

THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF TENNYSON'S WAR  
POEMS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MILITANT PATRIOTISM  
IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

by

Robert Lorne French

B. A., The University of British Columbia, 1965

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
in the Department  
of  
English

© ROBERT LORNE FRENCH 1969  
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

April, 1969

EXAMINING COMMITTEE APPROVAL

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. M. A. Mason  
Senior Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. E. F. Harden  
Examining Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Michael Steig  
Examining Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. C. I. Hamilton  
External Examiner

Abstract

This thesis attempts to link Tennyson's mysticism with his militant patriotism, an attempt which is delineated in three chapters. Chapter I describes the militant patriotism of Victorian England (a patriotism which was composed of many seemingly disparate notions), and uses incidents from Tennyson's life and excerpts from his letters and war poems to portray him as an apparently conventional militant patriot of his time. This chapter is essential to the thesis because it provides an historical background for the following two chapters. Militant patriotism is traced through the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars made Englishmen believe that they possessed an ability to fight which was superior to the military prowess of other peoples; moreover, the confidence of Victorian Englishmen in their institutions gave rise to the belief, expressed through English statesmen such as Canning and Palmerston, that other European nations could benefit by emulating the institutions of Englishmen. Accordingly, supposed English military prowess and political greatness led to the notion held by a great many Victorian Englishmen that their country could not be satisfied with simply protecting its eminence, but had to assert it: imperialism, of which in England the political embodiment was Disraeli, became the force through which Victorian Englishmen increasingly asserted their supposed national and racial greatness as the century progressed.

The reason for Tennyson's adherence to this militant

patriotism has now to be determined. The remaining two chapters of the thesis attempt to solve this problem. Chapter II deals with Tennyson's relationship with English Nature. The argument promulgated is that the poet used, probably unconsciously, the English landscape and seascape to embody his mysticism; more particularly, he allowed his distrust of material existence, and his exaltation of a spiritual existence which he felt was immanent but which could not be explicated by his intelligence, to be reflected in his descriptions of the landscape and seascape of England. Examples of this probably unconscious process are given in the chapter: passages of poetry containing descriptions of the English landscape and seascape are examined, and shown to consist of words of contrasting connotations, the total effect of which is the poet's exposition of the decay inherent in material existence, and what he feels is the glory and permanence of spiritual existence.

In Chapter III the argument which is promulgated is that Tennyson's war poems were written by him for two reasons, one of which was conscious, and the other probably unconscious. The former reason is the poet's expression in these poems of his belief that England, its people and institutions, must be defended against foreign aggression; the latter reason is his personal need to protect his relationship with English Nature. Because of his psychological investment in English Nature, he stresses in his war poems the need for Englishmen to defend their country and its institutions. In fact, his war poems consciously call for the defence of his country, but unconsciously

exhort Englishmen to defend his relationship with English Nature. Consequently, Tennyson emerges as a conventional militantly patriotic Victorian Englishman when his life, letters, and war poems are examined; but when these war poems are examined after an investigation of the poet's relationship with English Nature as seen in his descriptions of the English landscape and seascape, these poems, with their stress on the defence of England, reveal themselves to be primarily an expression, probably unconscious, of Tennyson's desire to protect his relationship with English Nature.

Thus, the relationship between Tennyson's mysticism and his militant patriotism is not a direct one: it operates, because of its unconscious character, through the notion which is expressed in his war poems that England must be defended against the aggression of foreigners; to Tennyson, this notion meant consciously that the country and its institutions had to be defended, but unconsciously it meant that his relationship with English Nature needed to be defended. Accordingly, Tennyson's war poems are a more important part of his works than they seem to be, and are linked with an apparently unrelated aspect of the poet, that is, his mysticism.

Table of Contents

Chapter I Militant Patriotism in Victorian England . . . 1

Introduction to the thesis--the notions involved in militant patriotism in Victorian England--Tennyson's conception of wars waged by Englishmen--his views on the English race and the British Empire--the importance of morality to Victorian Englishmen--The Pre-Victorian Nineteenth Century (1800-1832)--The Rise and Apogee of the Victorian Age (1833-1880)--The Victorian Sunset (1881-1891)--Towards the First World War (1892-1905).

Chapter II Tennyson and Nature: Concealed Mysticism in His Descriptions of Nature in England . . . . . 34

Tennyson's private mystical character--his ambivalence towards mysticism as reflected in his attitude towards asceticism--how major critics have dealt with the factual, accurate quality of the poet's descriptions of nature--Tennyson's descriptions of English Nature, a probably unconscious attempt to cope with his mysticism by embodying it in the objects of the English landscape and seascape--the rare occurrence in his poetry of descriptions of non-English Nature--the peculiar character of these non-English descriptions--Tennyson's use of the landscape and seascape in the "Idylls of the King" to reflect the degeneration of King Arthur's kingdom, and the poet's warning to Victorian Englishmen in this poem.

Chapter III Tennyson's War Poems . . . . . 71

Tennyson's probably unconscious need to defend his relationship with English Nature--an examination of his war poems in order to show their concern for the defence of England--the characteristics of these poems.

Footnotes to Chapter I . . . . . 113

Footnotes to Chapter II . . . . . 119

Footnotes to Chapter III . . . . . 122

A Selected Annotated Bibliography . . . . . 125

## Chapter I

### Militant Patriotism in Victorian England

The object of this thesis is to show that Tennyson wrote public poems not only for their avowed public purpose, but also for a private purpose which he never admitted, probably even to himself, and which therefore was likely unconscious; more particularly, the war poems discussed in Chapter III were produced, not only for the superficial, conscious purpose of proclaiming the goodness of England, its monarch and its soldiers, but also for the unconfessed purpose of defending the poet's relationship with English Nature. This link between Tennyson as a public poet and Tennyson as a private poet is not the result of morality, but rather of mysticism, that is, his intimations, from the universe, of what he felt was an immanent spirit which his intelligence could not explicate. His urge to call for England's defence in the war poems does not arise primarily from his interpretation of such a defence as morally good, but rather from his indebtedness to the English landscape and seascape for providing him with objects that could embody his mystical feelings,<sup>1</sup> that is, the feelings that arose in him from his communion with what he felt was an immanent spirit in the universe. The need to protect this private communion is the reason behind the stress on the defence of England in the war poems. Tennyson did not consciously understand the link between his mysticism and these poems, being unconscious of the use to which he put English Nature. Consequently, he does not proclaim the need for Englishmen to protect their landscape and seascape; he exhorts them



to guard their customs and country, and he extols their bravery, perseverance, and sense of duty. Chapter I delineates militant patriotism in Victorian England and provides an exposition of Tennyson as a militant patriot. The following two chapters of the thesis attempt to relate his militant patriotism to his mysticism: Chapter II deals with the use to which Tennyson put the English landscape and seascape, namely, their role as the environments into which he poured his mystical feelings. Chapter III deals with the war poems, attempting to reveal them as expressions of a need to defend England, with their basis in the poet's unconscious mind as a need to protect English Nature, but consciously expressed as a love of English institutions and traditions, and an admiration for the military prowess of English soldiers and sailors.

This chapter's treatment of militant patriotism in Victorian England is intended to be a background for the following two chapters. This treatment contains references from Tennyson's life, letters, and war poems, in order to show the poet's own involvement in the major political and military events of his time. However, a detailed consideration of the war poems has been reserved for Chapter III, where such an examination is necessary in order to reveal their defensive character.

Militant patriotism in Victorian England was a combination of the pride of the English people in their race, to the extent of feeling mentally and physically superior to all other races; the distrust by them of all people who were not English; the denigration by them of the military prowess of nations other

than England; their pride in their institutions; their dislike of the concepts of the mass army and conscription, and their consequent reliance upon small, distinctive, professional bodies of volunteer soldiers; and finally, their dependence upon the bravery of the ordinary soldier and sailor, rather than upon leadership, which was often absent because of the incompetence of aristocratic officers.<sup>2</sup> The result of the interaction among these characteristics was the idea that England's military successes were the product of English civilization: the country's victories on land and at sea were considered to be proof of the value of its culture and society, and of the need for preserving them. Thus, the aggressive posture of the Victorians in international affairs was really an extension of their pride in their accomplishments: they believed that they had the right to crush opponents of their will, because these opponents had necessarily to be wrong if they opposed the essentially just desires of the English government. However, the military aspect of Victorian patriotism never dominated the consciousness of Englishmen to the extent that it evolved into militarism; it remained a militant expression of pageantry and national honor, important not so much for its glorification of war, as for its declaration of English pride.

Tennyson did not conceive of himself as a militarist, and there is no realization in his poems about war of the political and economic power struggle between nations that frequently erupts into war. Wars waged by Englishmen were holy causes to Tennyson because to him his fighting countrymen were defending English Nature: such wars protected the landscape and seascape

of England from the aggression of foreigners, and war's carnage, although deplorably inevitable, was necessary. He conceived of his country's fighting men, not as masters of the nation's fate, but as servants of its essentially peaceful character.

Tennyson believed that wars involving Englishmen were morally justified because he maintained that their race was the noblest of all races. He thought that his race was destined to be the greatest one on earth and that the British Empire would be an institution for the extension of goodness and freedom throughout the world; and for this reason he was an ardent supporter of it.<sup>3</sup> He berated some English statesmen for their fear of being great;<sup>4</sup> conversely, he applauded, although with reservations, Governor Eyre of Jamaica, who put down an insurrection on the island with great severity, and who was recalled, prosecuted by the Jamaica Committee, but not convicted. In reply to the desire of the Governor's defence committee that Tennyson place his name on it, the poet declared, in a letter written in October, 1866:

I sent my small subscription as a tribute to the nobleness of the man, and as a protest against the spirit in which a servant of the State . . . seems to be hunted down.

But my entering my name on your Committee might be looked upon as pledge that I approve of all the measures of Governor Eyre. I cannot assert that I do this, . . . my knowledge of the circumstances not being sufficient.<sup>5</sup>

He concluded the letter by referring to the Indian Mutiny: "In the meantime, the outbreak of our Indian Mutiny remains as a warning to all but madmen against want of vigour and decisiveness."<sup>6</sup>

Tennyson did not assertively denigrate races other than his own; rather, they suffer through comparison. Comparing the English and the Irish, he asserted:

The Celtic race does not easily amalgamate with other races, as those of Scandinavian origin do, as for instance Saxon and Norman, which have fused perfectly. The Teuton has no poetry in his nature like the Celt, and this makes the Celt much more dangerous in politics, for he yields more to his imagination than his common-sense. Yet his imagination does not allow of his realizing the sufferings of poor dumb beasts.<sup>7</sup>

Americans also suffer by comparison with the English:

. . . we are freer, so most Americans tell me, than America. I have trust in the reason of the English people (who have an inborn respect for law), when they have time to reason. . . .<sup>8</sup>

In his two patriotic beliefs, namely, that in wars involving the English, they are morally superior to their enemies, and that the English are the greatest of all races, Tennyson reflected the attitudes of many Victorian Englishmen. David Thomson states that the salient feature of nineteenth-century England "is the remarkable accumulation of material wealth and power which the English people achieved."<sup>9</sup> He contends that

For much of the time Englishmen were unconscious of many of the very foundations of this power. . . . [F]or example, . . . the supremacy of the British Navy was normally as silent as footsteps upon the layers of drawing-room carpets. And, because the nakedness of power was withheld from view, men for long periods forgot how necessary this basis of power was to the whole structure of English greatness.<sup>10</sup>

This peculiar characteristic of the age altered the concept of warfare to the extent that the influence of morality was thought to be as good as physical force itself. The illusion fostered by this notion was the attribution of almost all

significance to morality. Thus, Victorians conceived of war as a test of moralities; they were confident that their morality was the best, and would survive all others, not merely through the largely irrelevant application of military might, but mainly through the superiority of their morality. The importance of morality meant that militant patriotism, as evinced in most Englishmen at this time, was the arrogant belief that the English race had the right to impose its moral definitions upon all other races; more particularly, it created in English soldiers and sailors the conviction that they could not be defeated by their counterparts from other races.

#### The Pre-Victorian Nineteenth Century (1800-1832).

England was one of the victorious powers in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815); the country's success earned it tremendous prestige throughout the world. England had withstood Napoleon's blockade, and had escaped being occupied by his troops. Moreover, Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805 and Wellington's victory at Waterloo in 1815 had effectively destroyed both the sea and land forces of the French Emperor.<sup>11</sup>

The important political and military events of this period impressed themselves upon Tennyson, who was born in 1809; as a boy he was the best story-teller among his brothers and sisters, and "Among historical events the doings of Wellington and Napoleon were the themes of [his] stor[ies] and verse[s]";<sup>12</sup> furthermore, although the Tennyson family did not hear of

Waterloo immediately, the poet remembered later that "the coach drove through Somersby [the Lincolnshire hamlet in which he lived as a boy], the horses decorated with flowers and ribbons, and this might have been in honour of Wellington's great victory."<sup>13</sup> In addition, during this period Tennyson began to be cognizant of his nationality: one of the incidents which he remembered of his life at Louth School was walking in a procession of schoolboys at the announcement of the coronation of George IV (1820); he also recalled later that he "wrote an English poem there [at the school], . . . the only line . . . [of which he could remember was] 'While bleeding heroes lie along the shore.'"<sup>14</sup> These events in Tennyson's boyhood show that early in his life the poet was proud of his country's military success, and was aware of his identity as an Englishman.

Tennyson was an adolescent from roughly 1822 to 1830, a period when the English armed forces were still living off the glory which they had acquired from defeating Napoleon's military forces. In fact, from 1815 to 1854, the beginning of the Crimean War, the British Army suffered both from its tendency to bask in the triumph of Waterloo, and from Parliament's policy of reducing its strength and appropriations.<sup>15</sup> The Royal Navy was allowed to dwindle away, from ninety-nine ships of the line in 1814 to twenty-three in 1838; each year Naval Estimates were cut in any way possible, both by Parliament and the Board of Admiralty; the result was that obsolescent ships and weapons were retained, a situation which inhibited the development of new tactics and realistic training.<sup>16</sup> However,

despite the economy, the Navy retained its superiority over other navies;<sup>17</sup> it did not suffer as badly as the Army, which declined from its strength of 220,000 men at the end of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars to its lowest total of 80,000 in 1820, although by 1840 it had risen to just over 100,000.<sup>18</sup> However, no nation was strong enough, for many years after 1815, to check England's growing industrial might and expanding Empire, and therefore there was no need for England to maintain strong military forces.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the factors that combined against the establishment of strong military forces, there grew up in England a militantly patriotic sentiment which was independent of considerations of military might. The unknowing instigator of this peculiarly English militant patriotism was a man whom Tennyson admired as a statesman,<sup>20</sup> George Canning, the successor in 1822 of that consummate diplomat Lord Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary in Prime Minister Lord Liverpool's Tory government. Canning, a former Whig, broke with the powers of the Holy Alliance (Austria, Prussia, and Russia), which with England had combined to defeat Napoleon, by asserting that England had the right to conduct its foreign affairs independently of any consideration of the foreign policy of any other nation, or any alliance.<sup>21</sup> Castlereagh had broken with the Holy Alliance, but he had done so under pressure from the public; Canning was ostentatious in his proclamation of England's isolation in foreign affairs. In practice, his policy meant that the English government began to support, passively, those

constitutional parties that struggled against autocratic governments. However, he did not advocate revolution in Europe or elsewhere; rather, he simply used England's prestige and threatened the employment of its power in order to prevent autocrats from destroying constitutional movements.<sup>22</sup>

As a young man, Tennyson felt an emotional attachment to the revolutionary movements in Europe. This feeling led, in 1830, to a journey by the poet and his friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, to the Pyrenees; the two Englishmen carried money and despatches to the Spanish Confederate Party there. Both of them were eventually disillusioned by the greed and immorality of these revolutionaries, whose movement was suppressed without difficulty.<sup>23</sup> Tennyson was happy to return to England, and wrote:

Someone says that nothing strikes a traveller more on returning from the Continent than the look of an English country town. . . . [E]ach man's house [is] . . . his own castle, built according to his own means and fancy, and so indicating the Englishman's free individual humour. I am struck on returning from France [which the poet had also visited] with the look of good sense in the London people.<sup>24</sup>

Tennyson's Spanish experience probably mitigated his enthusiasm for revolutionary movements, as probably did his experience in England during the autumn and winter of 1830, when agitation for the reform of the franchise was intense.<sup>25</sup> The agitation led to riots and burnings, and Tennyson was involved in extinguishing fires in Cambridgeshire (he was attending Cambridge University at this time), and in the forming of a group for the defence of the town of Cambridge from rioters. Although Tennyson was elated when the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed by the House of



Lords, he nevertheless did not approve of the methods of the English radical reformers.<sup>26</sup> These events in Spain and England were critical ones in the poet's life: they probably made him limit his political attention to England and to peaceful methods of political change in the country; thus these experiences very likely contributed to his patriotic feeling for England by increasing for him the value of the country and its institutions.

#### The Rise and Apogee of the Victorian Age (1833-1880).

Canning's ideological successor was Lord Palmerston, who, Tennyson declared, "In foreign affairs . . . saw further than he is ever credited with seeing."<sup>27</sup> Palmerston was first Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister intermittently during the period from 1830 to 1859; he was a Liberal who had been a Tory, and he mobilized the militantly patriotic feeling of Englishmen by asserting that England's duty was to support and protect its "liberal" ideas whenever they appeared in other countries.<sup>28</sup> He favored the use of England's power, or more accurately, the threatened use of its power, as an instrument in foreign affairs. In 1848 public opinion in England supported the revolutionaries in Europe, and Palmerston, although cordially receiving exiled autocrats in England in his capacity as Foreign Secretary, openly sympathized with the liberal forces in Europe. In 1850 the Don Pacifico incident caused Palmerston to state his beliefs clearly.<sup>29</sup> He contended that England, because of its traditions and institutions, was the suitable guardian of liberty in the world. Because liberty was not a

concept confined to England, then England must, he argued, assert its influence, traditions, and power throughout the world; England must oppose both anarchists and reactionaries, because both threaten true "liberalism" in the world by countering anarchism and reaction. He maintained that the Pacifico case, although insignificant economically, still involved the great principle that a British subject in a foreign country was entitled to feel that England's power and reputation protected him.<sup>30</sup> The English public supported Palmerston, and he was greatly acclaimed.<sup>31</sup>

By 1852, Louis Napoleon of France was regarded by most Englishmen as a threat to their country; this threat prompted Tennyson to write "Britons, Guard Your Own, "Hands All Round," "The Third of February 1852," and "For the Penny-Wise." Regarding Tennyson's attitude towards Louis Napoleon and nations other than England, his son Hallam declares:

. . . my father along with many others regarded France under Napoleon as a serious menace to the peace of Europe. Although a passionate patriot, and a true lover of England, he was not blind to her faults, and was unprejudiced and cosmopolitan in seeing the best side of other nations; and in later years after the Franco-German war, he was filled with admiration at the dignified way in which France was gradually gathering herself together.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, Tennyson was primarily concerned with his own country and its survival as a viable entity. He never advocated England subjugating other nations of European stock in order to increase its power, and so never distrusted such nations when they ceased to be threats to England. Consequently, Tennyson's patriotism was not narrow and destructive; but it was militant in advocating preparation for the repulsion of England's enemies.

The Duke of Wellington died on September 14, 1852. Tennyson wrote, in tribute to this soldier and statesman,<sup>33</sup> the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." Tennyson disagreed with those people who thought that the poem was written out of obligation to Queen Victoria, and therefore that it was "a Laureate Ode; . . . [instead, he declared,] it was written from genuine admiration of the man."<sup>34</sup> Tennyson's sincere praise for a soldier who embodied English military strength, and who dedicated himself to perpetuate the English state, suggests not only the poet's appreciation of the Duke's contribution as a soldier to England's safety, but also Tennyson's approval of Wellington's total dedication to England. The poet saw this dedication at Wellington's funeral, when he remarked on "the look of sober manhood in the British soldier[s]" present.<sup>35</sup> "Sober" is an important word in this context because it suggests that what Tennyson found admirable in his country's military men was what he conceived to be their completely serious dedication to duty. Just as Tennyson asserts in the "Ode" that Wellington "sought but Duty's iron crown,"<sup>36</sup> so the soldiers at his funeral are "sober," cognizant of their burden, or "iron crown," as defenders of their country. Accordingly, Tennyson's patriotism, although militant in its stress on England's security, emphasizes not an aggressive attitude to foreigners, but dedication in defending England.

Within two years of Wellington's death, England was involved in the Crimean War (1854-1856). The vast majority of Englishmen entered this war in a mood of exhilaration; the long period between the end of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars

and the beginning of hostilities in the Crimea had made them so impatient to prove their valor by forgetting industry and commerce for a while, and displaying their fighting courage, that the choice of enemy was incidental.<sup>37</sup> The resulting prosecution of the war by England and its ally France against Russia, the eventual choice as enemy, was disastrous for the English: aging, incompetent commanding officers such as Lord Raglan, Lord Lucan, and Lord Cardigan botched their commands; because of the telegraph, the English public was able to read immediate and intimate accounts of the incompetence of the English commanding officers and the suffering of their troops through mismanagement and disease;<sup>38</sup> and the winter of 1854 was very miserable, inflicting the additional sufferings of exposure and near-starvation upon the troops.<sup>39</sup> The public's disgust at the conduct of the war led to the fall of Lord Aberdeen's coalition government, and after Lord Derby was unable to form a Conservative government, the Queen turned to Palmerston, and he proceeded to form one in 1855.

However, despite the setbacks experienced by the English as a result of the incompetence of their military leaders in the Crimea, and the adverse weather conditions in the area, both soldiers and civilians held on to their conception of the superiority of their race. Joseph H. Lehmann in his book on Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley, who "held to the popular belief that most English gentlemen were born with courage,"<sup>40</sup> reveals the English military spirit at this time in his description of the attitude of English soldiers regarding wounds:

.. . he [Wolseley] was struck by a canister-shot

which whipped across his right thigh, inflicting a slight wound which bled profusely. He was too busy to have it attended to, but like all wounds he acquired serving Queen and country, he bore it with pride. This attitude was evinced by Lord Raglan, who, on hearing that one of his officers was wounded, said of the young man's mother: 'How proud she will be to hear that he has a bullet in his shoulder.'<sup>41</sup>

Wolseley, like most English soldiers throughout the age, adhered to a patriotism which was notable for its militancy; he "liked to repeat a paradox which he borrowed from Sir William Napier [a soldier and military historian]: 'We may not be a military nation, but without doubt we are the most warlike people on earth.'<sup>42</sup>

"The Charge of the Light Brigade," which was very popular during the Crimean War, both in England and in the Crimea amongst English soldiers,<sup>43</sup> reflects the extremely militant patriotic sentiment which manifested itself in most Englishmen at this time. Tennyson's assertion in the poem that "Their's not to reason why, / Their's but to do and die" (II, 225, 14-15), expresses his belief in the sanctity of defending England through unquestioning sacrifice; apparently most Englishmen shared this conviction, at least in the momentary need to extract victory from defeat. Tennyson sent the following preface to be printed with copies of the poem that he had ordered to be produced for the English soldiers in the Crimea:

Having heard that the brave soldiers . . . , whom I am proud to call my countrymen, have a liking for my ballad on the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, I have ordered a thousand copies of it to be printed for them. No writing of mine can add to the glory they have acquired in the Crimea; but if what I have heard be true they will not be displeased to receive these copies from me, and to know that those who sit at home love and honour them.<sup>44</sup>

On an anniversary of the charge of the Light Brigade, Tennyson, unable to attend a banquet celebrating it, sent a letter, including the following comments, to the banquet committee's chairman:

I cannot attend your banquet, but I enclose £5 to defray some of its expenses, or to be distributed as you may think fit among the most indigent survivors of that glorious charge. A blunder it may have been, but one for which England should be grateful, having thereby learnt that her soldiers are the most honest and most obedient under the sun.<sup>45</sup>

Tennyson acknowledges the charge as a "blunder," but his militant patriotism makes him extract value from the event by seeing it as proof of the English military man's dedication to the defence of his country.

After Palmerston assumed office as Prime Minister, the Crimean situation improved for England: French and English forces captured the Russian city of Sebastopol on September 9th, 1855; a Sanitary Commission was sent to the Crimea by Lord Panmure, who combined the offices of Secretary for War and Secretary at War; and the war gradually became more diplomatic and less military. The policy of Canning and Palmerston of ignoring the wishes of the Holy Alliance, and thus reducing its effectiveness, was assisted by the war: Austria, because of its efforts at mediation between the warring parties, failed to gain the confidence of any of them, and the result was the end of the Holy Alliance.<sup>46</sup>

During the remainder of his years as Prime Minister, Palmerston was occupied mainly with foreign affairs, which interested him much more than those at home. As the Crimean War was ending, Palmerston's government became embroiled in

events in China. Attempts by Western merchants to develop their interests in China had been opposed by the Chinese government, and had led to the Opium War (1841), the outcome of which, the Treaty of Nanking, in 1842, opened five "treaty ports" to English merchants.<sup>47</sup> However, the refusal of the Chinese to cooperate fully with the English negated the concessions that they had received, and by 1850 Palmerston was considering intervening in Chinese affairs; the Taiping rebellion in 1853 against the Chinese government, which developed into a civil war, and two incidents in 1856 involving questionable treatment of a Frenchman and the English flag led to hostilities; Palmerston's government was defeated in the Commons as a result of his Chinese policy, but in the consequent election in 1857, in which he appealed to the public's patriotism, he was returned to power.<sup>48</sup> In 1858 a combined English and French force, joined by plenipotentiaries from Russia and the United States, fought its way up the Peiho River to Tientsin, where a treaty was signed, arranging for the exchange of diplomatic representatives and the opening of five more cities to English traders.<sup>49</sup> Thus, Palmerston, although a supporter of liberal movements in Europe, had no qualms about extending England's power throughout the non-European world.

At this time the English government had just finished suppressing the Indian Mutiny of 1857; Palmerston had refused all aid from other countries in quelling the mutiny, declaring that England must have the strength and determination to correct the situation itself.<sup>50</sup> A famous incident of the mutiny, the defence by Englishmen of the Residency in Lucknow, was used by

Tennyson in his "The Defence of Lucknow." In 1886, commenting on the mutiny, the poet maintained that "It was a terrible time for England, but from this mutiny our race grew in strength."<sup>51</sup>

In 1859, after France and Piedmont became allies in a war against Austria, and England seemed to be in danger of being invaded, Tennyson wrote "Riflemen, Form!" According to Hallam Tennyson, this poem calling for English military preparedness against the likely invasion of England "rang like a trumpet-call through the length and breadth of the Empire."<sup>52</sup> Coincidentally, three days after the poem was published, the War Office approved the formation of a Volunteer rifle corps. To one of the promoters of this corps, Tennyson wrote: "I must heartily congratulate you on your having been able to do so much for your country; and I hope that you will not cease from your labours until it is the law of the land that every male child in it shall be trained to the use of arms."<sup>53</sup>

Palmerston died in 1865, and not until 1874, with Benjamin Disraeli, a Conservative, as Prime Minister did England return to the Palmerstonian policy of open and active interference in foreign affairs. Palmerston's support throughout his career of liberal movements in Europe was based upon his notion that these movements were establishing versions of English constitutionalism there; moreover, he felt that by supporting the nationalist sentiment voiced by these movements, he could preserve the balance of power in Europe.<sup>54</sup> The support always took the form of moral encouragement; Palmerston never arrived at the point where he had to involve England in a war to establish or preserve constitutional government in Europe.<sup>55</sup> The ambiguity of



Palmerston's domestic policy, which was grounded upon a distrust of the extension of the franchise, suited the period of political uncertainty between the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867; moreover, although his policy in foreign affairs reflected the attitude of the English middle classes that were produced by commerce and industry,<sup>56</sup> "His patriotism, his prejudices, his language summarized the opinions of the ordinary man."<sup>57</sup> Palmerston is the representative figure of mid-century militant patriotism in England. He developed Canning's policy of intervention to the extent that his diplomatic maneuvering became less important than his public pronouncements: the English public savored his declarations on foreign affairs, deriving pleasure from the assertion of England's opinions and the threat of its might. Palmerston did not create this militantly patriotic feeling in Englishmen: he gave expression to it.

During Palmerston's career as Prime Minister, and continuing after it, there was reform in the armed forces of England. The Crimean War prompted the English government to institute some administrative reforms involving the changing of the system of supply in the Army. However, major military reforms were introduced after William Ewart Gladstone, a Tory who became a Liberal, became Prime Minister; during his first Ministry (1868-1874) the organization of the Army was overhauled. The military victories of Prussia against Denmark in 1864, against Austria in 1866, and against France in 1870 in the Franco-Prussian War, directed attention in England to the reform of the Army.<sup>58</sup> The Navy's reform was slow. Until the Crimean War, most of the fleet had been laid up; this war, and the growth

of armaments in other European nations, made the Navy institute some reforms. However, despite the slowness of change, the Navy maintained, throughout most of the Victorian era, a large and expensive fleet, the largest in the world.<sup>59</sup>

The Franco-Prussian War convinced Tennyson that, if England were not adequately prepared militarily, the country would eventually be invaded and conquered. He declared that "We Englishmen rashly expose ourselves to danger, and in our press offend foreign powers, being the most beastly self-satisfied nation in the world."<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the poet felt that "We ought to have all boys at school drilled, so that we may be more ready for defensive war than now."<sup>61</sup>

At this time in England, the notion that the country should expand and preserve the Empire gained great popularity. The political embodiment of this notion was Disraeli, who was Prime Minister in 1868, and between 1874 and 1880. Tennyson neither admired nor trusted Disraeli, but was an adherent of the Prime Minister's imperial policy.<sup>62</sup> The true heir of Palmerston's aggressive, independent foreign policy,<sup>63</sup> Disraeli went further than Palmerston or any other Prime Minister, in making positive, publicized declarations on foreign affairs. He believed that England's position in the world resulted from what Englishmen conceived its position to be; consequently, there was a need, he felt, for Englishmen to tell the world what they thought, so that other men would always keep England's position in mind as they formulated the foreign policy of their own nations. The crucial idea in Disraeli's foreign policy was that the British Empire was the physical expression of England's power and place

in the affairs of nations.<sup>64</sup> He promulgated the notion that imperialism was a positive force, thus abandoning the policy of former Prime Ministers, who had allowed the British Empire to expand in a haphazard manner.<sup>65</sup> Disraeli reversed Gladstone's policy of non-intervention in the affairs of other nations, and also enlarged the scope of English concern, from the nation to the growing Empire; he accomplished this enlargement through two acts that aroused an imperialistic fervor in the English people. The first act was the purchase in 1875 of shares in the Suez Canal, thus joining England with France in the Canal's control; and the second was his getting statutory authority in 1876 for his proposal to make the Queen the Empress of India.<sup>66</sup> Disraeli placed his support behind those Englishmen who thought that their country should join in the race for colonies, a race which began in earnest in the ninth decade of the century; those people in England, and on the European continent, who stressed the need for colonies valued them as proof of national greatness, and as sources of materials as well as markets for manufactured goods.<sup>67</sup>

In 1875 in Bosnia there was a revolt against the Turkish rulers by their Slav subjects. Disraeli committed his country to supporting the Turkish government, even to the extent of a possible war with Russia. In England the Liberals denounced Disraeli's position, and public opinion turned against the Turks because of the bloody Turkish suppression of a Bulgarian rebellion. Disraeli adhered to his policy, which was dictated by a consideration of the imperial ambition and security of England. While Disraeli was maintaining his position, the

Turks and Russians became engaged in warfare in April, 1877, and the ensuing success of the Russians alarmed the English public, while the spirited defence presented by the Turks gained sympathy for them in England. A possible Anglo-Russian war was averted by the convening of a congress of the great European powers at Berlin in 1878; at this congress, over which Bismarck presided, Russian momentum in the Near East was stalled.<sup>68</sup>

Although Tennyson distrusted Russia, he did not approve of Disraeli's Near Eastern policy, which amounted to England supporting the Turks against the Christians in the area.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, he composed and published the sonnet, "Montenegro," in 1877, in support of the Montenegrins in their struggle against the Turks. The sonnet is probably an unconscious comparison of the English and the Montenegrins (this comparison is examined in Chapter III), a comparison very likely strengthened in Tennyson's unconscious mind by the common Christian faith of the two peoples.

Disraeli returned from Berlin declaring that he had won peace with honor. His policy of interfering in the affairs of other nations, not just to preserve the status quo as Palmerston had done, but to alter the balance of power in order to strengthen England and weaken its enemies, seemed to the English public to have succeeded. Yet in the general election of 1880, the Liberals under Gladstone won a convincing victory. This decline in the Conservatives' popularity was the consequence of costly colonial wars in Africa and Afghanistan, a decline in

English trade, and a depression in English agriculture. Disraeli was not directly responsible for the last two causes of his decline in popularity, but his foreign policy of continued interference in international affairs in order to expand and safeguard the British Empire led him to commit his country to costly and potentially disastrous colonial wars. The Zulu War (1878-1879) and the Second Afghan War (1878-1880) were expensive and initially disastrous for the English forces involved in them, and although they were eventually concluded in a manner satisfactory to the English government, they cast doubt upon Disraeli's glamorous conception of the Empire: Englishmen felt uneasy about accepting all the consequences of his foreign policy, among which were the inevitability of high costs and military defeats, and involvement in alliances and in the competition for spheres of influence throughout the world.<sup>70</sup>

During this period of nascent imperialism, Tennyson continued to produce poetry embodying his exalted conception of the English race. An example is "The Revenge: A Ballad of the Fleet," which was first published in 1878; about a year later, Tennyson read the poem to Carlyle, who told Tennyson that the poet had "got the grip of it."<sup>71</sup> Tennyson answered, referring to Sir Richard Grenville, the hero of the poem:

There's a man for you. The Spaniards declared  
he would "carouse" three or four glasses of wine  
and take the glasses between his teeth and crush  
them to pieces and swallow them down.<sup>72</sup>

To which Carlyle replied in an undertone: "I knew that Alfred would treat that episode in a masterful manner [the story is

told in Chapter III], and he'd not allude to Elizabeth's starving the poor sailors."<sup>73</sup> Carlyle noted what Tennyson readily reveals in this poem and in most of the other war poems: namely, a biased interpretation of history and current events which bolsters his notion that Englishmen are brave and eager to sacrifice themselves in order to defend their homeland.

### The Victorian Sunset (1881-1891).

In his election campaign of 1880, Gladstone declared that the British Empire was a burden for England, and that the country should always be a free agent in international affairs, at liberty to formulate its foreign policy according to the dictates of the moment. Gladstone and the Liberals, including Radicals such as Richard Cobden, believed that the imperialist policy of Disraeli would involve England in a perpetual struggle with those nations that bordered on the Empire, thus sacrificing England's policy of being uninvolved in alliances and holding the balance of power. Disraeli's policy would also, the Liberals felt, lose England its naval supremacy by making it concentrate on providing the weaker land forces that it could field to cope with the land-based problems the Empire would raise for the mother country.<sup>74</sup> Gladstone was careful to emphasize that he was not opposed to the conception of the British Empire as a collection of colonies composed of Englishmen; like the rest of the Liberals, he was against Englishmen attempting to subject and control the destinies of other races; to him, the Empire would ideally evolve into a commonwealth of self-governing nations whose people were of English stock.<sup>75</sup>

As succeeding years would show, the anti-imperialist sentiment from which Gladstone benefited was temporary. But the English people in 1880 had not yet become accustomed to imperialism, and thus were vulnerable to Gladstone's proclamation of the integrity of the natives of Asia and Africa.<sup>76</sup> Even though imperialism was still only a nascent force, during his administration Gladstone was forced to become embroiled in the ramifications generated by Disraeli's foreign policy; such consequences in Afghanistan and the Transvaal forced Gladstone to solve delicate situations.<sup>77</sup> Although Sir Charles Tennyson, the poet's grandson, can find no evidence of Tennyson's reaction to the situations in these two areas, he feels that Gladstone's solutions to them, solutions that involved England adopting a non-assertive role in foreign affairs, would have been seen as unfavorable to England by the patriotic poet.<sup>78</sup>

Africa provided Gladstone with two more crises during his second Ministry. In Egypt Arabi Pasha led a nationalist movement which threatened the security of the Khedive Tewfik, and thus of the Suez Canal, so important to the commercial and political interests of England and France. These two nations, because of their dual control of Egyptian financial affairs, were assailed by the Egyptian nationalists; after the nationalists massacred fifty Europeans, the two nations diverged in policy, France refraining from taking any action, while England sent Wolseley with an army to defeat Arabi Pasha, which he did on September 13, 1882, at Tel-el-Kebir. Wolseley's campaign, which he concluded very quickly, was expedited by the reforms that had been carried out in the Army.<sup>79</sup>

Tennyson celebrates Wolseley's victory by asserting in "Prologue: To General Hamley" that the victory's significance was such that "the stars in heaven / Paled, and the glory grew" (VI, 306, 31-32); to the poet, as to most Victorian Englishmen, such a victory proved that their country was militarily strong, and that their race possessed fighting ability. After writing about the poet's conversations, not only with Hamley, but also with Wolseley, Hallam Tennyson declares: "I need hardly remark how much of a soldier at heart the poet was who had written 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' 'The Defence of Lucknow,' and the 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,' or what true, admiring sympathy he felt always for the self-sacrificing lives to which those who command and serve in our army are often called."<sup>80</sup>

The other African crisis of Gladstone's second Ministry involved General Gordon's death in the Sudan. The corrupt Egyptian rule in the territory led to a popular revolt under the leadership of a local leader known as the Mahdi. A military force under the direction of an English officer, Hicks Pasha, was sent by the Khedive to destroy the Mahdi but was annihilated in November, 1883. Public opinion in England went against Gladstone's government because most Englishmen considered the defeat as damaging to England's prestige, and Gladstone, although hesitant about involving his government in the affair, sent the popular Gordon to the Sudan in January, 1884. Unfortunately, Gordon's instructions from the English government were vague.<sup>81</sup> After he arrived in Khartoum, the capital of the Sudan, the forces of the Mahdi laid siege to the



city. Gladstone did not want to intervene: he declared that he did not want to suppress a nationalist movement. Yet the earlier expedition against Arabi Pasha contradicted him. Ultimately, widespread criticism in England forced Gladstone, in August, to agree to send a force to relieve Gordon. This force, under the command of Wolseley, was near Khartoum on January 28, 1885, when the news of that city's fall and Gordon's death reached it. The English public reacted to the General's death with deep sorrow and much anger. Gladstone became extremely unpopular for his delay in sending aid.<sup>82</sup>

The veneration paid to General Gordon after his death was eloquent testimony to the admiration with which Victorian Englishmen regarded their military heroes: a day of national mourning was declared, and memorial services were held at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, to which most prominent Englishmen went. The Queen sent a letter of condolence to Gordon's sister and a letter to Gladstone blaming him for Gordon's death;<sup>83</sup> and Tennyson, in his "Epitaph on General Gordon," calls the General a "Warrior of God, man's friend, and tyrant's foe" (VI, 332, 1). All this veneration was for a man who was a "foreigner" in the Sudan, trying to perpetuate the corrupt Egyptian government in the territory.

These two African crises provided the outlet for a growing imperialistic spirit in the English people, a spirit which was based upon the notion that the race's superiority must be upheld by the immediate reaction to the smallest slight against England and the Empire by other nations or peoples. Gladstone, in not sending aid in time to Gordon, failed to

recognize the strength that the idea of imperialism had amongst the English public; the fact that the English government and its servant Gordon had little or no right to make its presence felt in the Sudan did not deter most Englishmen from believing that Gordon's death was an insufferable affront to the pride and importance of the English race.

This English sense of pride and superiority did not originate in the Victorian age or even in the nineteenth century, but it evolved in Victorian England into a much more emotional and militant appreciation of England's position in world affairs than it had been in the past. As the century progressed and the British Empire grew, it increasingly became the focal point of this emotional and largely decorative militant patriotism: because England was not involved in wars with its European neighbors (except with Russia in the Crimean War), the competition for colonies with other nations and the resulting comparison of the size of the British Empire with those of other nations became substitutes for war. Even outspoken opponents of imperialistic ambition and aggressive foreign policies, such as Gladstone, could not cope with the militantly patriotic fervor so easily generated in Victorian England by even the most insignificant transgression against the country's policies by other nations and peoples.<sup>84</sup> Imperceptibly, the English people became a prey to a strident patriotism which yoked itself for expression to a ruthless imperialism, the two forces gradually finding emotional justification in a gaudy exhibition of racial spirit defined in terms of military prowess. Thus, a militant patriotism which was psychologically

powerful but not transformed into any alteration of the state apparatus which could have led to its control by the military was the force which dominated English foreign policy as the nineteenth century progressed.

Tennyson was an ardent imperialist, and he was always interested in the Empire's affairs. In the autumn of 1883, Gladstone, probably at the instigation of the Queen, offered Tennyson a peerage, which the poet accepted partly because he felt that he could not refuse the opportunity of obtaining a seat in what he thought was the greatest legislative assembly on earth.<sup>85</sup> Tennyson sat on the cross-benches in the House of Lords, because he did not want to be tied to a party, but instead wanted to be free to vote for those measures that would be best for the Empire.<sup>86</sup> Combined with this concern for the Empire, was Tennyson's notion that the English government, and the concepts upon which it was based, were not universally applicable. According to Hallam Tennyson, the poet believed that the English constitution was not suitable for all countries:

This English constitution would never do for every sort and condition of country. The fault of the Englishman is, that he thinks that he and his ways are always right everywhere.<sup>87</sup>

Tennyson's concern for the Empire, and his belief in the special character of English government, reflect his patriotism: to him, the expansion of England through its Empire allowed the country to express its greatness without losing its individuality.

By 1885, Gladstone's handling of foreign affairs had convinced at least half of the English nation that he was

incompetent to direct the Empire's growth and security.<sup>88</sup> When in April, 1885, England was on the verge of war with Russia over Afghanistan, and the Royal Navy's weakness was proclaimed in articles in the Pall Mall Gazette, Tennyson became so enraged that he wrote "The Fleet," which savagely condemns Gladstone's government for neglecting England's interests in foreign affairs by allowing the Navy to deteriorate.<sup>89</sup> Gladstone's government fell in June, 1885, and was succeeded by the Conservative Lord Salisbury's first Ministry, which lasted until February, 1886, when Gladstone formed his third Ministry. However, this Ministry foundered upon Gladstone's Home Rule Bill for Ireland; the Bill was defeated in the Commons, and in the resulting election in the summer of 1886, the Conservatives were returned to power with Salisbury again as Prime Minister.<sup>90</sup>

Salisbury's second Ministry, which lasted until 1892, occupied a period marked by an increase in imperialistic sentiment. The Queen's first jubilee was in 1837, and it was observed with the expression of an enormous amount of pride in England and its Empire, and a growing sense of imperial destiny.<sup>91</sup> In "On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria," Tennyson expresses his own sense of pride and imperial destiny. He tells his fellow countrymen that fifty years of the Queen's rule should prompt them to

Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude  
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,

Hail the fair Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee. (VI, 8, 16-21)

During these "Fifty years of ever-widening Empire" (10, 54),  
England greatly expanded its accumulation of colonial posses-  
sions.<sup>92</sup>

Towards the end of Tennyson's life (he died in 1892), the  
poet made many remarks explicating his personal philosophy.

Regarding patriotism, he declared in 1888:

I am afraid patriotism is very rare.  
The love of country, which makes a man defend  
his land mark [sic], that we all have, and the  
Anglo-Saxon more than most other races: but the patri-  
otism that declines to link itself with the small fry  
of the passing hour for political advantage--that is  
rare, I say.

The Duke of Wellington had both kinds of patri-  
otism.<sup>93</sup>

Tennyson's praise of Wellington as the embodiment of complete  
patriotism is revealing, probably indicating that, to Tennyson,  
there was a strong link between patriotism and military prowess,  
the former depending upon the latter for its viability.

Towards the First World War (1892-1905).

Although the British Empire faced other growing, competi-  
tive European empires as the nineteenth century came to a  
close,<sup>94</sup> the immediate threat to England was seen by most  
Englishmen to be, not other empires, but other navies. The  
vast majority of Englishmen felt that the nation could maintain  
its policy of qualified diplomatic isolation from continental  
Europe if the Royal Navy were supreme. Fear of naval  
vulnerability arose during this period: technical innovations  
such as the torpedo and the submarine meant that a small ship

could destroy a large one and that, consequently, England's large Navy could fall prey to a small continental one; furthermore, England's naval rivals, France and Russia, formed an alliance which seemed to promise disaster for English sea power.<sup>95</sup> However, relations between France and England eventually improved, the result being the Anglo-French entente of 1904; this reconciliation between the two former enemies was the first step towards the final achievement of strong ties between them.<sup>96</sup> After 1900, the serious threat to English naval superiority came from Germany. Accordingly, England's Navy was brought closer to Europe, and an expansion program for it was undertaken.<sup>97</sup> Thus, by 1905 England embarked on the route to its involvement in the First World War. The country was part of the system of European alliances and was committed to a naval race with Germany.

Thomson analyzes the mood of England as the nineteenth century came to a close:

The Empire, vividly depicted in the Jubilees and in Kipling, always spreading out red on the map, became the biggest collective adventure of all: even if it had to be enjoyed by proxy.

Sensationalism, the love of excitement without danger, was indeed a characteristic of the spirit of the time. . . .<sup>98</sup>

Relating England's domestic and foreign affairs, Thomson declares:

The 'man-in-the-street' came into his own as the century ended--the product of industrialism-plus-democracy. . . . If his entry into his political and cultural inheritance was heralded by an outburst of raucous patriotism and a cult of brutal impatience with all resistance to British rule overseas, that was but over-compensation for the utterly unromantic conditions in which his civilization forced him to live.<sup>99</sup>

To Thomson, England's series of colonial conflicts

. . . reached . . . its climax in the naval rivalry with Germany and the First World War. War was, indeed, its natural form of expression.100

Thomson has delineated the final stage in England's gradual adoption of a militant patriotism: a compelling conception of the Empire, fostered by Disraeli, was the catalyst whereby patriotism could transform itself into a truculent pride and then into an assertive, emotional, and militant force.

England's commitment to a naval race with Germany at the end of the Victorian age, and its increasingly aggressive attitude in foreign affairs, seem to suggest that the country was forced to become militantly patriotic in order to protect itself. However, the conviction of Victorian Englishmen of their inherent superiority over other races, their pride in their military ardor and civilization, was fairly easily transformed by the Empire and by international events into a militant patriotism which was notable for its emotional attachment to English civilization, and its conviction that English moral superiority meant inevitable military valor and victory.

Shaw's version of Napoleon, in The Man of Destiny (1895), comments on Englishmen:

He [the Englishman] is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world, and calls it Colonization. When he wants a new market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the Gospel of Peace.101

Moreover, according to Shaw's character: "In defence of his island shores, he puts a chaplain on board his ship; nails a flag with a cross on it to his top-gallant mast; and sails

to the ends of the earth, sinking, burning, and destroying all who dispute the empire of the seas with him."<sup>102</sup> These comments, surely reflecting the personal outlook of Shaw to a certain extent, are applicable, if extreme, descriptions of the late Victorian Englishman.

The exposition, in this chapter, of Tennyson as a militantly patriotic Victorian Englishman raises the problem of determining the reason for his militant patriotism. The following two chapters of the thesis attempt to provide an answer by relating his patriotism to his mysticism: there is an investigation of his relationship with English Nature, a relationship involving mysticism, in Chapter II, and an investigation, in Chapter III, of the defensive character of his war poems, defensive probably because of the poet's unconscious need to defend his relationship with English Nature.



## Chapter II

### Tennyson and Nature: Concealed Mysticism in His Descriptions of Nature in England

This chapter investigates Tennyson's mysticism in an effort to provide an explanation for his militant patriotism. However, an examination of the link between his mysticism and his militant patriotism involves a consideration generally of two different kinds of his poems: those containing descriptions of the English landscape and seascape are used to investigate his mysticism and the war poems are employed to investigate his militant patriotism. Consequently, Chapter II provides only part of the connection, which is completed in Chapter III.

On a trip to France and Switzerland in 1869, Tennyson, according to his travelling companion, Frederick Locker-Lampson, declared:

"After all . . . what is matter?" He added, "I think it is merely the shadow of something greater than itself, and which we poor shortsighted creatures cannot see. If the rationalists are in the right, what is the meaning of all the mosques and temples and cathedrals, spread and spreading over the face of the earth?"<sup>1</sup>

This quotation is not the isolated production of an idle moment of musing in Tennyson's life. In 1890 he wrote to Hallam: "Before I could read, I was in the habit on a stormy day of spreading my arms to the wind, and crying out 'I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind,' and the words 'far, far away' had always a strange charm for me."<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, throughout Tennyson's poetry there is the

expression of an apprehension of an area of mystical experience beyond the world of ordinary experience. In "Armageddon," which he wrote when he was fifteen or sixteen years old,<sup>3</sup> he describes the expansion of his consciousness during a vision:

My mind seem'd wing'd with knowledge and the strength  
Of holy musings and immense Ideas,  
Even to Infinitude. All sense of Time  
And Being and Place was swallowed up and lost  
Within a victory of boundless thought.  
I was part of the Unchangeable,  
A scintillation of Eternal Mind,  
Remix'd and burning with its parent fire.  
Yea! in that hour I could have fallen down  
Before my own strong soul and worshipp'd it.<sup>4</sup>

In "The Mystic," first published in 1830 but suppressed afterwards, Tennyson attempts to objectify his personal emotion by using the third person.<sup>5</sup> In the poem, Tennyson describes a vision and a trance just before the moment of vision:

. . . he in the centre fixt,  
Saw far on each side through the grated gates  
Most pale and clear and lovely distances.  
He often lying broad awake, and yet  
Remaining from the body, and apart  
In intellect and power and will, hath heard  
Time flowing in the middle of the night,  
And all things creeping to a day of doom. (VI, 398-399,  
33-40)

In "The Ancient Sage," first published in 1885 and described by Tennyson as "very personal,"<sup>6</sup> he reveals through the sage a mystical visionary experience:

. . . more than once when I  
Sat all alone, revolving in myself  
The word that is the symbol of myself,  
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,  
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs  
Were strange not mine--and yet no shade of doubt,  
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self  
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours  
Were Sun to spark--unshadowable in words,  
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.  
(VI, 246-247, 229-239)

In "Merlin and the Gleam," written in 1889, three years before Tennyson's death, he deals with "the higher poetic imagination,"<sup>7</sup> which is symbolized in the poem as the Gleam. The Gleam has drawn Merlin onwards through visions that have supplied the continuity of his life, and that have linked it with the area of mystical experience which exists beyond the world of ordinary experience. In this poem Tennyson, through Merlin, is promulgating his own dedication to poetry,<sup>8</sup> defining poetic inspiration as indefinable but sacred, never to be known but always to be followed:

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes,  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow the Gleam. (VII, 97, 120-131)

Tennyson, in these and other instances throughout his life, showed himself to be far more concerned with matters beyond ordinary experience than he was probably thought to be by the vast majority of Victorians. This lesser known aspect of Tennyson shaped his attitude towards all the facets of his experience; he was primarily a poet who wrote best when he wrote of his private feelings and experiences, and consequently, his writings must be considered within the perspective of his private, intuitive grasp of an area of mystical experience. Despite his being Poet Laureate, and despite the fact that many of his poems are burdened with explicit morality, Tennyson's fundamental character, that of a lonely, fearful man,<sup>9</sup>

shunning society, subject to trances and visions, and seeking nature as it appears in English landscapes and seascapes, never changed, and is the motivating force behind all of his poetry.

Tennyson's character is complicated by an apparent distrust of asceticism; however, this apparent distrust actually illuminates the peculiar quality of his character, because he reveals, in his attitude towards asceticism, both a fear of its mystical implications and an attraction to them. He could not deny the force of mysticism in his life: his intuitive contact with an area of mystical experience, something which he could not explain or defend logically, was too vital a factor of his character to be denied. However, he doubted that his probings into transcendental reality required a mode of living which construes, as asceticism does, self-denial to be a prerequisite to mystical insight. Consequently, he would not allow himself to sanction asceticism, and accordingly in his poetry there is a curious ambivalence towards it: he distrusts it, and yet he cannot totally deny its validity.

In "St. Simeon Stylites," which was first published in 1842,<sup>10</sup> Tennyson attacks the self-satisfaction of ascetics; to him, their fanaticism is unnatural and wrong. In the following passage from the poem he reveals, through the saint's words, his own opposition to the mortification of the flesh, showing at the same time that he could write ironically:

Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.

Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedlessly I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God. (I, 306, 47-58)

In "The Holy Grail," which was first published in 1870,<sup>11</sup>  
the poet's purpose is to show that ascetic religion, in its  
eschewing of mortal affairs, and in its pursuit of mysticism,  
is maleficent except for a few special people who embody the  
endless pursuit of ideality and possess value because they are  
good examples for the rest of mankind. However, ascetic reli-  
gion, according to Tennyson, is not suitable for most people,  
and can only destroy them and their society if they subscribe  
to it.<sup>12</sup> Sir Galahad is one of these special people, and con-  
sequently his search for the Holy Grail is successful; King  
Arthur, who speaks for Tennyson, approves of Galahad's quest  
but he decries those of his knights who use the quest as an  
excuse to evade responsibility and to assuage their con-  
sciences.<sup>13</sup> Arthur, like Tennyson, possesses intuitive  
knowledge of an area of mystical experience, but he will not  
allow this knowledge to interfere with his kingly duties:<sup>14</sup>

. . . the King must guard  
That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
To whom a space of land is given to plow.  
Who may not wander from the allotted field  
Before his work be done; but, being done,  
Let visions of the night or of the day  
Come, as they will; and meny a time they come. . . .  
(V, "The Holy Grail," 314, 901-907)

Tennyson, while not completely hostile to asceticism, attempts  
to avoid evaluating it by emphasizing mankind's links with the  
mortal world. Although he does not deny the validity of his  
own intuitive knowledge, he does not allow it to obscure his

sense of social duty. Thus, Tennyson, like Arthur, attempts to preserve himself from the necessarily anti-social demands of mysticism by seeing it as less important for mankind than social order.

However, in poems such as "The Vision of Sin" and "St. Agnes' Eve," which were first published in 1842 and 1836, respectively,<sup>15</sup> Tennyson's unconscious bias in favor of mysticism shows itself; this bias is fundamental in his character, but its effect was never fully acknowledged by him, for the implications of such an acknowledgment would have destroyed his sense of social duty. In "The Vision of Sin" his opposition to a total absorption in the pleasures of the senses is coupled with an alternative, mystical sense of the universe. The dreamer in the poem has a "vision" (II, 124, 1) in which a youth enters a palace of pleasure and becomes involved in an abandoned dance; this vision is interrupted by a new one, in which the youth has become a disillusioned old man in a tavern. The youth has been ruined by seeking only sensuous pleasures. Tennyson, however, does not allow himself to offer mysticism explicitly as an alternative to sensuousness. The dreamer simply declares that "the mystic mountain range" (134, 208) was asked if there is any hope for mankind, and that

. . . an answer peal'd from that high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand;  
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn. (221-224)

There is, in the lines just quoted, the implication of something beyond the confines of the individual self; however, Tennyson does not express any evaluation, through the dreamer, of the

"awful rose of dawn," and these words can remain only as a testament to his intuitive attraction to a mystical interpretation of being, an interpretation made more acceptable to him in this instance because of his attribution of the event to God.

In "St. Agnes' Eve" Tennyson has taken a traditional idea and has altered it by etherealizing it: on Saint Agnes' Eve, January 21, a girl traditionally attempted to visualize her future husband's appearance; Tennyson, using the notion of a nun being the bride of Christ, has created, in this poem, a nun who anticipates her union with her "Heavenly Bridegroom" (II, 78, 31). Tennyson reveals, in the poem, not religious enthusiasm, but a bias in favor of a mystical attitude towards love: the nun does not appeal to him as a religious figure, but as a person who has transformed successfully her earthly passion into a mystical longing. Her asceticism appeals to him.

The curious ambivalence which Tennyson possessed towards asceticism reflects his basic uncertainty as regards mysticism. In order to avoid resolving the dilemma of his possessing both a social conscience and an anti-social mystical longing, he grounded his mystical feelings in nature, especially as it appears in the landscape and seascape of England. By doing so, he could express safely his necessarily anti-social mysticism, and could also make the world revealed to him by his intuitive mystical power seem less unknowable. These complicated processes were not developed consciously by Tennyson; rather, they were products of his unconscious desire to be both a mystic and an acceptable writer to Victorians.

Many critics who have dealt with Tennyson's relationship

with nature have remarked on the factual, accurate quality of his descriptions of nature. Stopford A. Brooke maintains that there is an "absence from his mind of any belief or conception of a life in Nature."<sup>16</sup> He declares that Tennyson accurately describes nature as it appears externally to the human senses, and that readers of Tennyson's descriptions of nature are affected intellectually, not emotionally, the reason being that he was not in love with nature as a living presence; consequently when Tennyson does not use nature to reflect human emotions, it does not exist as a living entity in his verse.<sup>17</sup> Tennyson, to Brooke, did not feel any love for nature because he saw it, in such poems as "The Higher Pantheism," as an imperfect vision of a superior reality which was hidden from man; accordingly, Brooke believes that Tennyson's senses responded to nature, but that his soul rejected it.<sup>18</sup> Brooke has separated Tennyson's senses from his soul, but he does not explain why the poet should trouble to describe nature accurately, even when he is not using it to reflect human emotions, if he believes it to be an inferior version of reality.

To Harold Nicolson, "the Victorian distrust of absolute imagination"<sup>19</sup> is the reason for Tennyson's "obsession with accuracy"<sup>20</sup> in his descriptions of nature. Nicolson asserts that Tennyson's descriptions of nature are memorable, not because they are more subjective than other more moralistic parts of his verse, but because "in approaching the eternal and illimitable inspiration of Nature, the emotional ecstasy depends perhaps more upon the temperament of the reader than upon the imaginative impulse of the poet himself"; the poet



simply acts as a stimulator of the reader's imagination.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Nicolson avoids an examination of Tennyson in his attempt to solve the problem of determining the reason for the poet's accurate descriptions of nature: Nicolson declares that the reader of these descriptions, not their creator, endows them with artistic merit by responding to their accuracy. Nicolson attempts to derive artistic value from Tennyson's accurate descriptions of nature: because of his desire to record only phenomena that he had experienced with his senses, coupled with his very short sight, his descriptions of nature are generally composed of a carefully delineated foreground and a vague, illimitable background, the result being, according to Nicolson, the valuable conveyance of the contrast in nature between "the minute . . . [and] the infinite."<sup>22</sup>

However, Nicolson fails to indicate why this contrast should be considered valuable.

Jerome Hamilton Buckley argues that Tennyson "found his first moral guide in natural science rather than in ethical theory";<sup>23</sup> the poet found, according to Buckley, relief from the misery of his own life and the life of man in general, by deriving solace from the universally applicable and comfortably impersonal character of natural laws, the seeking of this solace driving Tennyson to become acquainted in detail with the characteristics of plants and animals.<sup>24</sup> However, Buckley does not explain how Tennyson could separate mankind from the rest of existence in his considerations of natural laws.

Although all of these critics acknowledge Tennyson's intuitive mystical insight, they do not find a productive,

positive relationship between his descriptions of nature and this insight. Buckley finds a relationship, but it is only one of tension: "since Tennyson was committed both to the knowledge of things seen or felt in sensuous terms and to the reality of his private intuitions, his central concern with the individual soul and the problem of immortality was strangely ambivalent, charged with the tension of opposites."<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, the problem remains: why does Tennyson indulge in minutely accurate descriptions of nature and yet assert that matter is neither permanent nor valuable? Because, as this chapter will attempt to show, in his poems nature is the embodiment of his mystical insight; his descriptions of nature reflect his insight; its colors and sounds, as they appear in his poems, are the delineation of his mystical experience. The accuracy and factuality of his descriptions of nature are not the reflections of his interest in nature, but are indicators of an abnormal interest in delineation: he is not interested in nature, but in delineating it, because he is trying to discover the meaning of something very indefinite physically, his mystical experiences.

Nature, to Tennyson, meant the English version of nature, especially Lincolnshire, where he was born. Lincolnshire, for him, was the universe of his youth: its landscape and seascape acted as vessels and received the emotion which he poured out from himself and into them; they received his doubts, hopes, and fears as he matured. Accordingly, the topography of Lincolnshire is of paramount importance in a consideration of Tennyson's relationship with nature. This rural county, which

borders on the North Sea, is one of the largest in England, forty-five miles from east to west and seventy-five miles from north to south; it is composed mainly of wolds, fens, and marshes, and dikes and drains are in evidence. It is a bleak place, the monotony of the landscape being broken only occasionally by stretches of rich grass land, and rows of clumps of poplars, aspens, and elms. The coastline is composed of sand-dunes that have been built up by the wind and by the waves of the North Sea, and stretches of flat, brown sand that lie between the dunes and the sea.<sup>26</sup> Regarding the Rectory of Somersby, Tennyson's birthplace, Nicolson states:

It is not a high house--two stories only, with a dormer here and there--and yet it seems short and truncated in comparison to its stature. The Gothic hall . . . has a curtailed, almost a telescoped appearance. The lawn . . . is but a trim and tidy affair, a few square yards only in measurement.<sup>27</sup>

However, as Nicolson declares, the importance of the house's environment is great:

. . . more important is the general feeling of Somersby, its peculiar atmosphere. The geography of it, in the first place. The sense of distance and of isolation; the sense of seclusion. The sense that to the north the wolds stretch wind-swept to the Humber, that to the south they dip again into the wide sadness of the fens. The sense, to the east there over the hill, of marshes moaning in the gale . . . ; . . . to the west . . . fog loitering from dyke to dyke.<sup>28</sup>

In many of Tennyson's poems the bleakness of this landscape and seascape is delineated. However, their importance to him extends even beyond his character, to the sources of it; that is, to the quality of his experience of existence. The mystical quality of his experience is the reason for his close

relationship with Lincolnshire, so that initially, nature in that county, and later in all of England, became the means through which he attempted to cope with the intuitive insight which his mystical experiences gave him.

Tennyson describes his poetic imagination in "Merlin and the Gleam" in terms of landscape and seascape. The Gleam, which is the symbol of his poetic imagination, is his guide, and leads him through the various stages of his life, all of which are conveyed mainly through the interaction of the Gleam with the landscape and seascape. A "Wizard" (VII, 92, 11), also called "Master" (15), teaches Merlin "Magic" (14); his subsequent existence consists of following the Gleam, urged on by the master. The Gleam leads Merlin from the success of "the valley" (93, 17) in "early summers" (18) through the darkened "landskip" (31) of failure, from a "wilderness" (36) of fancies to the "Pasture and plowland" (94, 54) of orthodoxy, from the "faded forest" (96, 85) of doubt to the understanding of "the mortal hillock" (107), and finally, to the "boundless Ocean" (97, 117) of eternity. Tennyson, in this poem, is using the interaction between the Gleam and the landscape and seascape to symbolize his own mystical affirmation and doubt, the movement of the Gleam being the perseverance of affirmation, and the landscape and seascape being the forms of earthly thought that can breed only doubt. His use of "wizard," "master," and "magic" to describe the basic quality of his genius, and his seeing himself as a magician dealing with the mysterious world of magic, suggests that Tennyson was basically a metaphysician who, in his poetry, unconsciously promulgated

a belief in the intuitive feeling which was generated in him by his mystical visions; his descriptions of landscapes and seascapes are delineations of this belief.

By the time "Merlin and the Gleam" was written, Tennyson had generalized the English landscape and seascape to the extent that its characteristics are blurred. However, in his early poems he uses Lincolnshire almost exclusively as the source for his descriptions of nature, descriptions in which his mystical feeling is objectified. Tennyson, in the descriptions that he derived from the landscape and seascape of Lincolnshire, begins the process of revealing his mystical feelings through the use of words that convey his sense of union with an area of mystical experience which is beyond the world of ordinary existence; his descriptions of nature reach beyond description to delineate something which he has experienced or is experiencing. Tennyson unconsciously is attempting to convey, primarily, not what he has seen or sees, but what he has felt or feels, and thus he conveys a mood, not a scene: his mood dictates the scene, and his mood is the product of his dissatisfaction with what he has seen or sees; appearances, to him, are not to be trusted,<sup>29</sup> but rather are to be circumvented, for, he believes, there is something grand, wonderful, and above all, spiritual, behind them. In 1839 Tennyson wrote to Emily Sellwood, his future wife, to destroy

. . . within yourself these two dreams of Space and Time. To me often the far-off world seems nearer than the present, for in the present is always something unreal and indistinct, but the other seems a good solid planet, rolling round its green hills and paradises to the harmony of more steadfast laws. There steam up from about me mists of weakness, or sin, or despondency,

and roll between me and the far planet, but it is there still.<sup>30</sup>

In the same year he also wrote to her about

. . . mystic sympathies with tree and hill reaching far back into childhood. A known landskip is to me an old friend, that continually talks to me of my own youth and half-forgotten things, and indeed does more for me than many an old friend that I know. An old park is my delight, and I could tumble about it for ever.<sup>31</sup>

Tennyson reveals, in the two passages just quoted, the particular quality of his mysticism, a quality which pervades all of his descriptions of nature, and which consists of his probing of his own fear and sorrow at the insubstantiality of material existence, and of his ultimate satisfaction at the insubstantiality because, to him, material existence is merely the veneer of a greater, spiritual existence. The important words in his descriptions of nature bear witness to his particular kind of mysticism.

In his "Ode to Memory," first published in 1830, and considered by Tennyson to be one of his best early nature poems, Lincolnshire is the source of his descriptions of nature.<sup>32</sup>

He describes the Rectory of Somersby and its surrounding environment through his exhortations to Memory:

Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,  
The seven elms, the poplars four  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that loves  
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
In every elbow and turn,  
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland,  
O! hither lead thy feet!  
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,  
Upon the ridged wolds,  
When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.  
(I, 50-51, 55-71)

When this passage is examined closely, the important words, upon which the passage's mood depends, are the adjectives "gray," "matted," "ribbed," "dark," "narrow," "earthen," "filter'd," "rough," "ridged," "dark," "forlorn," and "low-hung." They are important because they alter subtly the passage's intent, which appears to be the use of memory to heighten the poet's appreciation of nature. These words reveal that Tennyson was not appreciating nature's beauty, but its instability: although "the brook loves / To purl," it does so "o'er matted cress and ribbed sand"; it does "dimple" in "rushy coves," but they are "dark"; the earth may be "dewy," but the promise of his word is qualified by "dark" and "forlorn"; and "the amber morn / . . . gushes" threatened by "a low-hung cloud." Although Tennyson has called upon "Divinest Memory" (50) to serve him, his ostensible pleasure is undermined by his mood, which is pessimistic, and which, through his adjectives, reveals his notion of the imperfection, sadness, and treachery of earthly existence.

In the same poem, Memory is also supposed to

. . . gaze  
On the prime labour of thine early days: . . .  
. . . a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,  
Where from the frequent bridge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenched waters run from sky to sky;  
Or a garden . . .  
Whither in after life retired

From brawling storms,  
From weary wind,  
With youthful fancy re-inspired.  
    We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind,  
And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded. (52-53, 93-94,  
97-105, 111-118)

Here the important words are the adjectives "harsh," "lowly," "wide," "wild," "enormous," "trenched," "brawling," "weary," "many-sided," "subtle-thoughted," and "myriad-minded." The kind of mood which is created by these words surely is not what Tennyson consciously would have wished to remember; however, in this ostensibly pleasant poem, he has expressed his unconscious fear of the treachery and insubstantiality of material existence; and yet he revels in his fear, savoring nature's lack of lasting value, because he finds hope for those, like himself, who have not succumbed to earthly desire, but have used their "many-sided" minds to pierce material reality.

In "The Dying Swan," first published in 1830, Tennyson gives his fullest conception of the fen country of Lincolnshire:<sup>33</sup>

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
    An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
    And loudly did lament.  
    It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
    And took the reed-tops as it went . . . .  
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the souging reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song. (I, 67-68,  
1-10, 36-42)



The important words are all adjectives except for one adverb: "wild," "bare," "wide," "wild," "doleful," "dying," "loudly," "weary," "creeping," "clambering," "hoar," "dank," "soughing," "wave-worn," "desolate," and "eddying." The poem concerns the legend that the dying swan sings immediately before it dies, and accordingly a pleasant poem is not to be expected. However, the mood of the poem is not one of sadness, but of complete protest against the limitations of earthly existence; the swan sings "a carol free and bold" (30), celebrating its release from its earthly limitations, and the landscape in the poem, largely through the adjectives already listed, conveys this ironic celebration; the landscape, although "open to the air," is covered by a sky full of "doleful" clouds, and the "creeping mosses," "clambering weeds," "hoar and dank" "willow-branches," "soughing reeds," and "desolate creeks" are "flooded over," but "with eddying song"; the landscape possesses movement, but this movement, like the lifeless "silvery" color of the "marsh-flowers," is only a temporary condition, for the treachery of physical existence--its inevitable death--is sure, and thus the swan's death means spiritual release and contains "joy / Hidden in sorrow" (22-23).

Adjectives do not bear the entire weight of Tennyson's distrust of material existence; up to this point, the examples have been chosen because of their obvious construction. Frequently, Tennyson allows his unconscious fear of material existence to appear in his descriptions of nature through the intricate, total effect of verbs, nouns, adverbs, and prepositions, as well as adjectives. One of his best descriptions of

nature as it appears in the Lincolnshire seascape is a quatrain in "The Palace of Art," first published in 1833; the quatrain was derived from his remembrance of his youthful summers at Mablethorpe-on-Sea, where the Tennyson family went for bathing:<sup>34</sup>

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
Left on the shore; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white. (I, 184, 249-252)

In this quatrain the verbs "lock'd," "left," and "draw," the noun "bars," the adverb "backward," and the preposition "from," all contribute to the total effect of the verse. In four lines Tennyson objectifies his longing to escape from earthly existence, and his realization that he is doomed, as long as he lives, to feel drawn beyond his physical state and yet not be able to escape from it: as the "still salt pool," his spiritual essence is imprisoned by his body ("bars of sand"); he cannot follow the "seas" as they "draw backward," led by the unearthly influence of the moon; he must wait all of his life ("all night") before the sea of eternity will come back for him.

Tennyson's use of descriptions of nature to express his unconscious belief in intuitive feeling, feeling which apprehended spiritual force in the universe, is not limited to poems with nostalgic or sorrowful themes. In "The Progress of Spring," first published in 1889, but written in his early youth,<sup>35</sup> Tennyson subtly uses the Lincolnshire landscape to deny Spring her wonder and grandeur. Spring comes, not triumphantly, but stealthily:

Fair Spring slides hither o'er the Southern sea,  
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold  
That trembles not to kisses of the bee:  
Come Spring, for now from all the dripping eaves

The spear of ice has wept itself away . . .  
She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;  
The frost-bead melts upon her golden hair;  
Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,  
Now wraps her close. . . . (VII, 86, 2-6, 9-12)

After Spring "slides" into Lincolnshire from "the South" (89, 66), the county receives "the tearful splendour of her smiles" (88, 41), and its "lowly flowers" (90, 84) receive her love. After being coaxed into Lincolnshire by Tennyson, Spring is seemingly applauded:

Thy leaves possess the season in their turn,  
And in their time thy warblers rise on wing.  
How surely glidest thou from March to May,  
And changest, breathing it, the sullen wind,  
Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
Larger and fuller, like the human mind!  
Thy warmths from bud to bud  
Accomplish that blind model in the seed,  
And men have hopes, which race the restless blood,  
That after many changes may succeed  
Life, which is Life indeed. (91, 107-117)

However, when examined closely, the important words in this passage are "possess," "turn," "time," "surely," "glidest," "sullen," and "blind." These words suggest uncertainty and insubstantiality: Spring's leaves have only a short life; birds are allocated a period in which to perform; ironically, Spring's movement is sure in its unconcerned gliding; and the "wind" and "seed" are parts of an unknowing machine. Tennyson attempts, in "The Progress of Spring," to become excited at the prospect of spring's return; and yet, the poem is profoundly gloomy in its philosophical implications. He cannot overcome his fear of material existence, and thus his attempt to glorify spring is betrayed by an obvious lack of interest: Tennyson is interested more in the spiritual motivation behind material

existence, than in material existence itself.

Sometimes Tennyson's descriptions that are derived from nature are so powerful that the mood which produced them, and which permeates their lines, dominates the poem in which they appear. "Mariana," a highly praised poem since its initial publication in 1830, contains excellent descriptions of Lincolnshire.<sup>36</sup> Mariana, deserted by her lover, suffers in a landscape which mirrors her despair:

After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
She drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats. (I, 26, 17-20)

However, Tennyson is interested in more than the probing of her despair. When the poem's mood intensifies, the description becomes more effective and dominant, and the result is that Mariana's uncertainty and loneliness are generalized to the extent that they seem to be characteristics of the landscape, and consequently, of the poet's view of the landscape:

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark:  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray. (26-27, 37-44)

Tennyson, overpowered by the utter hopelessness of his earthly state, has identified himself with Mariana: they are similar because of their despair, although her anguish stems from frustrated love, while his results from his notion that physical reality promises nothing but treachery because of its destined decay. The descriptions of landscape in the poem are, accordingly, not only symbolic of Mariana's despair, but also of

Tennyson's lack of faith in material existence.

There are descriptions of the landscape and seascape of Lincolnshire in other poems by Tennyson. However, only three of these will be examined, because they illuminate his treatment of his descriptions of nature: "Song" ("A spirit haunts the year's last hours"), "Locksley Hall," and "A Farewell." The "Song" ("A spirit haunts the year's last hours") was published first in 1830, and was written at the Rectory of Somersby: it describes the garden of the Rectory.<sup>37</sup> The poem is notable for the morbid enjoyment which Tennyson expresses in it regarding the effect which the year's end has on the landscape:

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose  
    An hour before death;  
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves  
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,  
    And the breath  
    Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
And the year's last rose.  
    Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
    Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;  
    Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
    Heavily hangs the tiger-lily. (I, 54-55, 13-24)

There is a peculiar atmosphere in these lines: Tennyson is probing his fear of the treachery of material existence, and he revels in this treachery, which is seen as nature's decay. The atmosphere is "hush'd" as he looks at the process of dying; he "faints" with excitement, and seemingly "grieves" at the "rich smell" of decay. Tennyson, consciously, is sorry about the year's conclusion; however, unconsciously, he is made more secure in his belief in the perfidy of material existence. The flowers, symbols of nature's triumph, hang their heads, waiting for their deaths. There is no lamentation in this

song; it is a lesson for those who, unlike Tennyson, place their faith and hope in nature.

In "Locksley Hall," first published in 1842, Tennyson's descriptions of nature are derived largely from the coast of Lincolnshire.<sup>38</sup> This poem is notable because Tennyson, through the poem's speaker, reveals his distrust of nature in his descriptions of it. Although Tennyson declared that the speaker was not identical with himself,<sup>39</sup> this assertion did not change his attitude towards material existence, as revealed in his descriptions of nature in the poem. Locksley Hall "overlooks the sandy tracts" (II, 34, 5) and the "hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts" (6). This forbidding seascape is not brightened by spring, in which "the wanton lapwing" (35, 18) thrives. The poem concludes with the speaker leaving the vicinity of Locksley Hall, after cursing it, the curse being in terms of landscape, which to Tennyson is the medium for his expression of his fear and distrust of material existence; a "vapour" (50, 191) comes "from the margin, blackening over heath and holt" (191), and as it crams "all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt" (192), the speaker directs this menace of nature to "fall on Locksley Hall" (193). The landscape and seascape in the poem reflect Tennyson's basic attitude towards material existence, and thus the speaker's cursing Locksley Hall in terms of landscape is consonant with Tennyson's personal outlook.

In "A Farewell," first published in 1842, Tennyson is saying farewell to the stream near the Rectory of Somersby.<sup>40</sup> This poem is noteworthy because in it Tennyson, while seeming

to express regret at never seeing the stream again, is really expressing his regret at his life being tied to the necessarily limited terms of material existence:

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver:  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever. (II, 116, 1-4)

The stream is merely a "tribute wave"; it must lose its identity in the sea, in order to pay for its existence. When Tennyson feels that his "steps" must be "No more," he is referring not just to the stream, but also to his inevitable death as the tribute which he must pay for his life. This parting from a stream is not ludicrous when it is seen as symbolizing Tennyson's sadness at his understanding of a preview of his death. He reveals, in this poem, that while he distrusts material existence, he still feels a deep sadness at the termination inherent in that existence.

Tennyson's attitude towards material existence does not change when his many descriptions that are derived from the landscape and seascape of English places other than Lincolnshire are considered. Although Lincolnshire was probably the bleakest area which he ever encountered, Tennyson's personal bleakness of character sought out the bleak aspects of the landscape and seascape of other parts of England, or cast a pall of fear and distrust over these landscapes and seascapes.

In "Audley Court," first published in 1842, the descriptions of landscape and seascape are derived from the area around Torquay, in Devon, which Tennyson considered in the old days to be the most beautiful sea village in England.<sup>41</sup> The poem

is about a picnic indulged in by two friends. After the picnic, they leave Audley Court, the scene of the picnic, for home:

. . . we rose  
And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just  
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,  
The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down  
The bay was oily calm; the harbour-buoy,  
Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart. (I, 291,  
80-90)

This description transcends the local interests of the poem's characters. Tennyson probably included it because he was stirred by the scenery around Torquay; he produced these lines as a result of his communion with it. The landscape and seascape of the description reveal Tennyson's attitude towards material existence; the scene is gloomy, except for "the harbour-buoy," which makes the "Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm"; he finds a deep comfort in this single piece of evidence of the spirituality behind material existence.

Section LXXXVI of "In Memoriam," written at Barmouth (III, 249), in Wales, and first published in 1850,<sup>42</sup> reveals Tennyson at his gloomiest, in despair over Arthur Hallam's death, and seeking solace from the spiritual existence behind material existence. He greets the "ambrosial air" (124, 1)

That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

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

The fever from my cheek. . . . (124-125, 2-9)



Tennyson believes that there is a "new life" (125,10) in the wind, which will erase his "Doubt and Death" (11), and allow his "fancy" (12) to be released. Thus, he seeks the peace existing beyond material existence; true peace is found only with the "spirits" (16).

"To the Rev. F. D. Maurice," first published in 1855, is an invitation to Maurice to visit Tennyson in his home on the Isle of Wight; the poet delineates the seascape of the island in the poem:<sup>43</sup>

. . . the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep. . . . (II, 265, 23-28)

Tennyson again yields to his impulse to see beyond the physical reality of existence, and apprehend its spiritual meaning: as the "ship of battle" proceeds along through patches of bright and dark sea ("zones of light and shadow") caused by clouds, the poet sees it "Glimmer away to the lonely deep"; he sees, not only a ship sailing away, but also its approaching doom, because as a physical object, it eventually must cease to exist, expiring in "the lonely deep"; thus, the vessel, for Tennyson, is a symbol for all physical objects, moving to their inevitable demise.

The landscape described in "Aylmer's Field," first published in 1864, is derived from that of Kent.<sup>44</sup> Although Tennyson considered the poem ineffective because of its prosaic story, he admired his descriptions of the English landscape in the poem.<sup>45</sup> The nascent passion of the doomed lovers, Leolin and Edith, is

described within the context of nature:

. . . he . . .  
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and roll'd  
His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt  
Against the rush of the air in the prone swing,  
Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, arranged  
Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it green  
In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,  
The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,  
Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd  
All at one mark, all hitting: make-believes  
For Edith and himself: or else he forged,  
But that was later, boyish histories  
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,  
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true love  
Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and faint,  
But where a passion yet unborn perhaps  
Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale. (II,  
153-154, 81, 84-101)

Implicit in these lines is Tennyson's hatred of passion, his belief that it bred only destruction, wasting both individuals and society. Although Leolin and Edith are blameless, they are, nevertheless, nature's slaves, and therefore their passion destroys them. Through the fate of these innocent lovers, Tennyson is suggesting the destiny of all lovers: by unconsciously employing words with contrasting connotations, and by placing these words in the passage just quoted, the poet implies the perfidy of material existence. Leolin, as a child, had played in nature's setting, pleasing Edith; moreover, he had amused her with flowers, even to the extent of sowing Edith's name and keeping "it green / In living letters"; but nature also meant to him "fairy-tales," "fairy footings," "fairy palms," "fairy pines," and "fairy arrows"; the solid "rush of the air" as they played, and the physical fact of the "letters," are

denied validity through the use of "fairy," with its connotation of insubstantiality. The passage progresses, Leolin telling Edith heroic tales involving danger and terror (95-98).

Tennyson says that these "sketches rude and faint" contain "a passion" hidden like the "music" sleeping in "the plain eggs" of procreation, a process which to him means only inevitable decay. Leolin and Edith, the products of procreation, eventually become lovers as they mature. Their passion, frustrated because of his rejection by her father, leads to their demise: she becomes despondent and succumbs easily to fever, and he commits suicide on hearing of her death.

Since the question of Tennyson's indebtedness to his English environment is so crucial to the argument of this chapter, the chapter must include a comment on those of his poems that contain descriptions of landscapes and seascapes that are not English.

In Tennyson's poems, such descriptions are accounted for largely by his association with Arthur Henry Hallam. In "Oenone" and "The Lotos-Eaters," both published first in 1833, the descriptions of nature are derived from the landscape of the Pyrenees, to which Tennyson and Hallam had made a trip in 1830 in an effort to aid Spanish revolutionaries.<sup>46</sup> In "Mariana in the South," first published in 1833, the descriptions of nature are derived from the landscape of southern France, to which Tennyson and Hallam had made a trip in 1831.<sup>47</sup> "In the Valley of the Cauteretz," first published in 1864, was written as a result of Tennyson's visit to the same valley in the Pyrenees which he and Hallam had visited in 1830, and conse-

quently, the valley provided the landscape described in the poem.<sup>48</sup> The only other important description not based upon the English landscape or seascape is found in a blank verse lyric in "The Princess": "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height," first published in 1847, was written in Switzerland, and its descriptions of nature are derived from that country.<sup>49</sup> This lyric has a special significance, in that Tennyson is relatively uninvolved personally in the emotion expressed in it: in "The Princess" it is sung by a woman, Princess Ida, and the lyric itself states that a shepherd sings it.

The fact that Hallam was involved in the activities that generated the descriptions in the first four of these poems specializes their significance, in that his influence upon Tennyson makes these descriptions the result, not of European scenery, but of the friendship between the two men. Perhaps the most revealing, if not the most aesthetically pleasing, comment upon European scenery provided by Tennyson is in "O Darling Room," first published in 1833:<sup>50</sup>

O darling room, my heart's delight,  
Dear room, the apple of my sight,  
With thy two couches soft and white,  
There is no room so exquisite,  
No little room so warm and bright,  
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,  
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,  
Musical Lurlei; and between  
The hills to Bingen have I been,  
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhene  
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

Yet never did there meet my sight,  
In any town, to left and right,  
A little room so exquisite. . . .<sup>51</sup>

Tennyson's infatuation with his "room" ceases to be ludicrous when he is understood to mean his English environment: although he exalts his "room," his comparison of it with other rooms is coupled with his recollection of visits to "Oberwinter's vineyards green," "The hills to Bingen," and "a woody scene" "where the Rhene / Curves toward Mentz"; his inclusion of descriptions of these landscapes in a poem about his "room" suggests that he is really praising his English environment.

Tennyson's belief in the insubstantiality of material existence, and in the viability of a spiritual existence beyond it, was the most important aspect of his character. He was not a believer in formal creeds and thought that Christianity, although completely acceptable to him, could learn to be more spiritual by understanding the religions of the East.<sup>52</sup> God, to Tennyson, was a spiritual essence, an ineffable presence which he felt more deeply than anything else in his life. Hallam Tennyson says of his father:

. . . he had a constant feeling of a spiritual harmony existing between ourselves and the outward visible Universe, and of the actual Immanence of God in the infinitesimal atom as in the vastest system. . . . [H]e said to me: "My most passionate desire is to have a clearer and fuller vision of God. The soul seems to me one with God, how I cannot tell." (III, 216-217)

Regarding his mysticism, Tennyson wrote:

"A kind of waking trance I have frequently had . . . from boyhood. . . . This has generally come upon me thro' repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once . . . individuality . . . seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest . . . the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility. . . . (217)

Tennyson attempted, unconsciously, to express, in his descriptions that are derived from English Nature, what was "utterly beyond words." His sense of the spiritual existence which is beyond material existence is evident in his treatment of the English landscape and seascape, and created in him a precious and fierce psychological bond with them, so precious and fierce that in his war poems he expresses, above all else, a militant patriotism in order to preserve his relationship with English Nature.

The significance of Tennyson's relationship with English Nature lies not only in its character, but also in the effect which it had upon the composition of his war poems, which are discussed in the next chapter. The delineation of this effect is perhaps best illustrated by a limited consideration of the "Idylls of the King," which were first published together in 1889.<sup>53</sup> This consideration involves an examination of the downfall of Arthur's kingdom, in conjunction with the roles performed in the downfall by the landscape and seascape that are described in the poem.

Considered generally, Arthur can be understood to be "soul or spirit in action."<sup>54</sup> He represents the spiritual aspirations of mankind, which, to Tennyson, provide the basis for the organization and continuity of society; so his people's rejection of spiritual values results in his kingdom's disintegration.<sup>55</sup> Although Tennyson is surely considering man in general in the poem, Victorian Englishmen in particular are models for the characters in it, and formed the original audience for it. To A. P. Thornton, in the "Idylls" Tennyson is warning

Englishmen that, unless they accept their greatness by having confidence in their worldly power, they are doomed to inferior status as a people.<sup>56</sup> This assessment of the poem would be improved if it were altered to state that the poet is warning Englishmen against the rejection of their spiritual values, the consequence of which would be, he contends, the eventual ruination of England. The notion of F. E. L. Priestley (outlined briefly in the first two sentences of this paragraph), when combined with the alteration of Thornton's notion, provides a link between the "Idylls" and Tennyson's war poems, in that the idea of concern for England, its prosperity and security, is important to both the "Idylls" and the war poems. There is no absolute equality between the notions of mysticism and spirituality, but they do impinge upon each other in what they presume to exist non-corporeally in the universe, namely, conceptions of God, soul, and spirit. Consequently, although Tennyson is not being explicitly mystical in the "Idylls" by ignoring its social order, he is revealing his bias in favor of the soul and spirit, by assuming in the poem that the body of man and what it desires is antithetical to man's goodness and survival as a civilized being.

Tennyson uses the landscape and seascape of Arthur's kingdom, which is in the broadest sense England, as reflectors of the spiritual condition of his kingdom at the various stages of its growth and collapse: the states of English Nature in the poem are the embodiments of the spiritual evolution of the domain.<sup>57</sup> Thus, this notion is an extension of Buckley's idea that the seasons mirror the growth and decline of Arthurian

society: "The sequence accordingly follows the cycle of the year from the fresh springtime of Arthur's marriage and Gareth's arrival at an uncorrupted Camelot, through a long summer of intense idealisms and hot destructive passions, on to the decadent October of the Last Tournament, the bleak November of Guinevere's repentance, and the winter wasteland of Arthur's defeat."<sup>58</sup>

Before Arthur's coming, the land of Cameliard suffered from constant warfare, and the consequent neglect entailed by such activity:

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase the beast;  
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear  
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields. . . .  
("The Coming of Arthur," 5, 20-24)

After defeating his enemies and unifying his kingdom, Arthur marries Guinevere, who comes to him "Among the flowers, in May" (22, 451). Their marriage seems to promise joy and the birth of everlasting peace and order; the landscape reflects this promise:

Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,  
The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,  
The Sun of May descended on their [the knights] King,  
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen. . . .  
(459-462)

In "Gareth and Lynette" the promise of Arthur's reign has not yet soured. Gareth lightheartedly finds his joy reflected in English Nature as he slowly but successfully gains the favor of Lynette:

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,  
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,  
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me" . . .



"O birds, that warble to the morning sky,  
O birds that warble as the days goes by,  
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."  
("Gareth and Lynette," 69, 1040-1042, 1049-1051)

However, with "The Marriage of Geraint" rumors about the adulterous love between Guinevere and Lancelot begin to spread, and the downfall of Arthur's kingdom has begun. The rumors about Guinevere make Geraint, one of Arthur's outstanding knights, suspect the fidelity of his own wife, Enid, and accordingly take her away from Camelot. In the succeeding idyll, "Geraint and Enid," Geraint's suspicions are finally allayed, but before they subside, Geraint and his wife suffer. The wilderness into which they ride when they leave Camelot reflects their troubled condition:

. . . they past  
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,  
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,  
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode:  
Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd soon:  
A stranger meeting them had surely thought  
They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,  
That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.  
("Geraint and Enid," 120, 29-36)

Even though Geraint and Enid ultimately return to Arthur's court, Guinevere's infidelity continues to destroy the kingdom. In "Balin and Balan" two brothers, after whom the idyll is named, slay each other because of a tragic mistake after Balin comes to realize Guinevere's infidelity. After overhearing a conversation between Lancelot and Guinevere, Balin becomes disturbed and leaves the court, riding through "skylless woods" ("Balin and Balan," 169, 288). When, at King Pellam's court, he is taunted about Guinevere's lack of virtue, Balin, although furious at such a charge, cannot rid himself of the suspicion

that the Queen is guilty, and the landscape reflects Balin's troubled state:

But not the less by night  
The scorn of Garlon [one of Pellam's men] poisoning  
all the rest,  
Stung him in dreams. At length, and dim thro' leaves  
Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated, and old boughs  
Whined in the wood. (172, 376-380)

In succeeding idylls, the disintegration of Arthur's court continues. In "Merlin and Vivien," Vivien, a lady at the court of King Mark of Cornwall, is sent by Mark to manufacture trouble for Arthur. Ignored by Arthur, she successfully destroys the melancholy Merlin, who is disturbed by a feeling that Arthur's court is doomed; he reveals to her his secret charm, known only to him. In "Lancelot and Elaine" even the relationship of Guinevere and Lancelot is threatened momentarily by the Queen's jealousy.

"The Holy Grail" contains Tennyson's notion that mystical perception involves the total abnegation of self, the complete absence of individuality. Of all the knights that seek the Holy Grail, only Galahad is successful, because of his eschewing of personal glory; the other knights, intent on using the quest as a means of enhancing their earthly reputation, must fail; they, unlike Galahad, do not seek in the Grail a means to spiritual experience. Thus, as Buckley maintains, Arthur's knights, except for Galahad, have perverted the meaning of the Holy Grail; it is an excuse for the avoidance of their earthly duties.<sup>59</sup> Arthur senses that the quest is wrong, and that it will only harm his kingdom. Lancelot believes that his failure in the quest is due to his relationship with Guinevere. He

recounts to Arthur his sense of his unworthiness, and recalls the maddened landscape and seascape that mirrored it during his quest:

. . . I came  
All in my folly to the naked shore,  
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;  
But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,  
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea  
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens  
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.  
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,  
Half-swallowed in it, anchor'd with a chain. . . .  
(309-310, 789-800)

The boat took him to the Grail, but it was veiled, and he realized that, because he sought redemption selfishly, the quest was not for him. In "Pelleas and Ettarre" and "The Last Tournament" disillusionment pervades Arthur's kingdom: Pelleas, an idealistic knight, leaves the court after learning of Guinevere's adultery; and in the latter idyll, Tristram, the winner of the last tournament, feels that the adultery of Guinevere sanctions his affair with Isolt, the wife of Mark. In this idyll, the fool of Arthur's court, Dagonet, presides over a kingdom which has lost its moral stability; he "rules" over a landscape of "yellowing woods" ("The Last Tournament," 340, 3), while Arthur, shocked at what is happening to his subjects, is identified with the "death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom" (370, 750) of his kingdom's landscape. In "Guinevere" Lancelot and the Queen part, he going to France and she to the abbey at Almesbury. There is no hope now for Arthur's kingdom or the implementation of his ideals. Guinevere's predicament can be seen as the microcosm of the kingdom's fate, in that

both are doomed to fail as instruments of Arthur's will.  
The bleakness of the landscape around the abbey mirrors  
this bleak stage of Arthur's reign:

Queen Guinevere . . .  
. . . none with her save a little maid,  
A novice: one low light betwixt them burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.  
("Guinevere," 371, l. 3-8)

"The Passing of Arthur" concludes the "Idylls"; as Arthur  
leaves his kingdom, the landscape becomes a threatening presence,  
seeming actively to fill the void being left by the King:

But, as he walk'd King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his [Sir Bedivere's] ear,  
'Quick, quick!  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels--  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.  
("The Passing of Arthur," 413, 344-360)

Arthur's deliverance from his degenerating kingdom is signalled  
by his sight of the moonbeams on the lake: they are "glories"  
because the sight of them means that the lake has been reached,  
and Arthur can be taken away to Avilion.

Although there is no direct connection in the "Idylls"  
between Tennyson's mystical feelings and his use of English  
Nature as the embodiment for these feelings, his use of the

English landscape and seascape in the poem to reflect the spiritual condition of the kingdom, coupled with his implicit warning to Victorian Englishmen that their physical power as a nation depends upon their spiritual strength as a people, shows that to Tennyson English Nature was not only usable as a private means for psychic involvement, but also that its survival as part of the English nation was dependent upon the physical power and spiritual strength of the English people.

Chapter III  
Tennyson's War Poems

The basis of this chapter is the notion that the value to Tennyson of his relationship with English Nature aroused in him, probably unconsciously, a need to defend this relationship. This need expresses itself most plainly in what are designated his "war poems" in this chapter. The link between the relationship and these poems is the poet's sense of personal security: because of his dependence upon the English landscape and seascape to embody his mystical feelings, and the resulting psychological value of this dependence to him, Tennyson became prey to a concept composed of two beliefs, namely that England and its people possessed enormous importance in the world, and that England was in perpetual danger from other countries. Accordingly, Tennyson, in his war poems, is seeking consciously to protect his country, its people and traditions, but unconsciously he is attempting to protect his relationship with English Nature.

Although selected to reveal Tennyson's attitude to war, the war poems vary in their content, in that some of them do not deal explicitly with warfare. However, all of them are notable for their concern, directly or indirectly, with the defence of England. This defensiveness is Tennyson's belief in the need for a unified England, strong enough militarily to withstand foreign aggression. He had a peculiar amalgam of beliefs: his mysticism led him to think that there was a spiritual world of supreme value, and yet in his war poems he

appears as a narrow-minded patriot, conscious only of what England needs, and blind to the desires and integrity of everyone and everything not English. This amalgam of beliefs is understandable when the strident patriotism of his war poems is viewed within the context of his relationship with English Nature; within this context, their narrow patriotism can be seen as an unconscious defence of the outlet for his mysticism.

In "English Warsong" and "National Song," both first published in 1830,<sup>1</sup> Tennyson reveals in his youth an outspoken faith in England, and an antagonism towards foreigners. This early awareness of himself as an Englishman merits attention because it is coupled with a lack of tolerance of nations and peoples other than his own. Such an outlook, of course, was not rare in nineteenth-century England, but to find it as intensely expressed as it is in these poems by a young poet is noteworthy. It may be the product of Tennyson's immaturity; however, his later poems dealing with England, its people, and their relations with other countries, though better written, are just as intensely nationalistic and intolerant. All that can be said with certainty is that throughout his life England was so precious to him that it aroused in him a fervor to praise it and its people, and to exhort them to protect it against obvious or apparent enemies. The character of the fervor suggests that it was created in him, not by any conscious study of diplomacy or economics, but rather by a probably unconscious emotional attachment to what the country meant to him, namely an embodiment, in its landscape and seascape, of his

mystical feelings.

In "English Warsong" his belief in the great value of England, its people and traditions, is stated ecstatically. He asserts that the English are the only free people, and that England's enemies, both foreign and domestic, are doomed to failure:

Come along! we alone of the earth are free;  
The child in our cradle is bolder than he [Eng-  
land's enemy];  
For where is the heart and strength of slaves?  
Oh! where is the strength of slaves?  
He is weak! we are strong; he a slave, we are free;  
Come along! we will dig their [England's ene-  
mies'] graves.<sup>2</sup>

The poem's chorus is enthusiastic:

Shout for England!  
Ho! for England!  
George for England!  
Merry England!  
England for ay!<sup>3</sup>

In "National Song" Tennyson attacks the French. He begins by praising England:

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no hearts like English hearts,  
Such hearts of oak as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no men like Englishmen,  
So tall and bold as they be.<sup>4</sup>

He reserves his distrust of the French for the chorus of the poem:

For the French the pope may shrive 'em.  
For the devil a whit we heed 'em:  
As for the French, God speed 'em  
Unto their heart's desire,  
And the merry devil drive 'em  
Through the water and the fire.<sup>5</sup>



In these two poems, words such as "earth," "land," and "oak" reveal Tennyson's tendency to deal with his country, not so much in terms of its traditions, as in terms of its physical reality: to him, England's value lies in its very soil, in the land itself, which breeds strong, free men who are superior to foreigners such as the French. This belief is consonant with Tennyson's involvement with the English landscape and seascape, his unconscious use of it to embody his mystical feelings: just as he establishes a private communion with English Nature, rather than with English traditions, so he conceives of that Nature, not of those traditions, as the creator of the English character.

Both poems are aggressive in tone, perhaps betraying uncertainty regarding England's strength as a nation. Tennyson seems to think, somewhat illogically, that England, although strong and free, urgently requires defending: if Englishmen "are strong," and their enemies are not because they are "slaves," as he maintains in "English Warsong," why the necessity of digging "their graves"; if "There are no men like Englishmen," as he asserts in "National Song," why is the assistance of the "devil" necessary in order to "drive 'em / Through the water and the fire?"

The sonnet, "Buonaparte," first published in 1833, is based upon Tennyson's distrust of the French, and upon four defeats of them by the English: the Duke of Wellington's defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo on June 18, 1815; Nelson's defeat of Napoleon's fleet in the Battle of the Nile at Aboukir on August 1, 1798; his defeat also of the French and Spanish fleets at Cape

Trafalgar on October 15, 1805, and the defeat of the Danish fleet at Elsinore on April 1, 1801.<sup>6</sup> This poem stresses Tennyson's notion of England as a land whose influence, beneficial to mankind, extends over the whole earth. Tennyson sees Napoleon as mad, because he thought that he could overcome England's military strength:

He thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,  
Madman!--to chain with chains, and bind with bands  
That island queen who sways the floods and lands  
From Ind to Ind. . . . (I, 107, 1-4)

In this poem, what is important to Tennyson is England's strength, which he substantiates with the evidence of the victories of the Duke of Wellington and Nelson. Such strength, to the poet, safeguards England.

The sonnet, "Written on Hearing of the Outbreak of the Polish Insurrection," first published in 1833, concerns Russian aggression in eastern Europe against Poland in 1831, the outcome of which was Russia's absorption of Poland except for the small republic of Cracow.<sup>7</sup> Tennyson sympathizes with the Poles:

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar  
The hosts to battle: be not bought and sold.  
Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold;  
Break through your iron shackles--fling them far.<sup>8</sup>

Tennyson seems to be identifying the cause of the Poles and the English, and the aggression of the French and the Russians: he calls the Poles "the boldest of the bold," a comment which it appears inappropriate for this very patriotic Englishman to make, unless he is understood to see a similarity between the Russian aggression against the Poles and Napoleon's planned subjugation of England, and consequently allows himself to become so emotionally involved in the Polish situation that the Poles are

given a degree of boldness which the poet would probably have been reluctant to have attributed to them under normal circumstances.

The sonnet, "Poland," first published in 1833,<sup>9</sup> is similar in that Tennyson condemns the Russian invasion of Poland, and sympathizes with the smaller nation. Moreover, he hints that Russia may consider other nations to conquer, including England, after having swallowed almost all of Poland:

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,  
And trampled under by the last and least  
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased  
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown  
The fields, and out of every smouldering town  
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown. . . .  
(I, 108, 1-8)

Russia is a menace because, like France, it threatens England with aggression.

The "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" was published first, in pamphlet form, on November 16, 1852, two days before the Duke's funeral; it later appeared in the 1855 volume, Maud, and Other Poems.<sup>10</sup> The two versions of the poem differ considerably, the latter being generally considered the better one.<sup>11</sup> The 1855 version, which will be considered now, is a stately tribute to the Duke, the lamentation being made to seem universally relevant:

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,  
And let the mournful martial music blow;  
The last great Englishman is low. (II, 211, 13-18)

After recalling the Duke's military exploits, and asking

Englishmen to honor him forever with "a people's voice" (216, 142), Tennyson considers the special character of the English, their unique heritage of freedom:

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;  
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,  
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt,  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.  
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;  
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul  
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
And save the one true seed of freedom sown  
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
That sober freedom out of which there springs  
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;  
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,  
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.  
(216-217, 151-169)

Through certain phrases in the passage just quoted, Tennyson exhibits his ready tendency to express his love for England and its people in terms of the organic processes of English Nature: Englishmen have been "isled . . . in blown seas and storming showers," and possess "the one true seed of freedom sown," out of which freedom "springs / Our loyal passion for our temperate kings." By contrast, peoples other than the English are "brainless," part of a "raw world," their nations "lawless," and these states seek to impose a "brute control" over England. The poet wants English statesmen to keep his country "whole" by saving it from other nations. The contrast in the passage between England and other nations is striking, and this contrast was not concocted meretriciously by Tennyson: this simplistic conception of world politics is presented

sincerely by the poet. Perhaps "whole" provides the clue to the meaning of the passage, if this word is taken to mean the traditional interrelationships of all that England represents to Tennyson, that is, the social, cultural, and natural aspects of the country. Tennyson's intense relationship with the English landscape and seascape would lead him to consider, not only English Nature, but also Englishmen and their traditions, as part of an organic "whole," the destruction of any part of which threatens the rest. Thus, to him, any threat to the English state is a threat to English Nature, and to his relationship with it. Although English traditions were not nearly as personally meaningful to him as English Nature, still they were necessary to provide social cohesion for Englishmen; if foreign aggression destroyed them, the English state would obviously suffer, and consequently his relationship with English Nature would suffer. Tennyson has reasoned himself, most likely unconsciously, into conceiving of England as an organic entity, the parts of which are its people, traditions, and Nature; these parts must work together and be free of foreign interference in order that one part, English Nature, may function unhindered as the embodiment of his mysticism.

Tennyson therefore goes on to exhort his countrymen to abjure complacency, remember Wellington's warning about defending England, and be cognizant of the country's state of military preparedness:

But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
Remember him who led your hosts;  
He bad you guard the sacred coasts.  
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall. . . .  
(217, 170-173)

In this passage, "sacred" recalls "soul" in the passage considered immediately before it: England is "the soul of Europe," with "sacred coasts." The spiritual connotation of these two expressions is surely not irrelevant to the rest of the poem. The poet is not simply proposing the safeguarding of class privilege through the preservation of English society, or expressing a paranoid fear of attack, but rather is endowing his country with the spirituality which he derives from his private communion with its landscape and seascape. The defence of England and English freedom entails for Tennyson, probably unconsciously, the preservation of what embodied his mystical feelings, namely, English Nature.

Tennyson stresses the Duke's service to England:

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
He, on whom from both her open hands  
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
Yea, let all good things await  
Him who cares not to be great,  
But as he saves or serves the state. (218, 192-200)

Tennyson endows the notion of duty to England with religious significance. Defending England is a religious cause, and must be undertaken, according to him, with fervor and total dedication:

Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory:  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled  
Ars close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun. (218-219,  
209-217)

Behind Tennyson's narrow-minded patriotism in this passage is his religious exaltation of England's defence. That he could consider duty to England to be "the way to glory," leading to "the shining table-lands / To which our God Himself is moon and sun," implies a religious sanction for actions in defence of England. Tennyson's belief in such a sanction, though presumptuous, is understandable if the value of English Nature to him is considered. Because of the depth of his intuition regarding the existence of a spiritual world, and his resulting emotional investment in it through his denigration of material existence and glorification of spiritual existence in his descriptions of the English landscape and seascape, albeit unconsciously, his identification of the necessarily religious character of mysticism with the defence of England, through the use of religious exaltation, is comprehensible.

Near the end of the poem, Tennyson makes the explicit identification of service to England with service to God, and he declares that England's true dimensions are spiritual, not physical:

We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.  
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will;  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?  
On God and Godlike men we build our trust. (220-221,  
251-266)

The passage above culminates in Tennyson's recognition of the importance of "the soul"; this recognition is strange in a poem about a pragmatic figure such as a soldier, unless the poet perceives something beyond military exploits as part of the significance of the soldier. Tennyson's apotheosis of the Duke as a "Godlike" man can be accounted for only by the poet's conviction that England's military power and valor are immensely significant: the Duke is a spiritual as well as a military hero to Tennyson because the Duke, as a defender of England, has helped to safeguard the poet's relationship with English Nature. Throughout the passage just quoted, an etherealized conception of the English landscape and seascape forms a background to the poet's assertion of the Duke's spirituality: "Music's golden sea" persuades the poet that the Duke's importance is spiritual as well as earthly; and Tennyson contends that, although "the Giant Ages heave the hill / And break the shore," the greatest concept known to man is "the soul," and so the "Godlike" Duke, who after death has "other nobler work to do," deserves "our trust."

"Britons, Guard Your Own" was first published on January 31, 1852, in The Examiner; "Hands All Round" was first published on February 7, 1852, also in The Examiner (it was rewritten in February 1882, as a patriotic song); "The Third of February 1852" was first published on February 7, 1852, again in The Examiner; <sup>12</sup> and "For the Penny-Wise" was first published in February, 1852, in Fraser's Magazine. <sup>13</sup> Tennyson was angry because the House of Lords seemed to condone Louis Napoleon's



coup d'etat in December, 1851; it would not pass a bill for the organization of the militia, at a time when Tennyson considered a French invasion of England very possible.<sup>14</sup> In "Britons, Guard Your Own," he voices in the first stanza the probable need for England to confront Louis Napoleon alone:

Rise, Britons, rise, if manhood be not dead;  
The world's last tempest darkens overhead;  
The Pope has bless'd him;  
The Church caress'd him;  
He triumphs: may be, we shall stand alone:  
Britons, guard your own.<sup>15</sup>

After stressing, in the third and fourth stanzas, that Englishmen do not hate France but her leader, Tennyson declares, in the final stanza, that Englishmen must sacrifice their lives, if necessary, to repulse any attempt by Louis Napoleon to conquer England:

Should he land here, and for one hour prevail,  
There must no man go back to bear the tale:  
No man to bear it,--  
Swear it! We swear it!  
Although we fought the banded world alone,  
We swear to guard our own.<sup>16</sup>

Tennyson's readiness to commit Englishmen to fight "the banded world alone" reflects his notion of the uniqueness of England, a uniqueness which to him exists in its landscape and seascape, and which must be defended.

"Hands All Round" exists in two versions; they differ in an interesting way. The first version, published in 1852, stresses England. The poem begins with a toast to England, coupled with a condemnation of Louis Napoleon:

First drink a health, this solemn night,  
A health to England, every guest;  
That man's the best cosmopolite,  
Who loves his native country best. . . .

God the tyrant's hope confound!  
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,  
And the great name of England round and round.  
(II, 322-323, 1-4, 10-12)

Then, in three successive stanzas, Tennyson toasts "Europe's honest men" (323, 13), condemns France, and then toasts the United States of America because its people are "of British blood" (40). Next, in the final stanza, there is a plea for Americans to forget that England has a monarch, and to aid England in opposing the tyrant, Louis Napoleon.

The second version of the poem, published in 1882, begins with a toast to Queen Victoria, and follows with a toast to England:

First pledge our Queen this solemn night,  
Then drink to England, every guest. . . .  
(VI, 335, 1-2)

In this version, "tyrant's" is replaced by "traitor's" (10). The stanzas dealing with "Europe's honest men," France, the consanguinity of English and American blood, and the plea for American aid, are all replaced by a stanza praising the "English Empire" (14) and another stanza urging England's statesmen to be proud of the power and size of the Empire. This latter stanza is openly boastful:

To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire!  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire!  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state;  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Thro' craven fears of being great. (336, 25-32)

Tennyson, no longer threatened by the specter of a militaristic France under the leadership of Louis Napoleon, is able, in the

second version of the poem, to place Queen Victoria before England, and to boast of the "English Empire." His relationship with English Nature is no longer immediately threatened. At the time of crisis, he thought first of England; after the crisis had passed, he thought first of the Queen. To him what matters most is his country, the land itself, upon which he is psychologically dependent.

"The Third of February 1852" contains Tennyson's explicit condemnation of the House of Lords for its failure to authorize the organization of the Militia when the security of England was threatened by Louis Napoleon. He attacks the Lords as being unworthy of their ancestors:

And you, my Lords, you make the people muse  
    In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed--  
Were those your sires who fought at Lewes?  
    Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?  
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this monstrous fraud!  
(II, 223, 31-36)

Then his fundamental notions of the sacredness of England's landscape and seascape, and of the urgent and perpetual need of guarding them, reveal themselves:

. . . silence here were sin,  
    Not ours the fault if we have feeble hosts--  
If easy patrons of their kin  
    Have left the last free race with naked coasts!  
They knew the precious things they had to guard:  
For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard word.  
(224, 37-42)

In his use of "naked coasts," Tennyson gives an example of the "things" that he believes must be protected: obviously, these "naked coasts" are a symbol for England itself.

"For the Penny-Wise" shows the desperate condition in which Tennyson saw England, and the extent of his anger concerning

the action of the House of Lords. He more than hints that the Lords should be punished for their decision:

Friends! the soldier still  
Is worthy of his calling,  
But who are they that want  
A little over-hauling?<sup>17</sup>

To Tennyson, disregarding England's need for defence is a major crime, and not even the House of Lords is exempt from punishment when guilty of it.

"The Charge of the Light Brigade" was published first in The Examiner on December 9, 1854; Tennyson wrote it after reading the account, in The Times, of the famous cavalry charge.<sup>18</sup> The poem is a commemoration of this charge, which occurred near Balaclava on October 25, 1854, and is the most notorious event of the Crimean War.<sup>19</sup> The charge resulted from a misunderstanding involving three English officers and their messenger. Lord Raglan, the English commander, sent an aide-de-camp, Captain Nolan, with a written order directing Lord Lucan, the commander of the cavalry division of the English forces, to recapture some guns that were just lost to the Russians. Lord Lucan, waiting for directives at one end of the North Valley, was puzzled by Lord Raglan's order: he felt that his cavalry could not be expected to charge artillery without the support of infantry. He asked Nolan what guns were to be attacked. Nolan, impatient to encounter the Russians, pointed not to the captured English guns, but rather to the other end of the valley, in which there was a massive concentration of Russian cavalry and guns. Lord Lucan, because of his dislike of Lord Raglan, and his consequent belief that he must readily obey Lord Raglan's directives

in order to avoid charges of insubordination, ordered another personal enemy, Lord Cardigan, the commander of the Light Brigade of Cavalry, to advance down the North Valley while he, Lord Lucan, would follow in support with the Heavy Brigade. The result was horrendous: the Light Brigade, although it silenced the Russian battery, was decimated by the fire from both Russian guns and captured English guns; the Heavy Brigade disengaged itself from the charge.

Tennyson's poem contains the expression "Some one had blunder'd" (II, 225, 12); these words were published in the version which appeared in The Examiner, but were omitted, after several friends of Tennyson suggested such a course, when the poem appeared in the 1855 volume, Maud, and Other Poems; the comment was reinstated in the version of the poem sent to the soldiers in the Crimea, and since then it has been retained.<sup>20</sup> It is important because it is an embodiment of Tennyson's notion that English military blunders are not as significant as the willingness of English soldiers and sailors to sacrifice their lives in order to defeat their country's enemies:

'Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Was there a man dismay'd?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
    Some one had blunder'd:  
Their's not to make reply,  
Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred. (9-17)

The soldiers of the Light Brigade do not matter as much as their cause which, although the poet does not mention it in the poem, can be inferred to be the maintenance of England's power and prestige among other nations, the ultimate effect of

which is the safeguarding of the English homeland. Even victory itself is not as important as the willingness of these men to defend England:

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
    Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
    Left of six hundred. (227, 39-49)

The poem concludes with a salute to the physical courage of the Light Brigade:

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
    All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
    Noble six hundred. (50-55)

Tennyson, by promising these men eternal "glory," is endowing them with the spiritual exaltation which he experiences in his mystical trances: these men participate in the spiritual world beyond the world of ordinary experience when they ignore physical danger to perpetuate Tennyson's mysticism, which is rooted in English Nature; their act of physical courage defies the world of ordinary experience, in that they are defying the apparent substantiality of matter, upon which ordinary experience is based, by ignoring matter's threat of death to such offenders. Accordingly, the men of the Light Brigade, through their courage, are reaching beyond matter, towards a mystical apprehension of the fact of courage: courage, for them, triumphs over matter. Tennyson, unconsciously, perceives a similarity between his

piercing of matter through mystical insight, and their conquest of matter through courage. Just as he had endowed, in the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," that famous soldier with an aura of spirituality, so Tennyson exalts the members of the Light Brigade by interpreting their courage as an act transcending concern for matter; because the Duke and these men share a common duty, that of protecting their country, their relationship with Tennyson is through the common factor of the nation, which suggests that the poet is really exalting, not these soldiers, but the nation which they helped to defend, and which to him is most profoundly meaningful as he sees it expressed in English Nature.

"Maud," as a complete poem, was published first in 1855.<sup>21</sup> The story is told by a man who is distressed by thinking about his father's suicide. He is in love with Maud, his neighbor; but he accidentally kills her brother in a duel, and must flee from England and go to France. After Maud dies, the speaker decides to purify himself by fighting in the Crimean War, which he sees as just. Commenting on "Maud," Tennyson declares that it is

. . . the history of a morbid, poetic soul, under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age. He is the heir of madness . . . raised to a pure and holy love which elevates his whole nature, passing from the height of triumph to the lowest depth of misery . . . and, when he . . . has recovered his reason, giving himself up to work for the good of mankind through the unselfishness born of a great passion.  
(IV, 270-271)

"Maud" reflects Tennyson's increasing uneasiness concerning the condition of English industrial society. The industrial growth of England according to the doctrine of laissez-faire was

producing human misery; Englishmen were being exploited and cheated by the owners of the industrial and commercial wealth of the country.<sup>22</sup> Coupled with the condemnation of the misery and selfishness of English industrial society in the poem is Tennyson's seeking approval, not only of the Crimean War, but of the notion of war. In praising war he is necessarily extolling England's involvement in it, and he is contrasting the ignominy of exploiting and cheating Englishmen with the nobility of fighting for England: in this way, he is asserting that England can be destroyed, not only by foreign aggressors, but also by Englishmen who place the acquisition of material goods above the cherishing of the spiritual heritage of the country. To Tennyson, industrial society, as he views it in "Maud," threatens the security of England, in that it transforms the country's landscape and makes tradition serve the expansion of the economy; such a threat to England's landscape frightens him. Consequently, in "Maud" he voices, through the speaker, his horror at the social injustices of industrial society in England. England is not at peace when its people rob each other:

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have  
made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not  
its own;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better  
or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his  
own hearthstone? (147, 21-24)

England is the victim of an inferior kind of war:

But these are the days of advance, the works of the  
men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman'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.  
(25-28)

Inevitably, the landscape and the people of England have been corrupted:

. . . the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's  
head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the  
trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor  
for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of  
life. . . . (148, 37-40)

Tennyson's response, through the speaker, is to express his preference for war over this false peace:

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial  
fee  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and  
by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred  
thrones. (149, 45-48)

Tennyson believes that the stability of English society, upon which his relationship with English Nature is based, is threatened by the misery and selfishness characteristic of industrial growth according to the doctrine of laissez-faire; and so he immediately thinks of war as the defensive measure necessary to correct this threat to English Nature and society. This use of warfare accounts for the extreme character of the passages in the poem dealing with war. Tennyson maintains, through the speaker, that the Crimean War has not only made Englishmen turn away from the social evils of industrial society, but has also given them a noble cause:

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!  
(229, 1303-1307)

This cause is noble, despite its inevitable production of misery; and finally Tennyson completes the connection between war and English Nature by having the speaker declare:

Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
. . . many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names . . .  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and  
done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.  
(1308, 1311-1312, 1314-1318)

War is a "blossom"; the organic character of this war results from its necessary existence as a defence against the destruction of Tennyson's relationship with English Nature. He concludes the poem by affirming, through the speaker, his belief in the necessity of this war as a unifying force for Englishmen, and as an expression of God, in that it allows him to feel part of his "native land" (230, 1323):

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a  
wind,  
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are  
noble still,  
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better  
mind. . . . (229-230, 1319-1321)

"Maud" is unique among the collection of "war poems" considered in this chapter, because only for it did Tennyson create a dramatic character who uses the pronoun "I"; this situation creates the obvious problem of determining the extent of similarity, if any, between Tennyson and the speaker in the

poem. George O. Marshall, Jr., states that Tennyson uses the Crimean War as "a cure-all for the troubles of the speaker" in the poem, and that consequently the poet is able "to express dramatically, through the person of the deranged speaker, comments on the social evils of England brought about by the industrial revolution."<sup>23</sup> However, Tennyson and the speaker are surely connected even more closely, to the extent of the following assertion by W. D. Paden: "The poet drew the fullest picture of himself at this time in the monodrama of Maud (1855)."<sup>24</sup> Although Tennyson denied that he was the speaker, he did so in a peculiar manner: he scoffed at those people who thought that the speaker was identical with "his very own self," and who could not understand that his poems "only express a poetic instinct, or judgment on character real or imagined, and on the facts of lives real or imagined."<sup>25</sup> The significant words are "poetic instinct": Tennyson was driven by his unconscious mind to embody his fear of English industrial society's subversion of English Nature; the embodiment of his fear is the speaker, who is Tennyson's unconscious poetic concept of himself, for the purposes of expressing this fear. Thus, there is almost complete identity between the poet and his creation, in the sense that the speaker is a nearly perfect reflection of Tennyson's psychological state at the time of the poem's composition.

"Riflemen Form" was published first in The Times on May 9, 1859.<sup>26</sup> The Volunteer Force which appeared very soon after the appearance of the poem in The Times had enlisted 180,000 men by the end of 1859.<sup>27</sup> Tennyson is so concerned by the

"sound of thunder afar" (VII, 182, 1) that he is willing to sacrifice temporarily the process of governmental reform in order to prepare for the defence of England:

Let your reforms for a moment go!  
Look to your butts, and take good aims!  
Better a rotten borough or so  
Than a rotten fleet and a city in flames! (15-18)

Preparation for defence is paramount to Tennyson, and the extent of that defence is for Englishmen to "be ready to do or die" (183, 22). This poem illustrates Tennyson's sense of vulnerability as an Englishman. He saw himself and his fellow countrymen as exposed to the designs of foreigners; Englishmen had to be on guard constantly in order to thwart the desire of foreigners to destroy England. What he sees in foreigners is rapacity, an insatiable need to obliterate England. His response to this rapacity is to arouse Englishmen to a high pitch of excitement through jingoism of a defensive character:

Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form. (26-28)

"The Captain: A Legend of the Navy" was published first in 1865.<sup>26</sup> It concerns the refusal of the crew of a naval vessel to engage in combat; because of their captain's harsh treatment of them, they allow themselves to be killed and their ship to be sunk, rather than fight a French ship. Tennyson is careful to state the moral of the poem at its beginning:

He that only rules by terror  
Doeth grievous wrong. (II, 101, 1-2)

Moreover, he asserts that the captain's only flaw was his oppressive command:

Brave the Captain was: the seamen  
Made a gallant crew,  
Gallant sons of English freemen,  
Sailors bold and true.  
But they hated his oppression,  
Stern he was and rash;  
So for every light transgression  
Doom'd them to the lash. (5-12)

The peculiar character of this poem consists in its examination of the concept of leadership. The leadership which is investigated in the poem is faulty because it is not based upon the consideration of the sailors as human beings. The inevitable result is the destruction of the chain of command, that is, the established order. The necessary mutual respect of the leaders and the led is lacking, and the naval vessel is not operational. Tennyson emphasizes the need for mutual respect: it is important because it holds society together, and he requires healthy interrelationships in both the social and military orders, so that he may be satisfied that England is safe. Therefore oppression is wrong, because it threatens the stability of English society. His interest in dealing with the problem of leadership in a military context reflects his interest in the need for mutual respect in the armed forces in order that they would be able to defend England.

The two songs, "Lady, let the rolling drums" and "Home they brought him slain with <sup>1770</sup> spears," were published first in 1865, and are versions of songs that were added to the third edition of "The Princess" (1850); <sup>1770</sup> <sup>29</sup> they illustrate Tennyson's tendency to project his wishes onto a situation seemingly remote from his own psychological state. In the former poem a lady and her children wait at home while the husband and father "meets

the foe."<sup>30</sup> The lady and her children symbolize, for Tennyson, England at home, and the warrior husband and father symbolizes the military power of England. What Tennyson desires is a close connection between English Nature and the defence of England. He tells the lady to

. . . let the rolling drums  
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands:  
Now thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands.<sup>31</sup>

In this manner, Tennyson asserts that the inspiration for the defence of England is derived from English Nature: the lady, who symbolizes, in part, English Nature, provides inspiration for her warrior husband, who symbolizes England's armed might. In the latter poem, a warrior's wife laments, all night, for the death of her husband. In the morning she watches as her

. . . boy began to leap and prance,  
Rode upon his father's lance,  
Beat upon his father's shield--  
'O hush, my joy, my sorrow.'<sup>32</sup>

Tennyson is emphasizing, in the wife's words, pride in military accomplishments, and understanding of the sad, but necessary, task of defending England: her "joy" is her pride in seeing her son accustom himself to the weapons of his father; her "sorrow" is her understanding that her son might have to sacrifice his life in combat, like his father, and though that sacrifice would be necessary in order to safeguard the English nation, it still would be sorrowful. Through the wife, Tennyson is expressing his own belief in the supreme importance of military strength for defence; by coupling war's glory with its sadness, he conveys the notion of war as being costly but salutary.

"Montenegro," a sonnet, was published first in The Nineteenth

Century, in May, 1877; after a conversation in March, 1877, with Gladstone, about the bravery of the people of Montenegro, Tennyson wrote the poem.<sup>33</sup> The result of the war between the Montenegrins and the Turks, which began in July, 1876, was the winning by Montenegro of a seaboard which it had not possessed since the Middle Ages.<sup>34</sup> Tennyson thought that this was his best sonnet.<sup>35</sup> The notion upon which this poem is based bears a strong resemblance to the notion expressed in the two sonnets on Poland: in all three poems, Tennyson salutes the courageous fight of a small people in defending their homeland against a larger foreign aggressor. To him the Montenegrins, in resisting the Turks, are defending their freedom, and therefore their right to exist as a people with a homeland:

O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne  
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm  
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,  
Great Tsernogora! never since thine own  
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm  
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.  
(VI, 183, 9-14)

In the passage just quoted, Tennyson uses the Slavonic name for Montenegro, Tsernogora, which means "black mountain."<sup>36</sup> In this way, he stresses the uniqueness of the Montenegrins, and thus their right to exist as a sovereign nation. He finds in the Montenegrins, as he found in the Poles, an example of a small, free people defending itself; they are attractive to him because they resemble the English in that they are defending their freedom and, more important, their homeland. Thus the acute need which Tennyson felt about the defence of English Nature against foreign aggression transformed itself into an admiration for peoples whom he conceived to be in a similar

position to that of the English people.

"The Revenge: A Ballad of the Fleet" was published first in The Nineteenth Century, in March, 1878, under the title "Sir Richard Grenville: A Ballad of the Fleet."<sup>37</sup> In this poem, Tennyson tells the story of the encounter between Sir Richard Grenville, in the Revenge, and fifty-three Spanish ships in 1591; the Revenge fought the whole Spanish fleet for fifteen hours, and surrendered only after Grenville was fatally wounded.<sup>38</sup> To Tennyson, Grenville represents indomitable English courage, because he places the defence of England above his personal safety. When his crew tells him that to fight the whole Spanish fleet can lead to nothing but death for all of them, he replies:

. . . 'We be all good English men.  
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of  
the devil,  
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.  
(VI, 98, 29-31)

Tennyson wants to convey to the reader that Grenville's courage is not desperate, but inherent; so immediately after Grenville's declaration of his resolve to fight, Tennyson writes:

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a  
hurrah, and so  
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of  
the foe,  
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety  
sick below;  
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the  
left were seen,  
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane  
between. (32-36)

After the Revenge has fought the Spanish fleet for fifteen hours, Grenville declares:

'We have fought such a fight for a day and a night



As may never be fought again!  
We have won great glory, my men!  
And a day less or more  
At sea or ashore,  
We die--does it matter when?  
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner--sink her, split her  
in twain!  
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of  
Spain!' (102, 83-90)

However, his crew induces him to surrender, and he is transferred from his ship to a Spanish ship, where he asserts, just before he dies:

'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant  
man and true;  
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:  
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!  
(103, 101-103)

In the lines just quoted, Tennyson, through Grenville, declares his belief in the necessity of duty to England, even when the price is certain death. The most important word in these lines is "only": Grenville has merely performed his function as an Englishman, and so he is not to be viewed, primarily, as a great military hero, but rather as an example to other Englishmen of the fulfillment of duty.

"The Defence of <sup>125)</sup>Lucknow," published first in The Nineteenth Century, in April, 1879, concerns an incident which occurred during the mutiny of the Bengal army, which began in May, 1857. The Residency in Lucknow, India, was under siege until November, 1857, when it was relieved by troops from England under the command of Sir Colin Campbell; the city itself was eventually retaken in March, 1858.<sup>39</sup> Tennyson's poem begins with a tribute to the tradition of English heroism:

Banner of England, not for a season, O banner of  
Britain, hast thou  
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the

battle-cry! (VI, 138, 1-2)

Then, after asserting the proper, exalted place in this tradition of the defenders of the Residency in Lucknow, he describes their plight:

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we  
held with our lives--  
Women and children among us, God help them, our  
children and wives . . .  
. . . there hail'd on our houses and halls  
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their  
cannon-balls,  
Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our  
slight barricade . . .  
Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for  
often there fell,  
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it,  
their shot and their shell . . .  
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets  
would rain at our feet--  
Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that  
girdled us round--  
Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the  
breadth of a street. . . . (138-140, 7-8, 13-15,  
17-18, 21-23)

There is no escape from danger. The defenders are confronted with the full, terrible meaning of aggression; although they are not Indians, both they and Tennyson believe that they have a right to be in India, and so the mutineers are seen by the defenders and the poet as foreign aggressors, attempting to "invade" England, as it is represented in India:

Tennyson emphasizes that the defenders are English:

Handful of men as we were, we were English in heart  
and in limb,  
Strong with the strength of the race to command, to  
obey, to endure. . . . (141, 46-47)

The last line of each of the poem's seven stanzas is a refrain, slightly altered in the fifth and last stanzas, emphasizing that England's flag flew throughout the siege. Tennyson is not a racist: although he despises the "traitors" (143, 66)

involved in the mutiny, he salutes "the kindly dark faces" (70) who fought with the English. What is important to Tennyson is the defence of the English flag, which is the symbol for all that England means to him. According to the poet, the lives of individuals are of no importance if they are required to be sacrificed in the defence of England; the suffering of the defenders of the Lucknow Residency will be forgotten, but not what they did:

Men will forget what we suffer and not what we do.  
We can fight . . .  
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left  
alive. . . . (144, 73, 78)

The defenders are "saved by the blessing of Heaven" (146, 104): Tennyson is interpreting the relief of the Residency in a religious context, and so the defence of England, the microcosm of which is the defence of the Residency, is seen as having a religious justification. The act of defending the Residency becomes an act of faith in England, and in what English Nature means to Tennyson. Furthermore, he is able to justify his willingness to sacrifice individual lives, because he conceives of defending England as he would of a religious cause, and of its defenders as being secure, not in their bodies, but in their souls.

The "Battle of Brunanburh" was published first in 1880, and is a translation of the original account of the battle written in Old English which was inserted in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 937; in composing this poetic translation, Tennyson depended largely upon his son Hallam's prose translation of the poem published in The Contemporary Review, in November, 1876.<sup>40</sup> This translation is included in the collection of war poems

because, although it is not entirely Tennyson's work, it reveals his attitude towards war, and it is endowed with enough of his distinctive poetic ability to be considered as his creation.

The following note is published with the poem: "Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland, under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937" (VI, 187). This subject is attractive to Tennyson because it lends credence to the notion that Englishmen have a long heritage of defence, a notion which is essential to his belief in the importance of safeguarding England, since England's protection is the protection of English Nature, and therefore a tradition of defence tends to safeguard his relationship with English Nature by conditioning Englishmen to respond to the need to defend their country. In the final section of the poem, Tennyson penetrates, through translation, into the beginning of English history, to reveal the crucial position in this history of the Battle of Brunanburh, as the greatest battle of this early period:

Never had huger  
Slaughter of heroes  
Slain by the sword-edge--  
Such as old writers  
Have writ of in histories--  
Hapt, in this isle, since  
Up from the East hither  
Saxon and Angle from  
Over the broad billow  
Broke into Britain with  
Haughty war-workers who  
Harried the Welshman, when  
Earls that were lured by the  
Hunger of glory gat  
Hold of the land. (193, 111-125)

This battle provides, for Tennyson, a suitable beginning for the tradition of the defence of England by Englishmen.

"The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava" was published first in Macmillan's Magazine, in March, 1882, having been written at the request of Alexander William Kinglake, the historian of the Crimean War; Tennyson had read an account of the charge in The Times of November 14, 1854.<sup>41</sup> At the end of the poem, Tennyson placed the following note:

Note.--The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous charge were the Scots Greys and the 2nd squadron of Inniskillings; the remainder of the 'Heavy Brigade' subsequently dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-camp, Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the orderly, who had been close behind him. (VI, 310)

The charge of the Heavy Brigade occurred earlier on the same day, October 25, 1854, as the charge of the Light Brigade;<sup>42</sup> but the charge of the Heavy Brigade, although not as dramatic or as famous as the other one, was a qualified military success. Brigadier-General Scarlett led three hundred of his five hundred men in a charge against a great mass of Russian cavalry, amounting to about four thousand men, situated upon sloping ground above him; after the two groups met, Scarlett's three hundred men were swallowed up by the Russians. Then part of the section of Scarlett's force which was not involved in the battle followed the three hundred men. The Light Brigade, under Lord Cardigan, was only five hundred yards away, but did not join the combat, the reason probably being a misunderstanding between Lord Cardigan and Lord Lucan. The battle was decided when the part of Scarlett's force which was still not involved in the

action added their support: the Russians broke, and streamed away. However, the victory was left incomplete because the Heavy Brigade was too disorganized from fighting to pursue the Russians, and because the Light Brigade kept its position.

Just as Tennyson did not discriminate against the defenders of the Lucknow Residency as regards their color, he does not remark on the fact that the Inniskillings and the Scots Greys, two of the regiments forming Scarlett's force, were composed of Irishmen and Scotsmen respectively. To him, what matters is their fighting under the English flag. Consequently, Tennyson conceives of these men as "Englishmen" fighting for England.

The charge, with the odds ratio ten to one against the English force, is seen by Tennyson as evidence of the ability of Englishmen to triumph courageously against great odds, and, more particularly, to challenge great odds without considering personal danger. Against the "thousands of Russians" (307, 2) Scarlett leads his three hundred men, not in desperation, but with instinctive courage:

. . . who shall escape if they close? but he dash'd  
up alone  
Thro' the great grey slope of men,  
Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
Like an Englishman there and then;  
All in a moment follow'd with force  
Three that were next in their fiery course,  
Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,  
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they  
had made--  
Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,  
Gallop'd the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade.  
(308, 16-25)

Tennyson does not describe the carnage of battle. Instead, he portrays the English forces as noble conquerors, while the Russians are described as "hordes" (310, 50):

. . . they rode like Victors and Lords  
Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
They rode, or they stood at bay . . .  
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
In the wave of the stormy day. . . . (48-51, 56-57)

The final section of the poem, composed of two lines, contains the unconscious, implicit spirituality with which Tennyson endows the defence of England; there is no exaltation of armed might in these lines, but rather there is "Glory" (65) in defending England, in instinctive sacrifice for so noble a cause:

Glory to each and to all, and the charge that they  
made!  
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the Brigade!  
(65-66)

"The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava" is notable in having a prologue and an epilogue, both added to it in its first volume publication, which was in Tiresias and Other Poems, published in 1885.<sup>43</sup> "Prologue: To General Hamley" was written at Tennyson's home, Aldworth, after General Hamley's visit there in November, 1883, when the poet and the General discussed the Heavy Brigade's charge and Tennyson's poem about it; the prologue is an expression of support for the General in his protests against official denigration of him after the Egyptian campaign of 1882.<sup>44</sup> In that campaign, General Hamley, who commanded an infantry division, was on bad terms with Wolseley, the commander of the expedition: Hamley felt that he had been misused by his commander, in that he was given orders to execute, without being told that they were designed only to fool the enemy.<sup>45</sup>

The prologue begins with a description of the landscape and seascape around Tennyson's home:

Our birches yellowing and from each  
The light leaf falling fast,  
While squirrels from our fiery beech  
Were bearing off the mast,  
You [General Hamley] came, and look'd and loved the view  
Long-known and loved by me,  
Green Sussex fading into blue  
With one gray glimpse of sea. . . . (VI, 305, 1-8)

This description of English Nature is an appropriate setting for the ensuing discussion between the poet and the General:

. . . gazing from this height alone,  
We spoke of what had been  
Most marvellous in the wars your own  
Crimean eyes had seen. . . . (9-12)

Tennyson accentuates what he unconsciously feels to be the strong relationship between English Nature and English military exploits by positing a personal relationship between England and its soldiers, exemplified in the battle at Tel-el-Kebir:<sup>46</sup>

Yet know you, as your England knows  
That you and all your men  
Were soldiers to her heart's desire,  
When, in the vanish'd year,  
You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven. (306, 23-29)

The last three lines here mark a sudden return in the poem to landscape, but one that is foreign and forbidding; such a place is fit only as a battleground in which Englishmen can defend their country. The poem concludes with Tennyson attributing cosmic significance to Wolseley's victory:

And Wolseley overthrew  
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven  
Paled, and the glory grew. (30-32)

To Tennyson, the defence of England is so vital that the meaning of Wolseley's victory transcends the military and diplomatic implications, and possesses a spiritual significance which, although it is not explicated, is implied.



"Epilogue" is based upon a conversation which Tennyson had with Miss Laura Tennant aboard the Pembroke Castle in the fall of 1883; he was distressed when he was accused of loving war, and this epilogue to "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava" is his attempt to explain his position.<sup>47</sup> The poem is a dialogue between Irene, the Greek goddess of peace, and the poet, who attempts to be humane about war. Irene attacks the poet:

You praise when you should blame  
The barbarism of wars.  
A juster epoch has begun. (VI, 311, 4-6)

The poet answers that he wishes that "wars should cease" (11) and that the whole world would "sow and reap in peace" (312, 13), but that

. . . since, our mortal shadow, I'll  
To waste this earth began--  
Perchance from some abuse of Will  
In worlds before the man  
Involving ours--he needs must fight  
To make true peace his own,  
He needs must combat might with might,  
Or Might would rule alone;  
And who loves War for War's own sake  
Is fool, or crazed, or worse. . . . (22-31)

In the passage just quoted, the poet, obviously Tennyson, is rationalizing the existence of war by construing its origin to be supernatural, and therefore beyond the power of man to understand or obliterate; man is doomed to find peace in war, by countering force with force. Consequently, Tennyson is able to deny any criticism directed towards him as a war-mongering writer. He conceives of himself as a servant to the soldiers of his country, and to his country. His war poems, he thinks, owe their existence to the deeds that they celebrate:

. . . let the patriot-soldier take  
His meed of fame in verse;  
Nay--tho' that realm were in the wrong  
For which her warriors bleed,  
It still were right to crown with song  
The warrior's noble deed--  
A crown the Singer hopes may last  
For so the deed endures;  
But Song will vanish in the Vast. . . . (312-313, 32-40)

After having placed the origin of war in a supernatural context, thus circumventing the problem of the morality of war, Tennyson claims eternal life for "The warrior's noble deed"; the poet seems to be furnishing war with an aura of mystery, even spirituality. War as an idea has come to dominate the poem; after having condemned those who love "War for War's own sake," Tennyson states that writing poems praising warriors who have fought for an ignoble cause is "right." The reason for this importance of the idea of war seems to be contained in the poem's conclusion, which asserts Tennyson's belief in immortality:

Earth passes, all is lost  
In what they prophesy, our wise men,  
Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
And deed and song alike are swept  
Away, and all in vain  
As far as man can see, except  
The man himself remain;  
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
Too many a voice may cry  
That man can have no after-morn,  
Not yet of these am I.  
The man remains, and whatsoe'er  
He wrought of good or brave  
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year. [sic]  
That dawns behind the grave.

--

And here the Singer for his Art  
Not all in vain may plead  
'The song that nerves a nation's heart,  
Is in itself a deed.' (314, 64-82)

Although he expresses his lack of faith in material reality in

this passage, Tennyson refuses to reject the notion of a life after death, an existence necessarily spiritual; this philosophy appears strange when it is coupled with his contention that his war poems are excusable because they nerve "a nation's heart." If material reality "passes," then why do nations and war poems matter? The expression "The man remains" provides the probable answer: to Tennyson, man bridges the gap between the material and spiritual worlds because he has a body and a soul; consequently, man's soul enables him to exist perpetually, because after his body, as part of material existence, passes away, his soul will still exist, as part of the spiritual world. Thus, man's valuable part, his soul, is the proper recipient of Tennyson's war poems; these poems, as "deed[s]," urge the defence of England, and ultimately, the defence of the spiritual embodiment of Tennyson's mystical feelings, English Nature.

"Epitaph on General Gordon" was published first in The Times of May 7, 1885.<sup>48</sup> Tennyson and General Gordon admired and respected each other; they had met and discussed the establishment of a training home for young soldiers; however, Gordon died before the home could be established. After Gordon's death in the Sudan, The Gordon Boys' Home was initiated by Tennyson and founded by the Prince of Wales.<sup>49</sup> The epitaph is simple, but somewhat inflated:

Warrior of God, man's friend, and tyrant's foe,  
Now somewhere dead far in the waste Soudan,  
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know  
This earth has never borne a nobler man. (VI, 332,  
1-4)

The hyperbolic character of the praise is due to Tennyson's admiration for Gordon's personality: the poet found in Gordon

a "look of utter benevolence and bonhomie."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the fact that Gordon read Tennyson's poems in the field must have pleased him.<sup>51</sup> The words "Warrior of God" express the connection in Tennyson's mind between the defence of England and his mysticism; to him, Gordon epitomizes the dedicated English military man, the man who defends England with total personal commitment. This admiration which Tennyson has for Gordon has transformed itself, inevitably, into a spiritual context, reflected in the use of "God," because the poet makes an unconscious link between defending English Nature and defending England.

"The Fleet" appeared first in The Times of April 23, 1885.<sup>52</sup> There is a footnote to the poem, which consists of an extract from a speech by Sir Graham Berry at the Colonial Institute on November 9, 1886; part of this extract is as follows:

. . . the keystone [of the British Empire's defence]  
. . . was the necessity for an overwhelming powerful  
fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling  
stations. This was as essential for the colonies as  
for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the  
continuance of the Empire. . . . Who could estimate  
the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster  
to the Imperial Navy? (VI, 342-343)

The poem is an urgent pleas for a strong Navy. It begins with an attack on the Liberal government of Gladstone for allowing the Navy to be weakened:<sup>53</sup>

You, you if you shall fail to understand  
What England is, and what her all-in-all,  
On you will come the curse of all the land,  
Should this old England fall  
Which Nelson left so great. (VI, 342, 1-5)

Tennyson's use of "land" is significant: he uses the word as a spiritual weapon which can "curse" those who wrong England.

He charges those who govern England with the responsibility of defending it: the protection of the country must be done through the partnership of its soldiers, sailors, and statesmen. The poet also implies that statesmen who do not keep England's military forces strong are traitors. After asserting that the country's fleet is "her Fate" (343, 15), Tennyson declares that, if the government fails to keep the fleet strong, there will be anarchy in England, and the state will perish:

You, you, that have the ordering of her fleet,  
If you should only compass her disgrace,  
When all men starve, the wild mob's million feet  
Will kick you from your place,  
But then too late, too late. (344, 16-20)

Tennyson's conviction that England's defence is paramount is expressed in strong terms. He feels that the country's protection from defeat and invasion is such an important matter that upon it depends the survival of the English state and English civilization, and ultimately for him, his own relationship with English Nature.

The final significant comment Tennyson makes concerning the defence of England occurs in "On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria," published first in Macmillan's Magazine in April, 1887.<sup>54</sup> This commemoration of fifty years of Victoria's rule is full of praise for the "Queen, and Empress of India" (VII, 7, 6), but in addition to adulation, combines pride in the British Empire with a warning to Englishmen that the future may bring trouble for them. The achievements of Englishmen during Victoria's reign are seen to be magnificent:

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire! (10, 52-54)

To Tennyson, the peoples of the Empire are members of a glorious community:

You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing 'Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee!' (58-65)

Nevertheless, the poet sees a possible threat to England and its Empire: "Are there thunders moaning in the distance? / Are there spectres moving in the darkness?" (66-67). Although he tells Englishmen that "the Hand of Light will lead her [Victoria's] people, / Till the thunders pass" (68-69), he has raised these "spectres" that threaten England's security. Perhaps these "spectres" are other nations or groups of nations, perhaps they are alien philosophies, or perhaps they are varieties of moral degeneration that threaten the English people. However, what is important to Tennyson is that there are "spectres moving in the darkness," threats to England's security, and therefore Englishmen must perpetually guard against the encroachment of these threats.

Tennyson's war poems are similar in certain ways: they reveal no understanding of the actual conditions of warfare; they reveal no interest in the brotherhood of all mankind, although there is no objection in them to any race helping Englishmen to defend England; they do not revel in aggression, even "The Charge of the Light Brigade," in which, although the English cavalry takes the initiative, it does so against tremen-

dously powerful forces; they stress the need for the defence of England; they celebrate the courage of Englishmen (in the sonnets on Poland and Montenegro, the Poles and Montenegrins are seen as similar to Englishmen, in that they are small peoples defending themselves against larger enemies, with the same courage which England displayed in its conflict with Napoleonic France); they celebrate apparent failures, such as "The Revenge" and "The Charge of the Light Brigade," but these are shown to be in reality successes, being examples of courage for other Englishmen; and they stress, above all else, the importance of a sense of duty to England, the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" being the apotheosis of Tennyson's attitude to war, because of the poem's exposition through the example of one man of the concept of duty to England.

The sacrifices made in the defence of England through courage and a sense of duty are justified because they create a tradition of defending the country at all costs. England is precious to Tennyson because English Nature embodies his mystical feelings. His war poems are accordingly patriotic in a mystical sense: they exalt England, but they do so not to serve the interests of the armed forces, the aristocracy, or the middle class, but rather to serve Tennyson's own interest, the protection of English Nature.

Footnotes to the Thesis

Introductory note:

The definitive edition of Tennyson's works is the nine-volume Eversley Edition (London, 1908; the third and fourth volumes of this edition that were used for this thesis are reprints, reprinted in 1909 and 1910, respectively). Except for the first poetry reference, each poetry and prose reference from this edition appears in the text, delineated according to its volume number, page number, and, in the case of poetry, line number. The volume number is denoted by a large Roman numeral, the page number is denoted by an Arabic numeral, and the line number is denoted by an underlined Arabic numeral. The first reference in a chapter to a poem or a passage of prose contains the number of the volume from which it was taken, but subsequent quotations from the same poem, or from prose in the same volume, do not contain the volume number in their reference; similarly, if a poetry reference is preceded by one containing its page number, then it contains only a line number; if two poetry references are to the same line, the line number is placed after both quotations. Regarding references to the "Idylls of the King," there is no difference from the above policy concerning volume, page, and line references, except that, because lines are numbered from the beginning of each idyll, the name of the idyll appears after a quotation from it; if a quotation is preceded by another one from the same idyll, then the name of the idyll is omitted in the reference to the second quotation, and to all other succeeding references to the same idyll in the same chapter.

Footnotes to Chapter I.

<sup>1</sup> For a general treatment of Tennyson within the context of the nineteenth-century poetic propensity for using external objects as embodiments of subjective moods, see Clyde de L. Ryals, From the Great Deep: Essays on Idylls of the King (Athens, Ohio, 1967), pp. 3-15.

<sup>2</sup> There were exceptions, such as the Duke of Wellington, to this widespread incompetence among nineteenth-century English officers who were produced by the aristocracy. Nevertheless, more typical than Wellington were men such as Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan, both of whom exhibited their inadequate leadership during the Crimean War. There were not many men of very humble origins who managed to gain eminence as high-ranking officers in the armed forces of England during the nineteenth century; perhaps the most



outstanding of such men was Colin Campbell, who led the relief force to Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny; for this service and many others performed for the English state, he became both Baron Clyde and a field-marshal. For an account of the military campaigns waged during the Indian Mutiny, and Campbell's role in them, see Michael Edwardes, Battles of the Indian Mutiny (London, 1963).

3 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir, 2 vols. (London, 1897), II, 223.

4 Loc. cit.

5 Ibid., 40-41.

6 Ibid., 41.

7 Ibid., 338.

8 Ibid., 339.

9 David Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914, 10th ed. (London, 1964), p. 7.

10 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

11 Ibid., p. 24.

12 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, I, 5.

13 Loc. cit.

14 Ibid., 7.

15 Jay Luvaas, The Education of an Army: British Military Thought, 1815-1940 (London, 1965), pp. 3-4.

16 Antony Preston and John Major, Send a Gunboat! A Study of the Gunboat and Its Role in British Policy, 1854-1904 (London, 1967), p. 6.

17 Loc. cit.

18 Brian Bond, "Introduction," Victorian Military Campaigns, ed. Brian Bond (New York, 1967), p. 11.

19 Preston and Major, Gunboat, p. 6.

20 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, I, 41.

21 Anthony Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, 1815-1914 (New York, 1962), pp. 65, 149.

- 22 Ibid., pp. 149-152.
- 23 Charles Tennyson, "Tennyson's Politics," Six Tennyson Essays (London, 1954), p. 40
- 24 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, I, 55.
- 25 Charles Tennyson, Essays, p.40.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 40-41.
- 27 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 349.
- 28 A. P. Thornton, The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies: A Study in British Power (London, 1959), p. 1.
- 29 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 169-170. As Wood relates in these pages, the Don Pacifico incident arose when the Greek government failed to honor certain debts to British subjects, and Don Pacifico, a Portuguese money-lender who claimed British citizenship because he was born in Gibraltar, had his house in Athens raided; Palmerston ordered a blockade of the Greek coasts without consulting either France or Russia, who were also guarantors of Greek independence.
- 30 Thornton, Imperial Idea, p. 4.
- 31 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, p. 170.
- 32 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, I, 343-344.
- 33 Wellington was Prime Minister from 1828 to 1830, and was Foreign Secretary from 1834 to 1835; he was a Tory Prime Minister, and as Foreign Secretary, was a member of Sir Robert Peel's first Conservative Ministry. For an outline of English Cabinets from 1812 to 1908, see Thomson, England, pp. 216-217.
- 34 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 403.
- 35 Ibid., I, 362.
- 36 Alfred Lord Tennyson, The Works of Tennyson, ed. Hallam, Lord Tennyson, The Eversley Edition, 9 vols. (London, 1908), II, 215, 122.
- 37 Alfred Vagts, A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military, 3rd ed. (New York, 1967), p. 165.
- 38 Bond, "Introduction," Victorian Military

Campaigns, p. 12. After the Crimean War had been waged for some time, daily telegraphic reports could be sent back to England, the reason being the laying of a submarine telegraph to the Crimea; for a consideration of war correspondents and the telegraph, see Justin McCarthy, A History of Our Times, 4 vols. (London, 1879), II, 304-305.

- 39 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 199-200.
- 40 Joseph H. Lehmann, All Sir Garnet: A Life of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley (London, 1964), p. 31.
- 41 Ibid., p. 34.
- 42 Ibid., p. 291.
- 43 George O. Marshall, Jr., A Tennyson Handbook (New York, 1963), p. 135.
- 44 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, I, 386.
- 45 Ibid., 388.
- 46 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 202-203.
- 47 Ibid., pp. 226-227.
- 48 Ibid., pp. 227-228.
- 49 Ibid., p. 229.
- 50 Ibid., pp. 229-23.
- 51 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 328.
- 52 Ibid., I, 436.
- 53 Loc. cit.
- 54 Thomson, England, p. 140.
- 55 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 238-239.
- 56 Thomson, England, pp. 144, 109-110.
- 57 Sir Llewellyn Woodward, The Oxford History of England, ed. Sir George Clark, 14 vols. (London, 1934-1962), The Age of Reform, 1815-1870, XIII, 222-223. For a discussion of Palmerston's popularity amongst the common people of England, see Kingsley Martin, The Triumph of Lord Palmerston: A Study of Public Opinion in England, 2nd ed. (London, 1963), especially pp. 70-71, which contain a popular ditty extolling Palmerston.

58 Luvaas, Education, p. 99. For more details regarding reform in the British Army during this period, see Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 23-204; Luvaas, Education, p. 98; Vagts, Militarism, p. 226; Thomson, England, pp. 119-120; and Bond, "Introduction," Victorian Military Campaigns, p. 13.

59 Thomson, England, p. 98. Thomson also notes here that Naval Estimates were increased after the Crimean War, the first English iron-clad was launched in 1860, and gradually the use of iron for building ships and of steam-power for propelling them increased.

60 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 99.

61 Ibid., 101.

62 Charles Tennyson, Essays, p. 60.

63 Thomson, England, p. 138.

64 Thornton, Imperial Idea, p. xiii.

65 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, p. 296.

66 Elie Halevy, A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, trans. E. I. Watkin and D. A. Barker, 3rd Eng. ed., rev., 6 vols. (New York, 1961), IV, 452. This reference, and all other references from the fourth volume of Halevy's work are from an essay by R. B. McCallum, "From 1852 to 1895," which forms part of the text.

67 Thomson, England, p. 185.

68 Halevy, History, IV, 453-454.

69 Charles Tennyson, Essays, p. 61.

70 Halevy, History, IV, 452-454.

71 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 234.

72 Loc. cit.

73 Loc. cit.

74 Thornton, Imperial Idea, pp. 41-43.

75 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

76 Ibid., pp. 308-309.

- 77 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 311-312.
- 78 Charles Tennyson, Essays, pp. 61-62.
79. Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 315-317.
- 80 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 297-298.
- 81 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 320-321.  
As Wood notes in these pages, Gladstone wanted Gordon to be just an observer, advising the English government of the situation, but the section of the Cabinet which, in Gladstone's absence, formulated Gordon's instructions, seemed to the General to want him to organize the evacuation of Egyptian forces from the Sudan.
- 82 Ibid., pp. 320-323.
- 83 Anthony Nutting, Gordon: Martyr and Misfit (London, 1966), pp. 311-315.
- 84 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 317-318.  
The significant political aspect of the campaign against Arabi Pasha, as Wood declares in these pages, was Gladstone's initiation of it: after having condemned Disraeli's imperialistic foreign policy, Gladstone proceeded to embark on a similar course, finding no way to avoid involvement in Egyptian affairs while safeguarding English interests in the Near East.
- 85 Charles Tennyson, Essays, pp. 63-64.
- 86 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 303.
- 87 Ibid., 302.
- 88 Halevy, History, IV, 460.
- 89 Charles Tennyson, Essays, p. 67.
- 90 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 341-345.
- 91 Halevy, History, IV, 471-474.
- 92 Loc. cit. McCallum notes in these pages that in 1885 Bechuanaland was placed under English protection; in 1886 Upper Burma was annexed and Eastern New Guinea was partitioned between England and Germany; in 1887 Zululand was annexed; and in 1888 the North Borneo Protectorate was formed. Moreover as Wood, in Nineteenth Century Britain, notes on pp. 372-373, England

in 1890 concluded a series of treaties concerning Africa with other European nations whereby England obtained a sphere of influence in Mashonaland and Nyasaland, established Kenya and Uganda as English areas, and was able to make the island of Zanzibar a protectorate.

93 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 349.

94 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 379-380. The most important of these other empires were established by France, Germany, Italy, and Portugal. For an account of the growth of these empires, see R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World, 2nd ed., rev. (New York, 1961), pp. 635-649.

95 Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 379-380.

96 Ibid., pp. 407-408.

97 Ibid., p. 403.

98 Thomson, England, p. 187.

99 Ibid., p. 188.

100 Loc. cit.

101 Bernard Shaw, The Works of Bernard Shaw, The Constable Edition, 36 vols. (London, 1930-1932), VIII, 192.

102 Ibid., 192-193.

#### Footnotes to Chapter II.

1 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 69.

2 Ibid., I, 11.

3 Alfred Tennyson, The Devil and the Lady and Unpublished Early Poems, ed. Charles Tennyson (Bloomington, 1964), p. vi.

4 Ibid., p. 12, 11. 182-192.

5 Jerome Hamilton Buckley, Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1965), p. 16.

6 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 319.

7 Ibid., 366.

- 8 Buckley, Tennyson, p. 242.
- 9 For examinations of Tennyson's character, see Harold Nicolson, Tennyson: Aspects of His life, Character and Poetry, 2nd ed. (London 1949), especially p. 129; and Buckley, Tennyson, especially Chapter I.
- 10 Marshall, Handbook, p. 92.
- 11 Ibid., p. 162.
- 12 Stopford A. Brooke, Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life (London, 1894), pp. 310-311.
- 13 Buckley, Tennyson, p. 188.
- 14 Loc. cit.
- 15 Marshall, Handbook, pp. 101, 107.
- 16 Brooke, Tennyson, p. 447.
- 17 Ibid., pp. 447-448.
- 18 Ibid., pp. 454-455.
- 19 Nicolson, Tennyson, p. 237.
- 20 Ibid., p. 241.
- 21 Ibid., p. 277
- 22 Ibid., pp. 278-279.
- 23 Buckley, Tennyson, pp. 5-6.
- 24 Ibid., p. 6.
- 25 Ibid., p. 15.
- 26 The material for this description of Lincolnshire was taken from Willingham Rawnsley, "Tennyson and Lincolnshire," Tennyson and His Friends, ed. Hallam, Lord Tennyson (London, 1911), pp. 8-16.
- 27 Nicolson, Tennyson, p. 32.
- 28 Ibid., pp. 33-34.
- 29 Buckley, Tennyson, p. 14.
- 30 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, I, 171-172.

- 31 Ibid., 172.
- 32 Marshall, Handbook, pp. 34-35.
- 33 John Murray Moore, "Tennyson as a Poet of Nature," Three Aspects of the Late Alfred, Lord Tennyson (Manchester, 1901), p. 10.
- 34 Ibid., p. 11.
- 35 Marshall, Handbook, p. 233.
- 36 Ibid., p. 29.
- 37 Ibid., p. 35.
- 38 Ibid., p. 96.
- 39 Ibid., p. 97.
- 40 Ibid., p. 106.
- 41 Ibid., p. 91.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 118-119.
- 43 Moore, Aspects of Tennyson, p. 12.
- 44 Marshall, Handbook, p. 147.
- 45 Ibid., pp. 146-147.
- 46 Ibid., pp. 63-64, 70-77.
- 47 Ibid., p. 60.
- 48 Ibid., p. 151.
- 49 Ibid., p. 118.
- 50 Ibid., p. 76.
- 51 Alfred Tennyson, Poems and Plays, 6th ed. (London, 1965), pp. 848-849, ll. 1-15.
- 52 Marshall, Handbook, p. 246.
- 53 Ibid., p. 137. For the publishing history of each Idyll, see Marshall, Handbook, pp. 136-139.
- 54 F. E. L. Priestley, "Tennyson's Idylls," Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, ed. John Killham (London, 1963), p. 241.



55 Ibid., p. 242.

56 Thornton, Imperial Idea, p. 48.

57 For a good, though brief, examination of Tennyson's use of landscape description to reflect the mental states of his characters in the "Idylls of the King," see David Palmer, "The Laureate in Lyonesse," The Listener, 77 (1967), 815-817. Palmer contends, on page 817, "that the landscape imagery" in the poem "is the mediator between the realms of the natural and the supernatural"; to him, Tennyson's descriptions of landscape are not just pictures, but also contain, through the use of heightened diction, the spiritual dimension of the poem. Palmer's argument differs from the one put forward in this thesis, in that he is asserting only that Tennyson uses landscapes to convey a spiritual meaning when he describes them in the "Idylls," whereas this thesis contends that Tennyson's descriptions of landscape and seascape in all of his poetry embody his personal mystical feelings, not simply the spiritual ethos of an individual poem.

58 Buckley, Tennyson, p. 173.

59 Ibid., p. 188.

#### Footnotes to Chapter III.

1 Marshall, Handbook, p. 49.

2 Alfred Tennyson, Poems and Plays, p. 842, ll. 26-31.

3 Ibid., ll. 7-11.

4 Ibid., p. 843, ll. 1-8.

5 Ibid., ll. 9-14.

6 Marshall, Handbook, pp. 56-57.

7 Ibid., p. 75. The Republic of Cracow was created in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna; in 1846 it was incorporated by Austria.

8 Alfred Tennyson, Poems and Plays, p. 848, ll. 1-4.

9 Marshall, Handbook, p. 75.

- 10 Ibid., p. 132.
- 11 Ibid., p. 133.
- 12 Ibid., p. 172.
- 13 Alfred Tennyson, Poems and Plays, p.851.
- 14 Marshall, Handbook, p. 172.
- 15 Alfred Tennyson, Poems and Plays, p. 850,  
11. 1-6.
- 16 Ibid., p. 851, 11. 55-60.
- 17 Ibid., 11. 13-16.
- 18 Marshall, Handbook, p. 135.
- 19 The following description of the charge of the Light Brigade has been derived from two sources: Cecil Woodham-Smith, The Reason Why (New York, 1954), pp. 226-249; and Alexander William Kinglake, The Invasion of the Crimea: Its Origin and an Account of Its Progress down to the Death of Lord Raglan, 8 vols. (Edinburgh, 1868), IV, 250-382.
- 20 Marshall, Handbook, p. 135.
- 21 Ibid., p. 128.
- 22 Buckley, Tennyson, pp. 136-137, 141.
- 23 Marshall, Handbook, p. 129.
- 24 W. D. Paden, Tennyson in Egypt: A Study of the Imagery of His Early Work (Lawrence, 1942), p. 92.
- 25 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, I, 402.
- 26 Marshall, Handbook, p. 250.
- 27 Loc. cit.
- 28 Ibid., p. 158.
- 29 Ibid., pp. 159-160.
- 30 Alfred Tennyson, Poems and Plays, p. 854, 1. 7.
- 31 Ibid., 11. 1-4.

- 32 Ibid., ll. 8-11.
- 33 Marshall, Handbook, p. 196.
- 34 Loc. cit.
- 35 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 217.
- 36 Marshall, Handbook, p. 169.
- 37 Ibid., p. 187.
- 38 Ibid., p. 188.
- 39 Ibid., p. 191.
- 40 Ibid., p. 197.
- 41 Ibid., pp. 211-212.
- 42 The following description of the charge of the Heavy Brigade has been derived from two sources: Woodham-Smith, The Reason Why, pp. 207-226; and Kinglake, Invasion of the Crimea, pp. 129-228.
- 43 Marshall, Handbook, pp. 211-212.
- 44 Ibid., p. 211.
- 45 M. J. Williams, "The Egyptian Campaign of 1882," Victorian Military Campaigns, pp. 243-263.
- 46 Ibid., pp. 270-275.
- 47 Marshall, Handbook, p. 212.
- 48 Ibid., p. 217.
- 49 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Memoir, II, 224.
- 50 Loc. cit.
- 51 Marshall, Handbook, p. 218.
- 52 Ibid., p. 223.
- 53 Buckley, Tennyson, p. 228.
- 54 Marshall, Handbook, p. 226.

A Selected Annotated Bibliography

Military and Historical Background.

- Bond, Brian, ed. Victorian Military Campaigns. New York: Praeger, 1967. A book which is composed of studies of the smaller Victorian campaigns involving England.
- Edwardes, Michael. Battles of the Indian Mutiny. London: Batsford, 1963. A colorful account of the Indian Mutiny; it contains precise descriptions of the battles.
- Glover, Michael. Wellington as Military Commander. London: Batsford, 1968. This study contains a good description of the battle of Waterloo.
- Halevy, Elie. A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, trans. E. I. Watkin and D. A. Barker, 3rd Eng. ed., rev. 6 vols. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961. A history of exceptional breadth.
- Kinglake, Alexander William. The Invasion of the Crimea: Its Origin, and an Account of Its Progress down to the Death of Lord Raglan. 8 vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1868. An indispensable account of the Crimean War.
- Lehmann, Joseph H. All Sir Garnet: A Life of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley. London: Jonathan Cape, 1964. A biography of an outstanding English soldier of the Victorian age.
- Luvaas, Jay. The Education of an Army: British Military Thought, 1815-1940. London: Cassell, 1965. An interesting study of the ideas of English military writers.
- McCarthy, Justin. A History of Our Own Times. 4 vols. London: Chatto and Windus, 1879. A survey which is interesting for its reflection of notions prevalent during the Victorian age.
- Martin, Kingsley. The Triumph of Lord Palmerston: A Study of Public Opinion in England before the Crimean War, 2nd ed. London: Hutchinson, 1963. A study which is valuable for its inclusion of popular ditties dealing with the political affairs of the time.
- Nutting, Anthony. Gordon: Martyr and Misfit. London: Constable, 1966. An unbiased attempt to deal with the enigmatic Gordon.

- Palmer, R. R. and Colton, Joel. A History of the Modern World, 2nd ed., rev. New York: Knopf, 1961. A study which contains a section, with good maps, on nineteenth-century imperialism.
- Pearson, Hesketh. Dizzy: The Life and Nature of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. London: Methuen, 1952. A highly laudatory account of Disraeli.
- Preston, Antony and Major, John. Send a Gunboat! A Study of the Gunboat and Its Role in British Policy, 1854-1904. London: Longmans, 1967. An interesting account of the gunboat, and of the naval development of Victorian England.
- Shaw, Bernard. The Works of Bernard Shaw. The Constable Edition. 36 vols. London: Constable, 1930-1932. This edition is the standard one of Shaw's works.
- Thomson, David. England in the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914, 10th ed. London: Jonathan Cape, 1964. An excellent brief history of nineteenth-century England.
- Thornton, A. P. The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies: A Study in British Power. London: Macmillan, 1959. A good account of imperialism in Victorian England.
- Vagts, Alfred. A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military, 3rd ed. New York: The Free Press, 1967. An excellent study of the development of militarism.
- Wood, Anthony. Nineteenth Century Britain, 1815-1914. New York: McKay, 1962. This survey is general, but also sufficiently detailed to be noteworthy.
- Woodham-Smith, Cecil. The Reason Why. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954. An outstanding account of the charge of the Light Brigade, and of the lives of Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan.
- Woodward, Sir Llewellyn. The Oxford History of England, ed. Sir George Clark. 14 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1934-1962. The Age of Reform, 1815-1870. Vol. XIII. Woodward's treatment of Victorian England from 1815 to 1870 is thorough and very readable.

Tennyson

Editions.

- Tennyson, Alfred Lord. Poems and Plays. 6th ed.

London: Oxford University Press, 1965. This edition contains poems that are not contained in the Eversley Edition.

Tennyson, Alfred Lord. The Devil and the Lady and Unpublished Early Poems, ed. Charles Tennyson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964. This edition (which is a facsimile reproduction of the 1930 edition of The Devil and the Lady and the 1931 edition of Unpublished Early Poems) contains poems that are not contained in the Eversley Edition.

Tennyson, Alfred Lord. The Works of Tennyson, ed. Hallam, Lord Tennyson. The Eversley Edition. 9 vols. London: Macmillan, 1908. This edition is the definitive one of Tennyson's works.

#### Biography and Criticism.

Baum, Paul Franklin. Tennyson, Sixty Years After. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948. A study which is basically hostile to Tennyson.

Brooke, Stepford A. Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life. London: Isbister, 1894. An early, largely adulatory study of Tennyson's works; the author sees Tennyson as a major prophet, in the sense that the poet exalts mankind, and proclaims truth and beauty.

Buckley, Jerome H. Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965. An excellent, compact study of Tennyson's life and work.

Fausset, Hugh I'Anson. Tennyson: A Modern Portrait. London: Selwyn and Blount, 1923. The author sees Tennyson as a narrow-minded supporter of privilege, a poet who cared more for his narrow morality than for humanity.

Johnson, Edward Dudley Hume. The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry; Sources of the Poetic Imagination in Tennyson, Browning and Arnold. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952. The author sees Tennyson's poetry as the embodiment of a two-fold view of the world; that is, Tennyson's poetry is seen as containing his ideals, and his criticism of his society for not reflecting these ideals.

Killham, John, ed. Critical Essays on the Poetry of

- Tennyson, 2nd ed. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963. The introduction "Tennyson: A Review of Modern Criticism" is especially valuable.
- Killham, John. Tennyson and The Princess: Reflections of an Age. London: The Athlone Press, 1958. The author sees Tennyson as deeply interested in the question of woman's rights.
- Lockyer, Sir Norman and Lockyer, Winifred L. Tennyson as a Student and Poet of Nature. London: Macmillan, 1910. A compilation of references to nature in Tennyson's poetry, and an examination of them for an estimation of the poet's knowledge of science.
- Lounsbury, Thomas R. The Life and Times of Tennyson: From 1809 to 1850, 2nd ed. New York: Russell and Russell, 1962. A biography of Tennyson which covers the period from his birth to his being made Poet Laureate.
- Marshall, George O., Jr. A Tennyson Handbook. New York: Twayne, 1963. This handbook contains the publishing record of all of Tennyson's poems, except for the unpublished early poems and The Devil and the Lady.
- Moore, John Murray. Three Aspects of the Late Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Manchester: Marsden, 1901. The chapter "Tennyson as a Poet of Nature" is especially valuable.
- Nicolson, Harold George. Tennyson, Aspects of His Life, Character and Poetry, 2nd ed. London: Constable, 1949. The author promulgates the notion that Tennyson wrote two kinds of poetry: mystical lyrical verse expressing his inner melancholy self, and didactic verse, written to accommodate and placate the Victorians; to Nicolson, the former verse is superior to the latter.
- Paden, W. D. Tennyson in Egypt: A Study of the Imagery in His Early Work. Lawrence: University of Kansas Publications, 1942. A psychological investigation of Tennyson's early imagery.
- Palmer, David. "The Laureate in Lyonesse," The Listener, 77 (1967), 815-817. An article which deals with Tennyson's ability to make landscape descriptions reflect the mental states of his characters in the "Idylls of the King."
- Pitt, Valerie. Tennyson Laureate. Toronto: University

of Toronto Press, 1963. The author attempts to relate the poet's public and private lives.

Rader, Ralph Wilson. Tennyson's Maud: The Biographical Genesis. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963. The author attempts to related "Maud" to the poet's personal life.

Richardson, Joanna. The Pre-Eminent Victorian: A Study of Tennyson. London: Jonathan Cape, 1962. This study views Tennyson as a representative of his age.

Ryals, Clyde de L. From the Great Deep: Essays on Idylls of the King. Athens, Ohio University Press, 1967. The author considers the "Idylls" as a philosophical poem.

Tennyson, Charles. Alfred Tennyson. New York: Macmillan, 1949. The standard biography of the poet, written by his grandson.

Tennyson, Charles. Six Tennyson Essays. London: Cassell, 1954. The chapter "Tennyson's politics" is especially good.

Tennyson, Hallam. Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1897. An invaluable compilation of the poet's thoughts, and an outline of the events in his life.

Tennyson, Hallam, ed. Tennyson and His Friends. London: Macmillan, 1911. This important compilation contains many recollections of the poet by his friends.

Watkins, Watkin. The Birds of Tennyson. London: Porter, 1903. A compilation of references to birds in Tennyson's poetry.

Whiting, George Wesley. "The Artist and Tennyson," Rice University Studies, L, no. 3 (Summer, 1964), 1-84. The author examines the relationship between Tennyson's poetry and nineteenth-century painting.

Willey, Basil. "Tennyson," More Nineteenth Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters. New York: Columbia University Press, 1956. The author links Tennyson with the Romantics, especially Coleridge and Wordsworth.