CHAP IV

Social and Political Tales
Tennyson at the height of his fame enjoyed a popularity such as no other English poet has enjoyed in his lifetime, such perhaps as no other poet has ever enjoyed. He was not merely the poet Laureate, he was the poet, as G.M. Young puts it, "Tennyson was the poet; and to the people poetry was what Tennyson wrote."

Tennyson was the supreme interpreter of his age, 'the Great Voice of Victorian England'. Tennyson was very much aware of the intellectual currents of his time. He read widely in the contemporary literature of science, geology, and astronomy, and he gave much thought to the condition of Victorian society and to the directions in which that society was likely to develop. Perhaps Tennyson noted what W.J. Fox wrote in his 1831 review of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, "A genuine poet has deep responsibilities to his country and the world, to the present and further generation, to earth and heaven."

Jerome Hamilton Buckley expressed the same view in the final paragraph of Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet:

"Laureate for nearly half a century to one of the world's great ages, Tennyson commanded such public reputation as no English writer before or since has known.

(1) C.M. Young, 'The Age of Tennyson', In Today and Yesterday London, 1948, p.44
(2) Quoted in Hallam, Lord Tennyson (ed.), Tennyson and his friends, London 1911, p.185.
(3) From the chapter 'Art and life': the book is 'A Tennyson Companion' by F.B. Pinion.
Sensitive to the moral and spiritual confusions of his time, familiar with the new sciences, aware of imminent social change and crisis, he was the voice and sometimes indeed the conscience of Victorian culture, and his work will endure, even apart from its aesthetic worth, as a mirror of his civilization.  

Tennyson's verse tales reflect the complex tendencies of the Victorian Age - social, political, religious and literary. He was keenly alive to the ebb and flow of the events and cross currents of affairs in every sphere of activity. He was not a visionary or a prophet merely dreaming of a glorious future. On the contrary, he was his nation's mouth-piece voicing her young hopes and aspirations. 

Tennyson lived in an age of intellectual fervent when the minds of people were actively preoccupied with the most vital problems of individual and national life. He wrote a number of social and political and patriotic verse tales which mirror his attachment to his age, an age of industrial revaluation and scientific development. "He wrote of patriotism, of the proper conception of freedom, of the sad condition of the poem, of the woman's position in the onward movement of the world, of the place of commerce and science in that movement, of war as the remedy of

selfishness and evils of commerce and of the future race."
(Stopford A. Bock).

Uptil 1842, Tennyson's work has been touched only slightly by the thought of his day. Much of it reflected the artistic ideals of Keats. But in *Locksley Hall* were indications that social problems had begun to stir him and in 1847 he published his first long poem, *The Princess*, which deals frankly with a problem of the day, the Woman's Question. His 'The charge of the light Brigade', *the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, *The Revenge, the Defence of Lucknow* etc. are intensely patriotic poems reflecting the patriotism of Englishmen as well as his own. His most monumental work, *In Memoriam* is his long drawn reflection on the existing questions of scepticism, faith and hope.

It was inevitable that Tennyson, with his universality of mind, which so impressed Fitzgerald, and his intense patriotism should, from his youth onwards, take a continuous and vital interest in Britain's domestic and foreign politics. But as he was before everything, a creative artist, his interest was likely to be instinctive, not giving allegiance to any single political creed party, and reflected in his poetry not so much by direct references to current events - though these are by no means entirely absent - as in his reaction to the political theories and tendencies which from time to time excited his admiration or opposition.
Tennyson was brought up under the shadow of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, for he was nearly six years old when the Battle of Waterloo was fought in June, 1815. Tennyson's family were Whigs by tradition, and Charles, the Poet's uncle, became a member of Parliament for Crimsby in 1818. The boy shared his uncle's political views, as some of his contribution to Poems by two Brothers (1827) show. At the end of 1827 Tennyson went up to Cambridge and there soon became one of a set of young men with strongly liberal views. He joined Christian Socialist Movement to help some refugees in England to revive the Spanish revolutionary movement. But on confronted with the selfishness and corruption of the Spanish revolutionaries, his revolutionary ardour was checked. And this received a further check. The movement for the Reform of the franchise had been gathering strength throughout the 1820's, Charles Tennyson being one of its leaders in Parliament and Alfred and his friend enthusiastic supporters. The autumn and winter of 1830 were worked by violent Reform agitations all over the country. In Cambridgeshire and elsewhere there were outbursts of rick burning, and Tennyson spent some exciting hours up to his knees in mud and water passing bucket from well to blazing rickyard. There were rumours that the rioters meant to attack the town, and Tennyson and his friends paraded, armed with stout clubs, for its defence. These experiences gave him a strong distaste for revolutionary methods.
Tennyson wrote a number of political poems in the early 1830s. The unpublished Hail Briton ends with a warning image of Tyranny (The course extremes of Power and Fear) exemplified in Czarist Russia's dominance over Poland. He expressed the convictions which the political experiences of the preceding years had given him, in three poems.

In the first, he expressed in lines that have become proverbial, his passionate love of England:

the land that freemen till,
That sober - suited freedom chose,
The land, where girl with friend or foes -
A man may speak the thing he will:

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent".

In freedom of thought and speech he saw the only hope of truth, justice and law.

Without truth there could be no justice, and without justice no acceptable law. Both freedom and power must be founded on love, and love must be a true love turned round on fixed poles, and no less conscious of the lessons of the past than of the conditions of the present and needs of the future. In the third of these poems he spoke of the tremendous changes which he felt were threatening the stability and security of Western civilization and of the spirit in which a statesman should strive to meet them. Internally, freedom as he understood, it was a middle-class
value: although he had sympathy and respect for the unlearned and working poor; freedom for mobs in rags changed its meaning, putting workers and all at mercy of the debased language of 'demagogues': democracy would lead to populist tyranny. His poems express Tennyson's desire for peaceful change not crisis.

The loss of his friend Arthur Hallam turned Tennyson's mind to more fundamental questions for four years. But when he came into close contact with some of his Cambridge friends like Milnes and other Thomas Carlyle, his mind turned once more to political and social problems. Politics enters Tennyson's poetry directly, and is implied by underlying ways of thinking.

We come across a number of remarkable instances of the Poet's social and political prescience in Locksley Hall which appeared first time in the volumes of 1842. Social criticism and the resentment of class superiority is not roused as deeply in most of the idylls as in Locksley Hall. "In this poem he reflects the current enthusiasm of the era of the Great Exhibition of 1851, when dreams of a universal brotherhood were in the air and a kind of commercial millennium occupied men's minds." In this verse tale Tennyson made a famous anticipation of aerial commerce and warfare and the establishment of universal peace through

"The Parliament of man, the federation of the world".
And expressed his fear of the growth of material knowledge without a proportionate increase in the moral sense and the danger of the standardization of human personality through an egalitarian policy.

"Knowledge comes and wisdom lingers and I linger on the shore, 
And the individual withers and the world is more and more".

"The prophecies of aerial warfare and world government in Locksley Hall do suggest a characteristic of the poem as a whole, that it could only have been written by an alert and well informed mind which was acutely receptive to contemporary ideas and attitudes. The final effect of the poem is confused and ambiguous but the ambiguity, however, is itself an indication of the way in which Tennyson's lack of intellectual strength may actually give his work a special interest for the modern reader, not only because it reflects so directly, even naively, the changing mood of the period, but also because its constant ambiguity and self contradiction may serve to direct our attention to the deep visions and instabilities within the whole victorian edifice".

The idea of this poem came to Tennyson from Sir William Jone's prose translation of Moallakat, the seven Arabic poems hanging up in the temple of Mecca. It is believed

that the story of the cousin's love and the family quarrels is derived from the feud between Somersby and Bayons.

This verse tale is an impassioned and rather hysterical protest against the social and spiritual conditions of the day spoken by a young man, who has been jilted by his betrothed. He damn's the girl who has submitted to marriage for money, and fantasizes escape to exotic Edens where 'the passions' can be free and 'some savage woman' will "rear dusky race" (167-8) - a colonialist fantasy that haunted Tennyson's writing from time to time.

The speaker of Locksley Hall, the 'I' of the poem, wishes to liberate himself from the limitations of his present life. He speculates not only about his own future, but about that of the world. These firm and epigrammatic lines are spoken by a desperately unstable character in a poem where two voices are audible. One of the voices is heavy with doubt and unbelief; it is the voice of "the palsied heart .. the jaundiced eye". Perhaps the progress of science will not bring happiness, just as knowledge does not always bring wisdom. For to speaker himself, happiness might even involve a reversal of progress, with its machinery and its literature, its inhibitions and frustrations. This dark side of the speaker's mind, desperate at having loved and lost, at finding himself also the victim of a money-ridden society, is very like the spirit that Tennyson was to dramatise and explore more fully
in Maud. it is also far closer to the tone of Locksley Hall sixty years after, in which Tennyson at eighty foresaw a bleak future.

Tennyson himself said "Locksley Hall is an imaginary place and the hero is imaginary. The whole poem represents young life, its good side, its deficiencies, and its yearnings".

Tennyson gives what he calls a "dramatic impersonation", that of a man who recalls the hopes of his youth, his frustrated courtship, social injustice, the materialism of the age, his disillusionment. He contemplates the possibility of escape from this civilization, but accepts finally, the promise of the future, of progress based upon the large ideals of labour, scientific discovery, trade and co-operation.

This poem is a denunciation of the social snobbery and the love of gold which were the ruling values of the time.

This poem tells us about Tennyson's opinion of woman in general through the mouth of a speaker. Physically, emotionally, intellectually, a woman is far inferior to a man. Accordingly, all Any's feelings and emotions if compared to his own feelings and emotions, that moonlight is to sunlight and what water is to wine. This also shows the Victorian attitude towards woman.
The speaker here describes the vision of the future that he used to see in his younger days at Locksley Hall. He imagined that nations would fight aerial wars and at the same time, that the wars would not last for ever, that nations would declare truce, and that the peoples of the world would come to a permanent understanding in the interest of peace. The league of Nations that was formed at the end of World War I and the United Nations Organisation that was formed at the end of World War II gave a practical shape to Tennyson's dream of the Parliament of man and the Federation of the world.

"Restlessness, ennui, impatience of humdrum existence, set him dreaming of something like a new Odyssey. But the bounds of culture and comfort are too strong for him; the project of wild adventure is abandoned as quickly as it is formed; he remains to console himself with the march of mind and the wonders of scientific discovery. The great and lasting success of Locksley Hall shows the power of genius in presenting an ordinary situation poetically, how it can kindle up and transform common emotion, dealing boldly with the facts and feelings of every day life.

In one direction did Tennyson really contribute suggestive ideas, and that was when dealing with the Woman's Movement. The most important social work undertaken by Tennyson at 1860s was The Princess, a long poem in blank verse, dealing with the education and social status of
women. "Upon what love is, depends what woman is, and upon what woman is, depends what the world is... There is not a greater moral necessity in England than that of a reformation in female education". If, as in probable, Tennyson noticed this observation on 'The Burial of Love' in W.J. Fox's review of his poems, Chiefly Lyrical, he must have responded with full approval, one of the deeper pulsations of the world to which he gave ear was the question of women's rights in marriage and society. "It needs no historical exposition to demonstrate that from Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Women(1792) to J.S. Mill's, The subjection of women(1869) woman was subservient to man. Almost another century was to pass before much significant change was noticeable, and the equality of men and women is still a principle recognised more in theory than in practice even at the highest levels. Education is only a means to that end, and Tennyson discussed the poem he projected on this issue with Emily Sellwood in 1839, when a college for women was 'in the air'.

The princess is a long narrative poem about a university for women and the eventual conquest of love over the claims of the female intellect. In 1846 the provision for the higher education of women was negligible. The possibility of giving them the parliamentary franchise had

1. The Princess by F.B. Pinion, from "A Tennyson Companion"
scarcely even been considered. Tennyson had long been keenly interested in the subject considering that the higher education of women was one of the most important questions confronting the time, and his interest had no doubt been stimulated by his friendship with F.D. Maurice, who was to found Queen's College for Girls in 1848.

No doubt he had thought of this question at home. There was little scope for his highly gifted sisters; and his admired mother. To Tennyson she was a finer creature than his father, and he had her in mind when describing the Prince's mother in *The Princess* (vii.290-312) through her he learned to love woman. Tennyson's marriage ideal was the partnership he first presented at the end of *The Two Voices*. 'The prudent partner of his blood leaved on him, faithful, gently, good, wearing the rose of womanhood, in company with their child, they form a trinity as whole and sacred as that of Tom Brangwen, Lydia, and Anna in Lawrence's *The Rainbow*.

Tennyson believed that the story of *The Princess* was original, and owed little, if anything, to earlier writers, including Johnson, whose princess (at the end of *Rasselas*) proposed a college of women, over which she would preside, to raise 'models of prudence, and patterns of piety' for the succeeding age. Whether indebted or not to the oriental story of Princess Turandot, Tennyson acknowledged that he might have been influenced obviously by Shakespeare's
'Love's Labour's Lost', where the king turns his court into a 'Little Academe' for men, its students adorning the company of women for three years; the plan inevitably fails when a French princess and her ladies have to be received for state reasons,. Shakespeare's treatment of the subject is sprightly, since it has no serious ulterior theme like Tennyson's which lies deeper than academic education for women, and is unfolded gradually through 'a parable' intended to interest an age not yet ready in the main to take it seriously.

The subject was complicated because it was highly controversial in Tennyson's day and involved a variety of conflicting points of views. It had been introduced into the political arena by Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), which brought with it not only the odium of Tom Paine's *Right of Man* but an antifeminine prejudice as well. When Tennyson was writing *A Dream of Fair Women* it was being most vociferously expressed by the socialist Saint Simonians and after him by the followers of Fourier and Rober Owen. Thus, it came associated with socialism, revolution, the French, atheism, free love and, with more moderate and acceptable proposals for the education of women, equal employment, cheap divorce, the right to vote, and the right to use custody of one's property. The speaker of Locksley Hall saw 'the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be', on that vision
included not only a warless, classless society created by the workers but also a world in which any would have been free from tyranny of her father and her loutish husband. The 'Golden Year' envisioned by the poet leonard is also partly socialist, and the Princess that same phrase is used to denote a day when woman shall have achieved equality with man. On the other hand, much of the impulse toward this ideal came from quite a different source. Arthur Hallam, nourished on Plato, Dante's Vita Nuova, Petrarch, and the troubadour poets, evolved a highly spiritualized religion of love in which woman, worshipped almost in the way the virgin mary was worshipped in the Middle Age, would serve almost that same purpose of elevating and refining the gross, unspiritual man. This idea, that woman was the Angel in the House, was adopted by a great many champions of woman of both sexes.

Caroline Norton, the beautiful and talented grand daughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, when tortured by her husband, agitated in support of a bill put forward by Serjeant Talfourd which sought to give the courts power, in certain circumstances, to award the custody of infant children to their mother. In 1839, the bill was passed and became law. As that was the year in which Tennyson first thought of writing The Princess in which the custody of the infant plays so important a role – one can not but think that he was partly inspired by the case of Caroline Norton.
W.J. Fox, the Unitarian Minister, in reviewing Tennyson's Poem of 1830, had said, "There is not a greater moral necessity in England than that of a reformation in female education". He took the position that simply because of woman's influence on her husband and children she needed to be educated, but Mrs. Grimston, an Owenite feminist, rose upon the winds of prophecy to a higher view, "I see not why civil offices should not be open (to women)", she declared in 1834. The accession of Queen Victoria to the throne in 1837 did much to favour the feminist cause. In 1848, Queen's College, in Hartley Street, was founded. As this was the year after the Princess was published, it was thought to be the practical outcome of Tennyson's speculations.

Given the complexity of the issues involved, it is obvious that Tennyson could not deal with the woman question in the visionary mode. By choosing a romance that was as remote as possible from modern life and having it told by people of varying points of view he could actually incorporate into his poem the variety of feminist discussion. And yet the tale would work by its own logic to some kind of unified conclusion, and this, tentatively and varyingly received by the group, was probably as close to the truth as one could get.

The argument of the Princess is related to debates in parliament and outside about the status of women, especially
married women, it displays the progressive attitudes which made radical women of the period quote a Dream of fair women (1832) in support of their case, but it also reveals anxiety about the consequences for male-esteem and emotional dependency. It is a political poem and also, like the Idyls, a poem of love. The attempt to resolve these two motives in the final marriage produces some of the problems in interpreting the poem. 'The idealization of love by Arthur Hallam, can appear in The Princess.

The poem's noble characters, quest for the love of a lady and final tournament derive from Tennyson's interest in medieval romance. The frame of the Princess and its wonderful prospects — stormscapes, starscapes, riverscapes, skyscapes and seascapes — relate it to the English Idyls, a form which opens up a pleasurable space in which possibilities can be entertained, possibilities of love, work and knowledge, the grounds of present and future value.

Love's Labour's Lost was first performed as a Christmas entertainment at court, and although the frame of The Princess is set on a summer holiday, its idea of telling a story from one speaker to another derives from a Christmas game. As you like it and Twelfth Night are remembered here; both involve women dressed as men, reversals of power and final reconciliations resulting from such reversals. The pleasure of turning the tables and imagining how things could be different derives both from
the Idyls and from Shakespear's comedies. One structural element which may have been encouraged by Love's Labour's Lost is the insertion of the songs between the parts of the poem, while Shakespeare's songs are of seasonality and fertility, Tennyson's are mainly of loss and separation reminders of familial anxiety not of satisfaction or community. Like the Prince's seizures they call the linear narrative in question, bringing in uncertainties.

Another influence was that of Eastern tales of women distinguished for unit, wisdom and beauty.

The presence of scientific experiment, observation and theory in both the frame and the story of The Princess 'reflects the age in its looking backwards and forwards, and also says that wild dreams can become truth; science is an encouraging model for social and political change.

The frame of the story is provided by an outing of the Mechanics' Institute held in the thinly disguised grounds of Park House, where the workmen are entertained by scientific tricks and toys, 'so that sport/went hand in hand with science'. The son of the house, Young Walter, reminisces with six friends about their college life, which makes his sister Lilia wish that women had their own university.

Tennyson tries to justify his entertaining presentation of a subject which readers could take as lightly or as seriously as they pleased with the pretence that it had been
'drest up poetically' by one of seven college students who told the story, each in turn taking the hero's part (a game played by Tennyson with other students at Trinity College), in response to Lilia's espousal at Vivian Place of women's cause, and her wish that she were a princess and could build 'Far off from men a college like a man's where she would teach them "all that men are taught". The ladies were to give the narrators relief at intervals by singing songs. At the end the men had demanded a 'mock-herioc gigantesque' manner throughtout but the women, who hated banter, had insisted on a solemn close, and then suggested that the whole should be 'true-heroic'. The poet-narrator, forced to compromise between mockers and realists, had decided to move 'as in a strange diagonal' from one style to another.

The interior story told by the several narrators is of the Prince, betrothed since childhood to Princess Ida, when she refuses to honour her engagement she founds female university in a remote house owned by her father, to which the prince goes to find her. He and two friends disguise themselves in girls' clothing and become undergraduates. When their sex is discovered, the prince pleads his love for Ida. The lives of the young men are in danger until the princess' father is taken hostage by the father of the Prince. A tournament is held to decide the issue, and the prince and two friends are wounded. At this the university is turned into an infirmacy and the young ladies into
nurses. Ida's scorn of men is melted by pity for the Prince, and she happily agrees to marry him.

The poem is not a fairy tale, but Tennyson's attempt to deal with a contemporary problem. The way in which Tennyson handled the subject was highly characteristic and was, in fact, the only way in which he, as a creative artist, could have handled it, although the result has been to cause a good deal of misinterpretation of his own views. He adopted a purely dramatic method, giving no direct expression of his own opinions, but allowing the various points of view to find utterance entirely through the acts and words of the characters in the story. One critic identifies his views with those of the 'maiden aunt', whom the poem describes with genial irony as 'crammed with theories out of books' and 'preaching a universal culture for the crowd'. More frequently the poet is credited with the opinions which he puts into the mouth of that tough old Blimp, the Prince's father:

"Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword and for the needle she;
Man with the head and woman with the heart;
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion."

The following sayings of the Princess clearly comes straight from Tennyson's own heart. From Canto II;

"Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble."
From Canto III;

"However you babble, great deeds cannot die;
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them."

Princess claims in Canto IV that women should be—

'Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
Whole in ourselves and owed to none'.

Very clear too is Tennyson's voice in the lines which he gives to Lady Psyche in Canto II: everywhere

Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two Plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss of science, and the secrets of the mind".

No doubt the Prince's speeches are the most directly expressive of Tennyson's own views, particularly the description of marriage in Canto VII

".....either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two - celled heart beating, with one full stroke, life.

And --

"The woman's cause is man's they rise or sink
Together, dwarfed or god like, bond or free...."

It is clear from the above lines that Tennyson believed woman's capacities to be fully equal, though not entirely similar, as man's and that he approved of their being given
the fullest development and expression, so long as woman's prime function, as wife, mother and High Priestess of Domestic Culture, is not impaired.

The prince is a poetic youth who is attempting to realize in his own life the vision of 'All beauty compassed in a female youth'. When the betrothal was broken off and his father proposed violence, Prince, proposed a quest. It would be a quest for ideal beauty, and success in this quest would give him wholeness once again. For his seizures are, in a sense, simply this that the vision of ideal beauty, which is the most intense reality he knows, is not embodied in the world about him, and on the other hand, the world is comparatively unreal. He was doing what Tennyson had done in several poems before him, leaving a cold northern kingdom for a kingdom in the warm south to seek the abode of clear poetic beauty.

It had been noticed that in his quest the prince is not unlike the fairy prince in 'The Day Dream', who also comes, "scarce knowing what he seeks," led by 'the Magic Music in his heart', to rouse the sleeping Beauty with a kiss, and take her out into the world. But difference here is that it is Ida who rouses the Prince with a kiss. For After he was injured in the combat with Arac he fell into "some mystic middle state" which was but an intensification and prolongation of his seizures. When Ida Kisses him, vision and reality merge. In this moment the Prince is not
only saved from death but is cured of his weird seizures as well. It was by envisioning her with sufficient intensity so that she came into being. Like Adam, he awoke and found his vision true.

but if the Prince was changed, so too was Ida,

"from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her falser self slit from her like a robe,
And left her woman."

White and red, the lily and the rose, have been used throughout the poem to symbolize the antinomies of intellect of passion. When she does learn that love is greater than knowledge and knowledge greater than power, then the birth of the new self within her is described as like the birth of Aphrodite out of the sea.

For what Ida has ignored above all is the child. But the care of the child, Aglaia, actually teaches her that she has that within her which is wilder than she knew, a mother's heart. All the intercalary songs turn on the child as the unifying element in the family. By all these admission of error Ida is almost too deeply humbled. Like the prince's seizures, the high-spirited 'false sublime' disappears from the verse as Ida casts off pretence and accepts reality. Tennysons believed that, 'if women ever were to play such freaks' as extreme feminists demanded, 'the burlesque and the tragic might go hand in hand'. The
diagonal which he steers from the burlesque to the positive
may imply a progressive resultant from the impact of forces
favouring women's enlightened emancipation in the course of
time. Both man and woman must rise or sink together;
progress depends not on likeness, which would destroy love,
but on woman's readiness 'to live and learn and be All that
not harms distinctive womanhood'. Man will be 'more of
woman, in sweetness and in moral height'; from him she will
gain in mental breath, nor 'lose the childlike in the
larger mind',

"And to these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other even as those who love,
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of humankind".

This passage echoes 'the Christ that is to be' and the
crowning race' of In Memoriam (cvi, Epilogue), showing that
Tennyson's ideal of 'manhood fused with female grace' (cix)
sprang largely from Arthur Hallam. Late in life he defined
Christ, the 'human and divine' of In Memoriam which he tried
to project in Idylls of the King, as 'that union of man and
woman, strength and weakness'. Lest he should be thought to
undervalue manliness, he wrote

'On One who affected an effeminate Manner':
While man and woman still are incomplete,
I prize that soul where man and woman meet,
Which types all Nature's male and female plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-man".
Here Tennyson's evolutionary confidence is asserted: In *Memoriam* gives his faith a long term expression; two lines in the poem Tennyson wrote on his own marriage, 'to the vicar of ship lake' ('I shall come through her, I trust, into fullerorbed completeness'), are more immediately relevant.

Prince, who put off a certain effeminacy in moving towards Ida, and Ida, who put off a certain mannishnes in moving toward the Prince, are thereby furthering nature's plan, but they had adopted the defects, not the virtues, of the opposite sex. The prince had already indicated to his father that the defects of man are grossness and roughness, "slips in sensual mire", while the defects of woman are apparently a narrow mental outlook. Therefore man should become gentler and morally more pure without becoming effeminate, whereas woman should acquire a broader mental outlook without losing her feminity. He thought that Christ was the perfect type of humanity in that he represented 'the union of tenderness and strength' - 'what he called 'the man-woman'. Thus, at this point evolution and christianity merge, and to imitate Christ is to further Nature's plan. Indeed, by typing Christ in their own lives the Prince and Ida will bring back the 'statelier Eden' in which reign 'the world's great bridals, chaste and calm," and from there will spring 'the crowning race of humankind".
This poem is didactic. "The several points specially dwelt upon are the insufficiency of the culture of the intellect alone, the essential diversity between the sexes – diversity in kind, not in degree – and the vanity of any attempt to crush out human impulses and affections" (Wallace). "The wrongs of women are dwelt upon with fervent indignation, and the vital importance to society involved in giving them full scope for the development of every side of their higher capacities is fully and frankly recognised, but the means adopted by Ida for the attainment of this end, her contemptuous withdrawal from the society of men, her defiance of the fundamental human instincts, her cultivation of the intellect alone, to the neglect of the affection and the moral life, are ridiculed and satirised" (Wallace).

'The Princess' was widely read and acclaimed at the time, but the work's chief interest to posterity lies in the wealth of immortal lyrics embedded in the narrative. A solid project of educational reform is surrounded with fantastic circumstances of romantic adventure, and is made the groundwork of some very fine poetry; while the substitution of women instead of men everywhere in the framework of college life and discipline gives ample room for artistic sketches of novel situations and costumes. The underlying social philosophy is moderate and sensible; the true value of the poem is rightly made to consist in its decorative beauty, in some delineation of character, in
verse of sustained musical effect, and in a few exquisite lyrics that vary the unrhymed metre.

Professor Lounsbury summed up the favourable view as follows. "In variety of interest in the due proportion of means to ends, in the marvellous adaptation of treatment of varying conditions of the subject matter, never degenerating into the purely burlesque, never straining beyond the legitimate expression of high - wrought feeling, he succeeds in producing within its limitations what might in justice be called a nearly perfect work of art".

The flexibility and the aptness of the blank verse, the beauty, the charm and humour of descriptions and images are praiseworthy.

More striking skill is the dramatic power which the poem shows as it gathers momentum. Canto VI, which describes the scene on the field of tournament, after the victory of the Princess's brother over her lover and his friend, has a dramatic force which Tennyson never surpassed on her sex.

In all these respects - the depiction of domestic joy and domestic sorrow, the victory of love, the inculcation of moral, the consideration of social and scientific matters - The Princess follows the idyllic formula as previously outlined by the poet. The poem is indeed what Prof. Baum has called it a kind of idyll on a large scale."
Cazamian’s views on The Princess

"The Princess introduces a serious idea in a way at once attractive and pleasing, though not a little over sweet, the grave nature of theme is often a disturbing element in the easy enjoyment of what is essentially a fantasy, and on the other hand the charm of the scenic descriptions tends to eclipse the rather fictitious dramatic action, borne up by characters who are too obviously the puppets of theory. And yet, the descriptive or emotional lyricism in the poem develops round the structure of a subject, the scenes or episodes, a trifle deficient in sustained energy, which the poet spontaneously produces; nevertheless group themselves into a whole where each support the other. Several of the interludes are of rare and entrancing beauty".

The Princess was published in 1847. "Seldom has a poem owed so much to contemporary literary doctrine", writes a commentator. According to one of the contemporary doctrines, poetry must contribute to the solution of social problems. In women's rights Tennyson found a mission, and he duly got down to the work, producing a long poem of over three thousand words. Critics and public alike looked for warm feeling and wholesome good humour, and they got both these in this poem. They also liked to hear about progress, "the golden future time", and Tennyson also met this wish.
But a great defect of the poem is that it is in every respect half hearted. Tennyson is divided in his mind regarding the final decision in the matter. That is the reason why it is a 'medley'; no close-knit plan was possible until the poet had cleared his own mind and when he wrote the poem he had not done so. To the same cause is due the hybrid mixture of the modern idea and the mediaeval story. This too is the reason why the poem hovers midway between zest and earnest. The conventional ending of love in marriage seems to him that after all there is not much in this "woman question, that the one great profession for women is that which always has been and always must be open to them - matrimony. This doubtless is true, but it is not very illuminative; it throws no light upon the path of that considerable minority for whom the profession in question is not open.

In the conclusion we find Tennyson at his worst. The chauvinism and Galliphobia (hatred of France that found expression in the National Song of 1830) have touched their extreme. Speaking in a self-righteous tone, the Tory member's eldest son bursts into a hymn in praise of England and this is followed by a criticism of France. Tennyson was becoming more and more convinced that the old order was changing, that the world was on the brink of revolution, that only in the stability provided by English family life was there a way of maintaining the traditional values. This
was perhaps, one of the very reasons that, in speaking to the age, he turned to the idyll to provide for his readers the pattern of social life he advocated as the bulwark against the violent change.

According to some critics The Princess is not a satisfactory poem at all. It is rather flat. But it is relieved by lyrics like 'Now sleeps the crimson petal', 'Sweet and low', and 'Come down O Maid', which would do far better separately. T.S. Eliot finds The Princess a beautiful but dull poem. He calls it an idyll that is too long. The versification in this poem, according to Eliot as masterly as in any other great work of Tennyson.

According to George Saintsbury, The Princess is the consummate expression of Tennyson's mastery in blank verse and is one of the greatest poems in English. The exceedingly difficult kind of the playfully - romantic, if not mock heroic, in which it is written, is not universally relished. It is too serious for some, not serious enough for others, and prejudices of various sorts have interfered with its reception. "But it is as much as the head of its own division of poetry on the Romantic side as The Rape of the Lock is on the classical, and it has appeals which are unknown to Pope's glittering little masterpiece".

In 'The High -born Maiden" Symbol in Tennyson Lionel Stevenson includes The Princess in a series of poems which
he says project the artist's 'anima', the feminine principle' of Jungian psychoanalysis (and also in alchemy). In the first phase the melancholy maiden of Shelley's *To a Skylark* is used to explore psycho-aesthetic problems, as in *The Lady of Shalott*, in the second this figure is condemned for proud self sufficiency, as in the palace of Art. Stevenson puts *The Princess* in the second phase: Ida's 'intellectual arrogance' must be 'broken down by love and all the demands of practical life'. Fitting *The Princess* into this pattern has just suited those who see Ida as 'warped' and 'obsessive', and her ambitions for women as an 'unnatural and humourless rebellion', laying claim to, 'power grotesquely inappropriate to womanhood'. However the poem does not present her enterprise as essentially negative. She gains the passionate advocacy of the Prince, as well as the rather spluttering support of brother, a prototype of the 'very strong man Kwasind'. To accept Stevenson's symbolic pattern for *The Princess* is to travesty it, and to ignore what Tennyson was attempting with the woman as speaking subject as well as the object of desire. Ida is not a projection of masculine 'anima' but an attempt to put the point of view of a woman with a strong will directed to a noble cause.

*The Princess* in frame and story is essentially concerned with a single class, the educated middle class and gentry, although, as in folk tales, in the story they are
called kings and princesses. There is space for the old comedy of gentle and simple; the lectures and discussions are mostly straight faced, not mockeries of learned fashions as in Shakespeare's play.

Princess Ida's students have classical exemplars set before them in lectures, sculpture, and painting; they believe in evolution, and geologize; the narrative quarrel between two kingdom which arises ultimately from the breaking of the princess's betrothal pact is fought in medieval fashion and with no quarter. The medley of story and lyric turns from mock-heroic to medieval heroic, and thence to forward-looking Victorian earnestness. It reflects the growing electrism of 19th century culture, its imitative styles and scientific progress, its traditional prejudices, its minority views on women, and its evolutionary faith.

Ida and Prince have been presented as opposites rather than as variably different: she the sterner, he the gentler. She speaks for science, he for poetry; with in poetry she has the heroic voice, he the lyric; she stands for social purpose and the work of the world, he for love. His feminine values triumph over her masculine victory in battle; her sanctuary is violated not by force but by the need to nurse the wounded men. His voice takes over to agree her cause. He becomes masculine like her, as she becomes 'women'.
The odd heroine or woman of power has never been a cultural problem, and female figures have regularly been used to represent human ideals. Like Tennyson in *A Dream of Fair Woman*, Ida could summon up many biblical and classical models: the physical assertion of defiance and power dominates her roll-call.

Princes Ida, though a figure in a fable about the education of women, is also a symbol of the development of Tennyson's poetry. The Prince, listening to the music in his heart, had gone to the warm southern kingdom to seek her but found that she had returned to the borders of the north and taken up her stand on a frosty mountain. When he melted her heart and pursuaded her to come down into the valley, marry, and have a child, he was essentially asking her to take up her abode in the English Idyl. For this form, based in love, centering upon marriage and the child, in that which he found most in harmony with his genius. Certainly it is that in which his poetic problems were ultimately resolved.

An artful rather than artistic work, *The Princess* is a medley of styles, their heterogeneity varying from spirited absurdities to the highly poetic, through a range of heroic effects, often incongruously placed but deceptively poker-faced at times. Each of the Princess' blowzy bodyguard is like a spire of land 'cleft from the main, and wailed about with new;' Lady Blanche boasts that she has led her to all
the castalies, and fed her with the milk of every Muse; Gama
appeals for reconciliation between his daughter and Lady
Psyche on the strength of the nights they had spent
discussing 'sine and cosine....... and right ascension.'
Mock - heroic incongruities are based occasionally on
anticlimax (v.211-14, 318-19), sometimes on epic formalities
such as the placing of 'He said' after a long speech, on the
use of heroic similes in situations unequal to them (1, 223-
4, v.332-40' vi 311-13), and more often on hyperbole (iii
96-100; iv 409-21; vi 142-51, 318 - 20). Fine descriptive
effects are common: thoughts in the eye of Melissa, Lady
Blanche's dauther, are as fair as bottom agates which appear
to wave and float in crystal currents of clear morning seas,
and it is no more strange that she and florian whom she
tends fall in love than 'when two dewdrops on the petal
shake to the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down, And
slip at once all - fragrant into one'; with epic splendour,
in the white wake of venus, the man furrows the orient with
gold; the virgin marble shrieks under iron heels when the
wounded are carried through the Vestal entrance; and the
princess' tenderness turns to love ' like an Alpine harebell
hung with tears. By some cold morning glacier', frail at
first but gathering colour day by day.

The Princess remained for many years one of the most
popular of Tennyson's works, and it can still be read
through with pleasure, but most modern readers and critics
have agreed in finding the valuable parts of the poem to be the interpersed lyrics, several of which were not added until the third edition of 1850. The best of these - 'Tears, idle tears', 'The Splendour falls on castle walls', 'come down, O maid, from younder mountain height,' and 'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white' - represent one aspect of Tennyson's genius at its fullest development. In fact Princess's chief interest to posterity lies in the wealth of immortal lyrics embedded in the narrative, amongst them to name but three 'Tears Idle Tears', 'Ask me no more', and 'Now sleeps the crimson petal'.

The placing of these lyrics in this ingenious and seemingly improvised piece of indirection does not suggest that they were sung to give the narrators 'breathing - space'. The first 'Tears, idle tears', occurs after only twenty lines of the forth part. It expresses,'the passion of the past, the abiding in the transient.'

But 'Now sleeps the crimson petal; despite its artificality, achieves a delicate perfection equalled in English poetry - except by Marvell, whom Tennyson greatly admired - and it contains at least one miraculous line.

"Now lies the Earth all Danae to the stars". Tennyson does not often have this fusion of lyrical and intellectual qualities. The pleasures of this lyric are those of difference, crimson against white, sleeping and waking, the
metaphors of sexual difference are boldly obvious, with the masculine cypress, fine and flying insect (like Blacke's invisible warm in 'O rose thou art sick!) and the feminine flower, crimson like Blake's for sensuality and shame, white for chastity and seductive frailty, vague like the peacock, and chill like the font. It is a very simple and a very sophisticated lyric.

Tennyson was a great humorous poet, is evident in the Princess which is an extraordinary blend of burlesque, passion and philosophy. This poem is a humorous poem in spite of the high level of much of its thought and emotion, for the original scheme was undoubtedly conceived in the spirit of comedy. This does not mean that Tennyson thought the subject of woman's rights and social position one of small importance. But he realized that the controversy had aroused hysterical enthusiasm on one side and a great deal of prejudice and ridicule on the other, and he wished his statement of the issues to be one that would attract, without inflaming the passions of the contending parties. As the poem progressed, however, the importance of his theme affected him more and more, and the element of comedy gradually dwindled, disappearing altogether from the last two cantos.

Its basic theme is admirably comic, involving the contrast between the Prince's aims and the hopeless absurdity of her scheme, founded on a deliberate ignoring of
the greatest fundamental fact of human nature. Excellently
comic is the situation of the Prince and his two friends
disguised as girls amongst the undergraduates of the woman's
University when, for example, after spending the morning in
attendance at the lectures of the various female professors,
they issue, 'gorged with knowledge'—

"...like these horses that have broken fence
And glutted all night long breast deep in corn"
and the Prince exclaims:

'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we!'

There is much admirable comedy of character.
Particularly effective in contrast with the high-souled,
iron-willed visionary Princess Ida, are her small, fussy,
good-natured, ineffective father King Gama, and her huge,
brainless, devoted brother Arac. Admirable is the speech in
which the king explains to the Princess's suitor that she
has repudiated her engagement to him.

Arac's character comes out in his defence of his
sister to the Prince:

"She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme:

............

............

Come, this is all! She will not: waive your claim":

From these few quotations it will be seen that The
Princess contains some excellent comic writing and that much
of it breathes the true spirit of comedy. In spite of the
high emotional tension of the later cantos, and the
solemnity of its close, it remains a true comedy in the
mediaeval sense.

"The wealth as well as the beauty of Tennyson's *lyrical
production* places him in the foremost rank of our lyricists,
strong as our literature has been for many centuries in that
form of poetry". (Harrison)

"For the songs of Tennyson, written separately or as
interludes to break the flow of narrative, are among the
best in the English language, and in them we find, as rarely
in his other poems, the absolute ecstasy, the purest poetry
perhaps, which he ever composed. For in his songs, and
predominantly in the songs, incorporated in the 'Princess',
His poetic energy was concentrated wholly on the magic of
words." (Herold Nicolson)

Temperamentally he possessed all the qualities of a
lyric poet. His genius was essentially subjective.

In the *Princess* he introduced six songs. the first
'Sweet And Low' is a sweet lullaby. This sweet lyric
presents a vivid and moving picture of conjugal fidelity and
parental affection. It is a pure lyric characterised by
simplicity, both in emotion and language. It is an implied
criticism of a life devoted entirely to intellectual
pursuits, to the entire exclusion of the warmer human
emotions.
Another beautiful song \textit{The Splendor Falls} has been highly praised by Stopford Brooke - "The greatest poetical beauty has been reached in the second verse where, by a magical employment of words, the whole of England crafted and with it all the romantic tales echo in the ear."

The third song 'Tears Idle Tears' is remarkable for its music and melody and for its tender pathos. This song is drenched in the heavy dew of long and living sorrow for love just touched but unattained. Wallace comments - "The melancholy that dominates this song is traced by the poet to some reminiscence of prenatal happiness. This is the main motive of Wordsworth's \textit{Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early childhood}.

"O Swallow, Swallow, Flying South" is sung by the prince which is an indirect expression of his love, and his impatience with Ida's schemes and isolation.

Another beautiful song 'Ask me no more' placed at the end of Canto VI, brings out the conflict within Ida between her longing for love, and her reluctance to yield to it.

The simplicity of its diction and language, its music and melody, its emotional intensity and fervour, all justify the popularity of this exquisite piece. More specially, Mr. Wallace emphasised Tennyson's artistic use of monosyllables which impart gravity and stateliness to the song.
Another sweet lyric "Now sleeps the crimson petal" occurs in Canto VII. This lyric is an appeal to the beloved to surrender herself and join the lover. The unusual form of this lyric appears to be Tennyson's personal adaptation of the 'ghazal', a type of Persian love-ode, examples of which he had been reading in the original and in translation with the help of Fitzgerald.

The last exquisite lyric 'come Down O Maid' occurs in Canto VII. In this love-lyric, remarkable for its fervour and intensity, a shepherd lover asks his beloved to come down from the mountain peak where she stands on the valley below where he himself stands. Her heart is touched and she decides to give up her ambitious plans which result in emotional sterility, and to surrender herself to her lover. It is a consummate work of art. The greatest glory of the song is its abundant wealth of wordpicture and imagery. Its felicity of diction and expression, its word-pictures, its imagery, and its music and melody all combine to make it one of the most popular lyrics of Tennyson. The only fault with this poem is that there is too much of art in it.

Thus the greatest beauty and appeal of The Princess lies in its songs, which have found their place in most anthologies of English lyrics. The Princess is little read today, its theme has grown out-dated, but its songs still retain their freshness and charm. They show Tennyson's lyrical gifts at their best; they will be read and enjoyed
as long as the English language and literature last.

Few poets have been so completely representatives of their times, have entered so fully into its moods, or have to such a degree, first moulded and then satisfied the tastes of their contemporaries as Alfred Tennyson. 'The Ode on the Death of Wellington' is the best specimen of a class of poems for which Tennyson was distinguished from first to last. As a poet of domestic politics he was never inspiring, but as a writer of patriotic verse, he is among the most distinguished of our poets, and this poem is among the best of its kind. Tennyson was a great patriot, and he glorified Victorian heroes like the Duke of Wellington, and there was no feeling he expressed more fervently than that of pride in England. He contrasted her stability with the fickleness of France. He was proud of her freedom slowly won and surely kept. Patriotic ballad like the Defence of Lucknow' is among the most prominent characteristics of his later volumes.

The Duke of Wellington died in the afternoon of September 14th, 1852, and Tennyson published his ode on the 18th, day of the Duke's funeral. in 1853, appeared a second edition, considerably altered; further changes were made when it was published again in 1885, in the 'Maud' volume. This poem is an eulogy on the life and works of the departed Duke. It is adorned with all the accessories of funeral pomp and national ceremony. Tennyson's great success in the
case of this poem is due to the fact first, that his heart is stirred by the sense that 'the last great Englishman is lost,'; and secondly, to the fact that he saw in Wellington an impersonation of all that he had admired in England. The picture he draws of the Duke is identical in its great features with that he had painted of the nation and it has the advantage of being concrete. "When the aged Duke of Wellington died who only three months before had been fighting to secure the enactment of the Militia Bill, Tennyson, who all his life had reverenced him as the saviour of Europe from the tyranny of Napoleon, composed this famous memorial ode, in which he defined, as he had done twenty years before, his conception of the true freedom:

"That sober freedom out of which there springs Our loyal passion for our temperate Kings, and once more warned the nation of the dangers of unpreparedness:

"Remember his who led you hosts; He bad you guard the sacred coasts. Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall, His voice is silent in your council hall For ever, and whatever tempests lour For ever silent, even if they broke In thunder silent, yet remember all He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke";

Within 18 months. Britain had drifted into war - not against the French, but in alliance with France against Russia - and, in spite of his warnings, lamentably unprepared ".

1. Tennyson's politics, from - Six Tennyson Essays' by sir Charles Tennyson, page - 52.
Like 'The Ode on the Death of Duke Wellington' another inspiring patriotic and political verse tale, published in 1880, was The Revenge. It is a tale of the courage and heroism of Sir Richard Grenville of Stow, in Cornwall, who was one of the most bold and adventurous spirits of the Elizabethan age. In 1585, he commanded Sir Walter Raleigh's seven ships to Virginia. He also fought in the Armada. In 1591, he was appointed vice-admiral of a squadron, fitted out for the purpose of intercepting a rich Spanish fleet from the West Indies. The enemy's convoy, however, surprised him at Flores and surrounded him in his single ship, The Revenge, the rest of the squadron having retired. The engagement lasted throughout the night, during which the Spaniards not withstanding their vast superiority, were driven off fifteen times. At length the greater part of the English crew were killed or wounded, the ship too was reduced to wreck, and no hope of rescue remained. Though Sir Richard was wounded, he refused to surrender. But ultimately the offers of quarter from the Spaniards induced him to yield. Sir Richard was taken on the board of the Spanish ship and honourably treated, but he died soon after.

In this verse tale Tennyson's deep and fervent love of his country is evident. It breathes the true spirit of courage and determination in the presence of danger. The very spirit of the Elizabethans is infused into the lines. The heroic exploits so characteristic of the age possess an
abiding fascination for us and Tennyson has admirably presented in this poem a realistic picture of Englishmen's cool courage amidst overwhelming odds, their love of adventure and their hatred of Spain. The artistic blending of romance with realism, the patriotic touches of a masterhand and the dignity of its rhyme have secured for the ballad a unique place in English literature.

This is a narrative poem. It is the story of the bravery of Sir Richard Grenville, and it is told vividly without much of description, having the spirit of a ballad proper. It is a splendid poem of action. It describes in a forceful and vigorous language, a great and valiant action. It makes us breathless and at the same time curious to know the result. The poem arouses our keen interest mainly because of the stoic heroism and patriotism of Sir Richard. He arouses our admiration and sympathy being a brave fearless leader of men who does not care even for life.

Tennyson remained, however, in the Keatsian 'Chamber of Maiden thought', intoxicated with its light and atmosphere, and content for the most part to express its pleasant wonders in melodic verse. Tennyson wrote 'The Vision of Sin' in 1839 after the exhibition of J.M.W. Turner's Fountain of Fallacy'. It provides an interesting contrast in presentation on the question of sense and spirit. Its subject is the expense of spirit in a waste of shame. This tale is 'most successful in conveying the whirling measure
of the sensual dance to which the youth who had proved too heavy for his winged steed succumbs, until cold, heavy mists of satiety close in on the palace of the specious fountain. God's 'awful rose of dawn' remains 'far withdrawn' and unheeded. Then, as if prophetically, another vision shows a lean grey man riding across a withered heath to a ruined inn, where he joins aged inmates in a festive 'hole - and - nob with Death'. Disillusioned and cynical, he scoffs at virtue, freedom, and utopianism, and suggests a danse macabre: 'Death is king, and Vivat Rex, Tread a measure on the stones, Madam - if I know your sex, from the fashion of your bones? No one understands the answer to the cry 'Is there any hope?' as God declares Himself in 'an awful rose of dawn' on the far glimmering horizon.

Like in "The Two Voices", and 'Locksley Hall', the doubts and hesitations are dramatized, explicitly or implicitly in 'The Vision of Sin'. There is a note of sardonic humour in this poem which like 'St Simeon Stylites' appeared in 1842.

"The gifts by which Tennyson has won, and will keep, his place among the great poets of England are preeminently those of an artist. His genius for vivid and musical expression was joined to severe self-restraint, and to patience which allowed nothing to go forth from him until it

had been refined to the utmost perfection that he was capable of giving to it. And this 'law of pure and flawless workmanship' (as Matthew Arnold defined the artistic quality in poetry) embraced far more than language: the same instinct controlled his composition in the larger sense, it is seen in the symmetry of each work as a whole, in due subordination of detail, in the distribution of light and shade, in the happy and discreet use of ornament. Pointed out in this connection: The crown has ben won, partly by the fact that Tennyson embalmed in exquisite verses the current tastes, greeds, hopes and sympathies of the larger part of the reading public in our age 'but mainly it was won by the supreme perfection of his form... His poetic style has faultless precision - musical, simple, and lucid. It was never uncouth, never careless and never obscure. Every line was polished with the same unerring ear and the same infallible taste'. Really, he had 'a reasonable good ear in music'. He could play with a master's touch upon the instrument of his verse - its vowels and consonants, rhythm and rhyme; and he could paint with a cunning hand the colour and form of what he saw. He is, indeed, of all our poets the greatest artist, working with infinite care and subtlety upon his canvas. Nearly all his poems like Ode to Wellington ode and Locksley Hall and others were revised with deliberation and the most painstaking thoroughness.
Tennyson's style has an epigrammatic terseness, finish and polish. Every word is carefully chosen and every phrase is well-chiselled. See the terseness-

'Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers.....
'Things seen are mighter than things heard'.

He is also the creator of such unforgotten similes;
(Tears idle Tears)

'Dear as remembered kisses after death;-'

Such beauties which occur in multitudes and literally make up the body of Tennyson's song.

He has 'the noble and genuine simplicity' which sometimes has' the air of being striven for". But sometimes the simplicity belongs to the profoundest passion of thought, the simplicity that possesses the poet like a divine urge:

"Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes
In looking on the happy autumn - field,
And thinking of the days that are no more...

Another characteristic of Tennyson's art is his avoidance of the commonplace. This tendency to avoid the commonplace is noticeable not only in separate words, but in the rendering of ideas, the blue smoke rising from household chimneys is described as "azure pillars of the hearth".
Tennyson was a great elegiac poet of England. He is at his best in the elegiac mood. The Lady of Shalott is a lovely, tragic figure, 'sick of shadows', living under a curse, and finally dying a tragic death. The hero of Locksley Hall is frustrated and embittered as a result of the faithlessness of the, 'Shallow-hearted 'Amy, and fulminates bitterly against womankind and against the times which seem to him out of joint. Tears Idle Tears expresses the tender melancholy, vague regrets and longings of a life lived without love. Any sad tragic event inspired him to song and he could write an immortal Ode even on the death of the Duke of Wellington.

Tennyson is one of the most musical of English poets. Wallace declares: 'In no English poet, perhaps only in Homer and Virgil, is the kinship of poetry and music so evident as in Tennyson'. Music and melody is created by the skilful use of sonorous and musical words, alliteration, concentration of vowel sounds by using monosyllabic words, and the use of liquid consonant 'I', 'm' and 'n'.

He could, however, use muted sounds with great effect – as, for example

He could, however, use muted sounds with great effect – as, for example, in the opening of the Wellington Ode:

Bury the great duke –
a line which Fitzgerald criticizes, saying that so
great a poem ought to have opened with broad sonorous
vowels. He did not realize that Tennyson deliberately used
the muted vowels to indicate the dull tramp of the funeral
cortege.

Tennyson often used his control of sound and rhythm for
more definite ends than the production of melody. The
famous example is the opening of the fourth stanza of 'The
change of the Light Brigade' where vowel sound, assonance
and rhythm combine vividly to picture the gleam and sweep of
the sword play.

'Flash'd all their sabres bare
Flash'd as they turn'd in air...

More subtle are the lines in the Wellington Ode
describing the fruitless French charges at Waterloo:

'Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foamed themselves away.

Perhaps the most brilliant descriptive use of rhythm,
vowel sound, assonance and alliteration is to be found in
the closing lines of 'The Revenge'.

When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from
sleep,
And the water began to leave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening - ended a great gale blow,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an
earthquake grew,
Till it smate on their hills and their sails and their
masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot shattered
navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags,
To be lost evermore in the main."
"Tennyson was a great Nature painter. He described Nature as she was to his own senses, as she appeared on the outside. He did it with extraordinary skill, observation, accuracy and magnificence. He did not conceive Nature as alive. He did not love nature as a Living Being, as Wordsworth did. As a poet of Nature, he is vivid, accurate, lively but cold" (Stopford Brooke).

"The background of his poems are always scenes or landscapes which he had himself visited; their foregrounds and their similes are drawn from the flowers that he himself had called.

Nature in Princess, is either ornamental, or used to intensify human emotion; but how excellent is the poet's work in either case:

"Not a thought, a touch,  
But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
Of the first snow drop's inner leaves.

This remarkable climax, following close on another, reminds us of,

'Chaste as the icicle  
That's curdied by the frost from purest snow,  
And hangs on Dian's temple".

Wallace comments on the passage "chaste as a cold, bright point of ice, not any ice, but ice curdied, not by any other agency, but by post, not from water, but from the melted snow; not any snow; but the purest; the purest of the pure, for it lay on the roof of the temple of the goddess of
chastity herself".

Like in *Princess*, the 'Locksley Hall' some of the nature pictures are noteworthy. They include 'orion sloping slowly to the west' and 'the pleiads, rising through the mellow shade'. There is an exquisite simile in the comparison of the pleiads with a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid.' The picture of the Spring which brings new odour and new feathers to the robin, the lapwing, and the dove is lovely. Another beautiful picture occurs when the speaker refers to the tropical land where he would like to settle down;

"Slides the bird o'er lustrous wood land, swings the trailer from the crag;
Droops the heavy — blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy — fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea".

The metaphor contained in lines 31-34 of the poem have deservedly been praised:

'Love look up the glass of Time, and turvid it in his glowing hands,
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands Love look up the harp of life, and smote on all the chord with might;
Smote the chord of self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.'

In fact Tennyson's poetry lives by its imaginary, and a number of felicitious poetic image are scattered all over the poem.
This poem has achieved immortality not for its depth of thought but for its cluster of golden phrases, and the sheer delight of imagery, diction, and cadence which it provides in such ample measure. A number of lines from the poem have passed into common, everyday household proverbs which also show the epigrammatic terseness of Tennyson's style.

"With the exception of Gray," says 'Grierson', English poetry had produced nothing since Milton that is so obviously the result of strenuous and unwearied pursuit of perfection of form". for examples ..

1) Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers
2) Woman is the lesser man
3) Not in vain the distance beacons.

Such lines 'ring and swing, they are firm, epigrammatic and memorable. They are a kind of lotus classics; 'what oft was thought in Victorian England but never so quotably expressed'. (J.B. Steane)

In Princess also we come across a number of such memorable lines:

1) The woman's cause is man's. they rise or sink together..."

2) "However you babble, great deeds can not die". and hundreds of others show Tennyson's artistic genius.

We enjoy the poem The Princess for its grace, melody, imagery, richness of colour, in short, for its many artistic excellencies. The Princess may be a medley, but this medley
includes a abundance of artistic beauties. There are many passages in The Princess that surpass line for line, almost any other poetic work of the same kind of any other writer in the language, and the whole poem is so replete with what is wise and good and graceful, that in this respect it may be compared with In Memoriam, but, as far as we are aware, with no other poem in English literature. "The Princess, a very unfortunate comparison for Pope; by the side of The Princess, the graceful form of Pope's famous poem satire, banality of fancy, insincerity of artifice, it is the perfection of pettiness. But in Tennyson even the fireworks of fancy flash against a moonlit heaven of imagination, and there is nothing in the Rape of the Lock. and surely again, there is nothing in all literature, that can approach such a delicate interweaving of the graceful and the grotesque as will be found in this poem: (Walllace)

Of gesture painting, the examples are admirable and abundant:

"Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.

Is one among a dozen such. All the songs are matchless. "Certainly as hinted above, the poet's thoughts sometimes appear over-dressed; and remind us of certain photographs in which the finery and not the person makes the picture. But on this very account of excess of ornament the poem offers the best material extent for the student of literary art.".
Tennyson was a great metrical artist who experimented with, and used with complete mastery, a number of meters and verse forms. The use of a great variety of rhythm and metre in the volumes of 1830 and 1842 show as if he had mastered the principles of English prosody. *Locksley Hall* is a long poem in trochaic (falling) rhythm, with a line of eight feet (sixteen syllables normally). This was the first trochaic poem of importance that Tennyson had published until 1842 and it has been criticized for the excessive rigidity of its rhythm. But this rigidity was intentional as this poem is an impassioned and hysterical protest against the social and spiritual conditions of that day spoken by a love-stricken young man. It has to be read at a rattling pace and with the maximum of dramatic expression. According to Alfred Lyall: "As a composition, it (Locksley Hall) has great original merit: the even current of blank verse is put aside for a swinging metre, new in English poetry, with rhymed couplets, passionate and picturesque, which follow one another like waves, and the long nervous lines sustain the rise and fall of varying moods."

The form and the metre of *Revenge* are best suited to its subject matter. The metre is very rapid and light. Its internal rhymes (Spanish ships of war at sea! We have sighted fifty three) add force to it. In this way the action is considerably helped by the metre and the rhythm of the poem.
After 1855, Revenge is metrically the most interesting. In this poem, lines of seven, six and five feet are used. It is written in Lincolnshire dialect. In Revenge and Defence of Lucknow one can not help recognising the skill of the versification.

In Wellington Ode, Tennyson put into practice what he had learned through his early experiment in 'The Hesperides' and 'Ilion, Ilion'. This poem is just as truly melodic as either of the earlier poems, but it has a more coherent form, so that interest and emotion are concentrated instead of being dispersed and distracted. But the form is exceedingly free. The poem is composed of nine sections of very unequal length, the longest comprising 77 lines, the shortest only 5. The metre is iambic, occasionally varied with anapaests and sometimes given a trochaic quality by the inversion of the first foot (in Section V the words 'Let the bell be toll'd must be read with three beats to suggest the sound of the bell) and the lines vary in length from three to five feet. The use of vowel sound and rhyme is exceedingly skilful and varied. The melodic line is freely and beautifully varied to express the emotions of the poem, and the musical form is emphasized by what one may call the Handelian close of Sections V, VI and VIII.

1. Tennyson used to emphasize the melodic nature of the by the way in which he chanted it when reading it aloud. certain passages he would suddenly raise the pitch of his vo several note with surprising effect, e.g.; Section-II, 'we shall we lay the man whom we deplore' to the end of the sectl and the last five lines of Section-IV "O fall'n at length", et
Tennyson was a master of dignified, often stately compliment. This ode is the supreme instance of this mystery. It is not only a model of its kind, but it ranks with Milton's Lycidas and Shelley's Adonais among the great elegies of the English Language. Despite the apparent irregularity of metre and rhyme, the four of the 'Ode' is firm, and 'precisely integrated with the subject. The shape of the poem is moulded to the progress of the funeral procession and service, with the attendant rituals of the tolling of bells and the firing of cannon, and its unity is further strengthened by the pattering of sound and rhythm achieved especially by the constant recurrence of particular sounds, words, and even whole lines. Tennyson is perhaps most consistently at his best in the elegiac mood which dominates this ode'.

J.B. Steane writes,

"The Ode is strong and eloquent. The plain but sonorous style has a certain massive authority, and the solemn, measured rhythm, heavy like a dead march, is also appropriate and impressive. So the first lines,

"Bury the Greak Duke
With an empire's lamentation"

have a boldness of attack, and a rightness of feeling for a great national occasion. The last lines, too, ring with depth and finality.

1. 'Introduction' from "Tennyson - New Oxford English Series" Page - 40
"Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him,  
God accept him, Christ receive him!"."

The movement in this poem is quickened or slowed down in harmony with thought and matter.

Half of Tennyson's total output is written in blank-verse. The normal blank verse line is composed of five iambic feet, which make ten syllables in all.

Tennyson's blank verse is esteemed for its amazing flexibility, its power of achieving, through rhythm and vowel music, a lyrical, singing quality which no other poet has attained in the same degree. The most striking examples of all are the blank verse lyrics in The Princess. These short poems are so lyrical in quality that few realize that they are written in blank verse. They are - 'Tears, Idle Tears' in Cant IV, 'Our enemies have fallen' in Canto VI, and 'Now sleeps the crimson petal', 'come down, O Maid' in Canto VII. It is the flexibility of Tennyson's verse and his varied control of rhythm that enabled him to use metre successfully for the comedy, drama and burlesque of The Princess. Again "Tennyson's delicate ear enabled him to enhance his verse with innumerable felicities of detail, creating, by subtle variations of rhythm and vowel sound, mental and sensual images to reinforce the literal meaning of his words. Countless examples of such felicity can be found in The Princess:
"...............sound the lake
A little clockwork steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies....(Prologue)

"The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty elm
Made noise of bees and breeze from end to end ".
(Prologue)

Thus after analysing these verse tales artistically, we come to the conclusion that Tennyson was a consummate artist. He polished and repolished his verses, till near perfection was reached. His style is marked by sincerity, clarity, lucidity and simplicity. His language is uniformly excellent. His diction has sublimity, dignity and stateliness about it. His imagery, similes and metaphors, words and phrases, are original and apt. Every word is carefully chosen both with reference to its sense and sound, and in this way his diction has become melodious and musical. There is no English poet who can set before us more clearly and more concisely the essential features of a scene or landscape. A perfect artist by gift and temperament, he commands a poetic technique remarkable for its perfect modulation of rhythm, its mastery over vowel-music and consonantal effects.

Tennyson, got much popularity on the basis of his political and social verse tales which are highly esteemed for their thought and emotional content, their literary and artistic excellence. And it is also on the basis of such

1. 'Tennyson's verification' from 'Six Tennyson Essays' by 'Sir Charles Tennyson' p-144-149.
political and social poems e.g. Locksley Hall, Princess, Revenge, Wellington Ode, and others that a number of critics regarded Tennyson as a philosopher and seer, the supreme interpreter of his age, 'the Great voice of Victorian England.

His Locksley Hall is full of the restless spirit of 'young England' and of its faith in science, commerce, and the progress of mankind. It has been highly praised by one critic after another. Morton Luce regards it as the central poem in the volume poems 1842, compares it with Maud and writes: "There is the same outcry in each against almost exactly the same social abuses; there is the same consideration of the possible benefits of commerce: of the more possible benefits of war; of patriotism as the moving spring of noble life". A glorious tribute has been paid to the poem by Alfred Lyall:"The great and lasting success of Locksley Hall shows the power of genius in presenting an ordinary situation poetically; how it can kindle up and transform common emotion, dealing boldly with the facts and feelings of every day life. As a composition, it has great original merit.

In the Princess the poet grapples with one of the rising questions of the day - that of the higher education of women and their place in the fast-changing conditions of modern society. There is a healthy progressive note in this poem. John Killham in his most informative study,
Tennyson and The Princess, makes out an excellent case for his view that "The Princess", properly understood, is a vivid reflection of an age. What we have is, I think, more rare; a glimpse of the aspirations of the age in the colours in which they presented themselves to a truly poetic imagination". An unidentified commentator wrote about the merits of Princess "Seldom has a poem owed so much to contemporary literary doctrine".

George Saintsbury also expresses his view about Princess: "It is the consummate expression of Tennyson's mastery in blank verse and is one of the most charming, if not one of the greatest poems in English. The exceedingly difficult kind of the playfully - romantic, if not mock-heroic, in which it is written, is not universally relished. It is too serious for some, not serious enough for others, and prejudices of various sorts have interfered with its reception. "But it is as much as the head of its own division of poetry on the romantic side as The Rape of the Lock is on the classical, and it has appeals which are unknown to Pope's glittering little masterpiece." The opinions of the above and hundred other critics show the immense popularity of the Princess, a social verse tale, and how much it was liked by the public as well as the critics. This verse tale won the hearts of the female class and made them aware of their rights.

In Revenge and Wellington Ode Tennyson tried to stir the patriotic feelings of the English men by tributing highly to great English warriors. It is the staunch patriotism of Tennyson inflected in these verse tales that he became popular as a patriotic poet.

In this way politically and socially Tennyson stands out as the poetic exponent of the cautious spirit of Victorian liberalism. His poetry becomes the vehicle of spreading democratic sympathies of Victorian England. It is historically interesting as reflecting the social and political trends of his age.

Tennyson's above mentioned verse tales became popular not only because of the fact that they are the reflection of Victorian England but also because of the artistic merits. Tennyson's artistry is at its best in these poems. So long as pure beauty has power to move, so long as it draws its materials from tone and rhythm and its principles from a wise organisation and control, so long will Tennyson take high rank among the great craftsmen of language.

Thus, indeed, the high thought and emotional content as well as the literary and artistic excellence of the above social and political verse tales made Tennyson so popular among the Victorian English people as a national figure that he was made The Poet Laureate in 1850. In fact, he has never ceased to be widely read, quoted, and admired, his
poems has always had on steady sale, and in recent years critical appreciation of his work has been steadily growing.