality, let us note for a moment their different treatments of love and friendship. The position of the knight in The Book of the Duchesse, of course, is that of husband and lover of the lost lady. He expresses his love for the lady in a high and exalted manner, with all the conventional declarations of mediaeval romance. We are persuaded that his passion is genuine, and that his love was of such a force that the

deprivation of it is a loss which he cannot withstand. There is no indication, however, of a continuance of the relationship of love after death. Death is the end of all, so far as the treatment is concerned in Chaucer's poem.

Lycidas and Adonais are not primarily love or friendship elegies, as we have heretofore pointed out. It is In Memoriam which gives us a supreme expression of love and friendship. One statement of the purpose of the poet is given in these lines of section xxvi:

"I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love."

Love is the dominating force throughout the poem, and one critic has succinctly stated its supreme purpose as being that of proving that, "Love is intrinsically immortal." The poet's griefs finally overcome only by true love, become universal.

Another interesting comparison of the elegies may be made in the uses and descriptions of nature made by the poets. In this respect, In Memoriam may be said to make the greatest and most effective use of natural setting. The scenery of the poem is "partly the downs and of the sea in the distance; partly of a woodland country made vocal by a brook; and sometimes of a garden full of flowers

and a lawn with far-branching trees. Two parts of England contribute their landscape to the verse, for in the midst of the poem Tennyson changes his dwelling place; but the scenery of the first part is often recollected and described in the second."

Diverse uses are made of the nature description, sometimes as an expression of the spiritual projection of the poet's own inner being, sometimes woven together with inward emotion in a singularly unified way. Picture after picture is made to fit the feelings of the soul--- storm and calm, grief and quiet resignation. Especial attention should be used to Tennyson's use of the seasons to express the progressing stages of his thought and feeling through the two years and a half which the poem covers---the Christmastides, spring and autumn. On the first Christmas,

"The moon is hid, the night is still."

On the second Christmas,

"The silent snow possessed the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve."

"No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost."

Note also this further expression of calmness:

"Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief;
And only through the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground.

"Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers
To mingle with the bounding main."

No less effective are the pictures of storm and
movement:

"Tonight the winds begin to rise,
And roar from yonder dripping day;
The last red leaf is whirled away,
The rocks are blown about the skies.

The forest cracked, the waters curl'd,
The cattle huddled on the lea."

" Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers of the shapen'd eaves."

Here is the spirit of re-awakening spring:

"Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow."

A great deal of the use of nature in the expression
of the poet's thought in In Memoriam would come under Mr.
Ruskin's definition of the "pathetic fallacy."

The most beautiful bit of nature description in
Chaucer's elegy is that at the very beginning of the dream,
in which he gives us a picture of a fair May morning:

"Me thought thus:--that hit was May,
And in the dawning ther I lay,
Me mette thus, in my bed al naked:---
I loked forth, for I was waked
With smale foules a gret hepe,
That had affrayed me out of slepe
Though noyse and swetnesse of his song;

• • • • •
For al my chambre gan to ringe
Through singing of hir armonye.

• • • • •
And through the glas the sunne shon
Upon my bed with brighte bemes,
With many glade gilden stremes;
And eek the welken was so fair,
Blew, bright, clere was the air,
And ful atempre, for sothe, hit was;
For nother cold nor hoot hit nas,
Ne in al the welken was a cloude."

Another beautiful passage is that which describes
the lane into which Chaucer was led just before his meeting
with the black knight:

"And hit went forth,
Doun by a floury grene wente
Ful thikke of gras, ful softe and swete,
With floures fele, faire under fete,
And litel used, hit semed thus;
For bothe Flora and Zephirus,
They two that make floures growe,
Had mad hir dwelling ther, I trowe;
For hit was, on to beholde,
As thogh the erthe envye wolde
To be gayer than the heven,
To have mo floures, swiche seven
As in the welken sterres be."

Chaucer's nature descriptions serve simply to give
the setting and atmosphere of the story; they add much to

the artistic finish and beauty of the poem.

Milton describes nature in one or two effective passages, in the expression of his grief for the loss of Lycidas. In him we find the pathetic fallacy most pronounced, but it is most effectively and artistically applied:

"And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the wild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparelooks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honey'd showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
....
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies."

"Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes mourn.
The willows and the hazel copses green
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays."

Milton makes a further effective use of nature in his description of the setting and the rising sun, to symbolize the sinking and the glorious rising of the soul of **King**. Lycidas is not dead, he declares, though he has sunk beneath the watery floor:

"So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low but mounted high."

Shelley makes a somewhat more liberal use of nature, and also indulges freely in the pathetic fallacy to express his grief.

"All he had loved and moulded into thought
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch tower, and her hair unbound,---

• Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew around, sobbing in their
dismay.

Lost echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
• And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn or bell at closing day."

"Grief made the young Spring wild, and she
threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves: since her delight is flown
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?"

His expression of the awakening joy of spring reminds one much of Tennyson's description in his elegy:

"Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year---
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;"

"Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean,
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst."

Lastly, we would again call attention to that most beautiful passage which we have already quoted in connection with our discussion of Shelley's pantheism, beginning,

"He is made one with Nature; there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird."

Two of the elegies, especially the Lycidas and the In Memoriam, may be profitably compared in their treatment of blighted fame and promise. A feeling of extreme untimeliness in the death of the subject is, of course, a necessary element in the composition of an elegy, and although it is difficult to cite specific passages in either The Book of the Duchesse or the Adonais, a strong feeling of it is an undercurrent running all through both works. In Lycidas the occasion of King's death calls forth the following lines on the subject of fame:

"Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise---
That last infirmity of noble mind---
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'
Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glittering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.'"

This expression, enjoining the poet not to wait for glory when one has done well, for that is above all

glory, was one of Milton's ideals. He finds comfort in the fact that although fate may cut the thread of life, she cannot cut off the praise that is a man's due; since God pronounces fully upon each deed, one may expect to find his just reward in the beyond.

Much the same idea is expressed by Tennyson in the In Memoriam:

"The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
The head hath missed an earthly wreath:
I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

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

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

And further:

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

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

Although Tennyson believes the world lost Hallam's fame by his untimely death, his immortal soul retains the same powers, glorified rather than diminished, while his evident kindred with the great ones of history suggests more

than can be said. Although the greatness of his friend missed its proper recognition here, it gains its true acclaim in the other world.

We have now considered with a fair degree of detail what we believe to be the principal points of similarity and difference in the four elegies. We have seen that the major portion of the differences are due, omitting the individuality of the authors, to the demands of the times of their composition, and to the character of the relationships of the poets to their respective subjects. It is to be hoped that this exercise in criticism has been useful in throwing light on the idiosyncrasies of the writers, their ideas of art, and something of their attitudes toward some of the greater and most interesting problems which present themselves to the race in the face of death.

It is perhaps futile to attempt an arbitrary selection of the greatest one of the poems. Much depends, of course, as is always true in such matters, upon the reader's own taste and background. To an older person, the serene philosophical research of Tennyson might appeal most forcibly; to a thoroughly classical mind, the polished beauty of Milton's poem might seem to be incapable of being surpassed; to others, the naive simplicity of Chaucer

might seem supreme; but, as for me, I should hand the laurel to Shelley's Adonais, by virtue of its incomparable poetic beauty and artistic finish. However that may be, England must ever be proud of the genius of all four of the poets, who have produced elegies unmatched either in ancient or modern times.

The end.

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