CHAPTER - III

(A)

PATMORE'S CONCEPT OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Not unlike most of the Victorians, Patmore believed in the domesticity of love - a note that permeates the whole of *The Angel in the House*. So Patmore has rightly been called the 'Laureate of Wedded Love'.¹ He pursued the theme of love all through his life. It might almost be said that he pursued it as a 'hound of Heaven'. There are few others English poets who, from beginning to end, sing so much in praise of love. There have been quite a good number of love-poets, who have celebrated the passion, the freshness and the delirium of love but very few have derived so much lyrical inspiration from married-love as Patmore did. We have already seen that Patmore's belief in the efficacy of law and limitation led him to recognise wedded-love as the true source of joy and happiness in domestic life. Deeply religious, Patmore had a hatred

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for the type of love which had inspired Don Juan of Seville. Being a realist, he declared himself to be not the poet of passion in the abstract but of love purified and sanctified by nuptial bonds. Thus, for Patmore love is only worth consideration or fit for imaginative contemplation only when it is married love, that is, the love that exists between married partners and which has been legalised by the Church and the State. Patmore thought that he had discovered an inexhaustible mine of poetic inspiration in married love though he knew too well that other poets had looked askance at it and rejected it on the ground that this type of love was unsuitable for poetry because of its ordinariness. But for Patmore this was, 'the first of themes, sung last of all'.

In her *Memoirs of Victorian London* (1912), the novelist, Mrs. L.B. Walford, wrote of an afternoon call by Patmore in July 1887, and represents him as saying to her:

"..... what grew upon me was the conviction that though poets from all time had sung of love, the object of that love was always the Siren woman, or the Fairy woman or some lovely creature of that kind - but not the woman as woman - not the Inspirer and Beautifier of daily life, not the Presiding Deity of the Home. That was what I longed to depict, and all stones I felt the power to do it".

2. As quoted in the *Notes and Queries*, February 13, 1943, pp.105-106.
From the above lines it is clear what Patmore's aim was.

The *Angel in the House* is an attempt to show that the ordinary is in some indefinable way made extra-ordinary because of the presence of love. Patmore knew that this particular character of nuptial love had scarcely received due attention from other poets or had hardly been adequately expressed in English verse. In the case of Robert Browning it may be said that in one or two brief pieces he tried to write lyric poetry on the theme of married love but, as a certain critic points out, "even his great poem, *The Ring and The Book*, although it is dedicated to, and intended to enshrine, the memory of his dead wife, his 'lyric love', presents a spiritualised and abstract love."\(^3\)

Patmore's approach to love and marriage is most realistic. Unlike Browning, he could not pin his faith on abstract notions of love. He had great respect for Plato but the latter's treatment of love seemed to him unrealistic. Plato's adoration of ideal beauty with total disregard of the body wherein that beauty is found, was not liked by Patmore. Patmore always viewed love with an idealism of his own but the soaring abstraction of Platonic love did not appeal to him. In the following lines we find Patmore clearly stating his

\(^3\) J.C. Reid, op. cit., p.151
realistic and idealistic conception of love while rejecting Platonic love and the too much 'earthiness' of 'Anacreon's love:

I saw three Cupids (so I dream'd),
Who made three kites, on which were drawn,
In letters that like roses gleam'd
'Plato', 'Anacreon', and 'Vaughan',
The boy who held by Plato tried
His airy venture first; all sail,
It heav'nward rush'd till scarce descried
Then pitch'd and dropp'd for want of tail,
Anacreon's Love, with shouts of mirth
That pride of spirit thus should fall,
To his kite link'd a lump of earth,
And, lo, it would not soar at all,
Last, my disciple freighted his
With a long streamer made of flowers,
The children of the sod, and this
Rose in the sun, and flew for hours.

- A.H., II, i : "The Kites"

For Patmore marriage is no negation of love but its fulfilment in the truer and higher sense. It may be surmised that for similar reasons of abstraction and vagueness Patmore could not accept Dante's treatment of love in the *Divina Commedia*. As J.C. Reid remarks:

"......The Italian poet's idealisation of women did not suit the more pragmatic mind of Patmore, who was, after all, mainly concerned with marriage, and not with an idealised Beatrice unattainable in this life."

4. Gosse aptly remarks that 'Patmore loathed and rejected the scholastic theory that marriage is nothing but a *remedium amoris*, a compromise with frailty, a best way of getting out of a bad business'. *(Coventry Patmore, p.99).*

5. The mind and Art of Coventry Patmore, p.111.
Patmore's Honoria is a completely human being and a wife. Dante's Beatrice was something more, but also for more ordinary purposes something less, than a woman rooted in daily realities of life. Patmore revealed the detail and the background in which Honoria and her poet-husband loved and lived, thus making her more realistic than a Beatrice.

It has been the constant aim of Patmore to emphasise that love has its germination in the bosoms of men and women but its growth and flowering is secured in the congenial soil of married life. Nothing abstract or vague had any value for Patmore, whether in love or in religion. His conception of love is based on the actual experiences of his married life. The happiness that he enjoyed in his own married life made him certain that "Love is rooted deeper in the earth than any other passion; and for that cause its head, like that of the Tree Igdrasil, soars higher into Heaven".6 This conviction made him the poet of married-love.

Yet, it has been a literary fashion to mock at the common-placeness of the Angle in the House. The Athenaeum parodied it and a certain Mr. Chorley wrote in the pages of the same magazine that he found in the

poem nothing more than "a tale not very wise about a Person and a Spouse"\textsuperscript{7}; while Arthur Symons alluded to the "dinnertable domesticities of the Angel in the House".\textsuperscript{8} We, however, contend that in subject-matter Patmore's poem is singularly original. To think that the poem is merely a novellette in verse is to misunderstand it. For there is something more in it. Many earlier poets had tried to depict the passion of love, its fever, its uncertainties, its tendency to break away from the restraints of law but Patmore tried to show that the real happiness and joy of human life and the fulfilment of all human passion can be achieved within the limits prescribed by Christian marriage. In other words, Patmore tells us that the story can be trivial, that poetry can describe the common place and that in the daily experiences of married life there can be found enough material for poetry. His aim is to show that marriage is a proper climax of love because marriage is Order and therefore has the consent of God. So, the properflowering of love can only be possible in married life. Love increases rather than decreases with the years of married life. Thus, married love which seemed to be most ordinary,

\textsuperscript{7} As quoted by F.L. Lucas in \textit{Ten Victorian Poets}, (Cambridge University Press, 1940). p.89.

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Figures of Several Centuries}, (Constable, 1916), p. 364.
colourless and without any variety to most people, got a novel treatment in the hands of Patmore. The seeming ordinariness of marital love presented no difficulty to Patmore and it was round this that he built up his philosophy of love.

In an age when poetry sang of the wonders of nature, and became wild with ecstasy, Patmore came along with his narrative, and simply made poetry tell a story. If Wordsworth could tell us of the common little experiences of human life and weave poetry out of them, Patmore could also show that so small an incident as a note received from the Deanery (in the A.H. Book I) had just as much right to be expressed in poetry. He was never afraid of the common place; it was rather one of his merits in an age which erred towards grandiloquence. It was not that he was unaware of what was banal; but his defiance led him to emphasise it, and he wooed the commonplace as ardently as other sought out the exotic.

Like all true Catholics, Patmore believed that marriage was no more domestic excursion but a sacrament. This was not the outcome of any theological dogma but of his personal conviction and experience. We agree with Edmund Gosse when he says that "Patmore's transcendental adoration of weeded love was originally
neither a rule of theology nor an argument of morals, but was a symptom of purely individual lyricism. His notion of love in Marriage was not inculcated by any priestly or puritanical scruple". On the other hand, it is an expression of his personal intuition that there is a correlation between marriage and poetry. He thought that marriage could be the subject of poetry while the latter could suitably be employed to interpret the former. He was an orthodox Christian thinker about marriage and his whole poetry bears a strong witness to this fact. In poetising on marriage Patmore comes into line with Catholic thought and demands the absolute indissolubility of the married state. He is certain that it is God himself who binds the couple together in marriage and it follows then that this divine pact should not be broken by man. In the following lines he puts forward his Catholic standpoint:

Can ought compared with wedlock be
For use? But He who made the heart
To use proportions joy. What he Has join'd let no man put apart.

In marriage he sees the proper climax of love. He is poles apart from those thinkers who thought love in itself so exquisite that marriage must necessarily

9. Coventry Patmore, p. 39
10. Angel in the House, Book II, Canto VII: 'Joy and Use'.
destroy it. He is not in sympathy with the position of Schopenhauer who holds that since love as a deception practised by nature, marriage is the attrition of love, and must be disillusioning. Nor would he have agreed with Shaw's remarks that "marriage is the most licentious of human institutions...that is the secret of its popularity". On the contrary, Patmore thinks that in a true marriage there is a permanent union of the mind, heart and body which alone can guarantee the bliss as well as the freedom of love. In his outlook on the true nature of love and marriage, Patmore seems to echo the oft-quoted lines of Shakespeare:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds.

Marriage, then, for Patmore is not a 'sop to man's concupiscence', tolerable only because it helps to regularise procreation. He has a nobler conception of love and marriage. It does not, however, mean that Patmore dismisses the idea of procreation in a marriage. He thinks that the procreation of children adds momentum to family life. The presence of children

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11. 'Schopenhauer', Ch.VII of The Story of Philosophy, pp.319-320.
12. Man and Superman
13. Sonnet, No.CXVI.
strengthens the bond of man and wife. In the 'Wedding Sermon' he writes:

babies, chief front
of union..............
Love's self the noblest offspring is,
And sanction of the nuptial kiss.

On the other hand he does not fail to emphasise the sacredness of the body the purity of sexual love in marriage. This emphasis underlines all through the Angel in the House. But when it was openly and nakedly expressed in the odes, the readers, who had enjoyed the domesticity of the earlier poem, were shocked. This was not surprising because the conventional middle-class Victorian attitude towards marriage was complacent with its evasions on the problem of sex. "To the average Victorian husband", writes Harold Nicolson, "marriage came as the ultimate solution, the ultimate 'hushing-up' of what might not have been a self-indulgent youth". 14

Marriage, according to Patmore, is not a mere chain upon love as the anarchists say. Marriage is a fact, an actual human relation like that of motherhood which has certain human habits and loyalties. It is something more. The love that exists between the married partners is analogous to the love that exists

14. Tennyson, p.251
between God and the human Soul. Natural love (or earthly love) is the precursor of the Divine love as St. John the Baptist is the precursor of Jesus Christ. The love and attraction of the soul for God, and of God for the soul, expressed in terms of love between man and woman is in the Catholic tradition. It is a mode of expression characteristic of the great mystics of the Catholic Church, especially in the Middle Ages, and we find a good deal of it in the earlier mystical writers. Patmore's distinction as a poet of love lies in the fact that he maintains a dignified attitude towards wedded love and uses it boldly to symbolize the love between Christ and the Soul. He made the act of marriage the rehearsal of the union between God and soul.

In one of the preludes of the Angel entitled 'The Nursling of Civility', Patmore tells us that love, and more especially married-love has a civilising power over mankind. Love, Patmore thinks, is 'the nursling of civility' and it is at the base of all human perfection leading to a refinement in taste and behaviour which distinguishes a civilized person from a savage. It is love that binds man and wife together for life. In the

15. cf., "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural" - I. Corinthians, Ch.XV, 46.

family love acts as a cementing force. The ideal society consists of persons animated and united by the spirit of love, each seeking the good of all and all of each. While hatred has a fatal power of division, love is the bond of perfectness. The relation between husband and wife becomes stronger and more stable in proportion as they are welded together by a true feeling of love which is the law of the kingdom of Heaven. 17

In the above lines we have seen what Patmore's aim as a poet of love was. Patmore has given us a complete philosophy of love. His attitude to love and marriage becomes still more clear when we come to know with what psychological insight and subtlety he treats of the relationship of husband and wife and what according to him, are the foremost duties and responsibilities of each sex for ensuring a happy and successful marriage.

17 c f. "Love rules the court, the camp the grove, And men below, and saints above; For love is heaven, and heaven is love". (Scott: 'Love of the Last Minstrel', iii, ii, 5-7).
Patmore asserts, it is very essential that both the partners in a marriage should be inspired by a spirit of mutual sacrifice. Through mutual sacrifice the lovers come closer to each other. Felix the poet husband of Honoria, realises that love develops through mutual sacrifice and so he determines to live not for myself but her'. He knows that sacrifice and a somewhat self-effacing attitude are essential to keep love in its proper place. And so his ideal is:

I for my epitaph would take
To serve seem'd more than to possess'.
And I perceiv'd (the vision sweet
Dimming with happy dew mine eyes),
That love and joy are torches lit
From alter-fires of sacrifice

Love thrives at the alter of sacrifice.

Patmore knows that for keeping the bliss of married-love at its height the part played by reverence and awe is also of great importance. For him 'intimacy in love is nought without pure reverence'. No doubt, the relation between husband and wife should be very cordial and familiar. Yet much of the charm of married life consists in a proper blending of excessive awe.'

18. 'The Epitaph', Angel in the House, II.X, p.193
and 'excessive familiarity'. Patmore thinks that though marriage is a sacrament, it has its own mystery. The sacramental nature of marriage convinces him of the necessity of reverence in a marriage. But at the same time he believes that too much familiarity between the lovers may minimise the mystery of love. The lover is always happy to enact the role of an explorer in the sea of love. Each new discovery in his beloved happily startles him. Thus, he is always trying to reach at the heart of the mystery. On the other hand, the presence of only reverence and awe, Patmore apprehends, may mar the happiness of married life. Too much reverence may result in an idealisation of the object of love and may dampen the warmth of love. What, then, should be the proper relation between the husband and wife? Patmore believes that for a successful married life a balance must be maintained between the two extremes of reverence and familiarity.

In brief, then, ceremonies of love, mutual respect and courtesy on both sides, a 'great and gracious way' of acknowledging each other's personality, a spirit of sacrifice in order to adjust each other's ego—these are, according to Patmore, the minimum requirements for the success of an average marriage. To a great extent, these provide the essential theme of the Angel in the House.
So much about the requirements of a happy and successful married life. Now a word about the part initiative plays in the love-pursuit. It had become a fixed belief, in the Western world at least, that men always 'ran after' women, never women after men unless, of course, they were immoral and worthless women. Outwardly, it seems that the man is the pursuer and the woman, the pursued. This notion is largely due to the fact that in a conventional courtship, it is the man who proposes and not the woman. Moreover, in every society much value is attached to woman's modesty which prohibits her to openly express her love. But Patmore tells us that both man and woman take equally active part in the pursuit both before and after the marriage. It is not only the man who pursues the woman but also the woman who pursues the man though in a more subtle way. Patmore's treatment of love, in this case is psychological. In one of his preludes entitled 'The Chace', Patmore tells us very skillfully how a woman adopts clever methods in her pursuit. The poem opens with the silent storming of a girl's heart before she falls in love and is married. Speaking of her mood the poet tells us that she is much worried and is longing for love:

_____________________________
She's told that maidens are by youths
Extremely honour'd and desired;
And sighs, If those sweet tales be truths,
'What bliss to be so much admired.19

But, she is somewhat afraid and the future appears to
her 'dim with vague alarms'. For a while she is
bewildered by her lover as:

He comes about her like a mist,
With subtle, swift, unseen increase;
And then, unlook'd for, strikes amain
Some stroke that frightens her to death,
And grows all harmlessness again,
Ere she can cry, or get her breath.20

Nevertheless, she is gradually attracted
towards the man and is ultimately won by him.
Now she herself advances in a most subtle
manner and with the help of her 'hidden
art'she fulfils her aim:

By secret, sweet degrees, her heart,
Vanquish'd, takes warmth from his desire;
She makes it more, with hidden art,
And fuels love's late dreaded fire.21

Patmore tells us that the women is so skilful that even
after she is won, she feigns to retreat and fly from
her lover so that
Should she be won,
It must not be believed or thought
She yields.22

20. Ibid., p.132
21. 'The Chace', Angel in the House, I, XII, p.133
22. Ibid., p.134.
The prelude 'In Love' shows in some detail how the woman employs her subtle and captivating arts to win her man. Even after his capture, it remains a mystery to the man as to how 'without his knowledge he was won'. If he tries, he will not be able to understand it because she will never divulge her secret to him. The married-lover may go on wondering and

If, sudden, he suspects her wiles,
And hears her forging chain and trap,
And looks, she sits in simple smiles,
Her two hands lying in her lap.²³

Thus, it is clear that in Patmore's view both the man and the woman are equally active in their love pursuit. It is simply due to woman's subtlety and tact that her pursuit remains unobserved while the man appears to be more active in courting the woman whom he ultimately marries.

Now this love-pursuit, Patmore argues, does not end with marriage. Though the lover has won the woman sought for, he feels that there is something more to be attained. He feels that there is something in

²³ 'In Love', Angel in the House, II, VIII, p.181
It is interesting to find that the 'woman's method of pursuit' as detailed in the above lines much resembles the stage projection of the tragicomic love chase of the man by the woman in Shaw's Man and Superman. Like Patmore, Shaw also makes his heroine Ann Whitefield, the pursuer and the here, John Tanner, the pursued. Evidently, Shaw's aim is to show that in a marriage woman is a more conscious agent than

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marriage which 'spirit-like eludes embrace'. So, it is the constant endeavour of the lover to reach at the heart of the mystery. Patmore's married lover realises that with marriage wooing does not cease and so asks: 'Why, having on her, do I woo?\textsuperscript{24} To this question the lover answers himself:

Because her spirit's vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
But, spirit-like, eludes embrace;

and further

Because, though free of the outer court
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
Sacred to Heaven; because, in short,
She's not and never can be mine.\textsuperscript{25}

Patmore puts the matter thus:

He meets, by heavenly chance express,
The destined maid; some hidden hand
Unveils to him that loveliness
Which others cannot understand.\textsuperscript{26}

(from previous page):

the man and that woman disposes along time before the man proposes. It should, however, be remembered that Patmore no where in the poem shows the woman as a liar or a cheat. But, in the words of Chesterton, While Shaw makes Anne, the woman who marries his hero, a really powerful and convincing woman, he can only do it by making her a highly objectionable woman... She is a liar; she has no truth or magnanimity in her'. (George Bernard Shaw, Published in Guild Series, 1949, p.91).

24. 'The Married Lover', Angel in the House, II, XII, p.201.
25. Ibid.
That is, Patmore tells us of the special, not to say divine relationship, that exists between two lovers, a relationship at once brought about by some mystical power, 'some hidden hand'. It is extremely important to notice this movement from 'some hidden hand' for it explains that analogy of the human with the divine, which is so much a part of the Patmore philosophy.

For Patmore, as we have already noted above, marriage is not an end of love. The delight of married life increases rather than decreases with years. Patmore thinks that the mystery of never-ending, never-satisfied pursuit of love in a marriage assures the continuance of love and its increase. So, Felix Vaughan, even after ten years of his marriage with Honoria, feels fresh in his ardour towards her:

Ten years today has she been his.
He but begins to understand,
He says, the dignity and bliss
She gave him when she gave her hand.27

Above all, Patmore believes that the success of marriage depends upon unflinching fidelity and loyalty of both the husband and wife to their marriage vows. The conjugal love and happiness largely depend upon fidelity. Patmore lays great emphasis on the

importance of faith and fidelity and his 'happy husband' is he

Who, scanning his unwedded life,
Thanks Heaven, with a conscience free,
'Twas faithful to his future wife.28

This, naturally, led Patmore to consider the two common types of marriage, one, in which marriage takes place after an experience of ante-nuptial love; and the other, in which there has been no prior love. In the former case the lover is irresistibly drawn towards the 'destined maid' and love compels him to marry the woman. The lover sees in his loved one that uniqueness that only he sees and understands.

Verily, choice not matters much
If but the woman's truly such,
And the young man has led the life
Without which how shall e'er the wife
Be the one woman in the world?29

Patmore fully develops this idea in The Victories of Love which forms the sequel to The Angel. Frederick, the rejected lover of Honoria, marries Jane who is the humble daughter of a chaplain. She is much below the expectation of her husband as, compared to Honoria, she has less refinement of manners. Yet Frederick

28. 'Prospective Faith', Angel in the House, I.V. p.91.
reconciles himself to this marriage:

Remember, few wed whom they would.
And this, like all God's laws, is good. 30

Finally, however, this ill-matched pair finds happiness in the unity of married life and through adversity resulting from the death of two of their children. Frederick is also convinced that through faithfulness married life becomes happier for he says that:

he whose daily life
Adjusts itself to one true wife,
Grows to a nuptial, near degree
With all that's fair and womanly. 31

Evidently, Patmore believed that the security of married life is to be found in the permanence of nuptial ties. Moreover for Patmore, as we shall see later, the earthly marriage was nothing but a rehearsal of the divine conjunction between God and Soul. This mystical significance of marriage convinced Patmore of the immortality of love even after death. In one of her letters to Frederick, Jane discusses the immortality of love, and tells Frederick that love without immortality is a mockery. It is no wonder, therefore, that Patmore should consider easy divorce as 'the vulgar solution' for unhappy marriages. 'To Patmore', as Shane Leslie

30. Ibid., p.335
points out, 'modern divorce would have appeared a
tearing of the garment which is without seem'.32 One
of Patmore's aphorisms in the Rod, Root and Flower
touchs this question :

'Love is a recent discovery and re­
quires a new law. Easy divorce is
the vultar solution. The true
solution is some undiscovered
security for true marriage.33

Patmore thought that some solution was necessary so
that Love might not be trampled upon by an inharmonious
pair. And he found the solution in a realisation of the
permanent nature of the union obtained through the
sacraments of a marriage. Patmore's point of view is in
sharp contrast to that of Bernard Shaw. It is one of
the cardinal doctrines of Shavianism that marriage as
an institution will be tolerable only if men and women
are rendered economically independent of each other and
if divorce is made easy, cheap and honourable.34
Unlike Patmore, Shaw finds in divorce the best and the
easiest solution for unhappy marriages :

'It is clear', Shaw writes, 'that no
marriage is any longer indissoluble;
and the sensible thing to do then is
to grant divorce whenever it is
desired without asking why'.35

33. Rod, Root and Flower, p.51
34. S.C. Sen Gupta, The Art of Bernard Shaw, p.66
35. Getting Married.
It may be argued by many that the Shavian view of marriage and divorce is more workable than Patmore's. The woman who is suffering from the infidelity or the cruelty of her husband is unlikely to be moved by the consideration that her marriage is a symbol of the relationship between God and Soul, or may even despair of a heaven which so much resembles what to her has become a hell. They may point out that no man or woman can create an enduring marriage, for the simple reason that the husband or the wife at any moment may walk out of the house never to return. This is a common experience in many countries of the West and in America where the state of matrimony is not always a united one. We admit that the peril is there but marriage survives all the same.

Thus, it is clear that from Patmore's point of view divorce is not the proper solution of unhappy marriages. Divorce may help to secure separation for the unhappy husband or wife from each other but it certainly does not remove the ills that cause disharmony between them. Patmore's view is essentially optimistic. It is no little achievement of Patmore that he could keep a sane outlook on life and we, who live in this 'difficult and very faithless twentieth century' cannot do better than ponder over its truth. It has been rightly observed by Patrick Braybrooke that
Patmore gave his allegiance to the Catholic Church because he could see that in her man could adhere to the real optimism, the optimism of the man who knows that his relationship to God is as intimate as that of a husband and wife.36

Patmore became increasingly aware of the interdependence of marriage and virginity. In fact, his conception of chastity and virginity was closely related to his idea of marriage. He believed that the nature of virginity in marriage consisted in the proper disposition and control of lust. It may be surmised that the teaching of Swedenborg on the chastity of the married state might have greatly influenced Patmore's mind. Although the Catholic Church imposes celibacy upon the clergy, Patmore, however, takes a somewhat generous view of it. This was not unnatural for a poet to whom marriage was so full of bliss and holiness that celibacy must have appeared to him as an inferior state of human life. Of course, he never attacks celibacy either in his verse or in his prose. Yet it is clear from his writings that he has no sympathy with the Manicheans who have a hateful distrust of the physical side of marriage. Patmore's contention in that even in

36. Patrick Braybrook, Some Victorian and Georgian Catholics: Their Art and Outlook, (Burns Oates, 1932), p.20
the married state purity and virginity can be maintained if there is pure love between the husband and the wife. And this purity of married love depends on a proper control of passion. In the Wedding Sermon Patmore tells us:

Love's in most nuptial sweetness see
In the doctrine of virginity;

Thus, virginity is a part of all pure love, whether this love is between a husband and wife or between the human soul and God.

Patmore's belief in chastity in marriage irritated many of his contemporaries who thought that by celebrating the delights of marriage on the one hand and trying to uphold a scheme of virginity in marriage on the other, Patmore had made himself ridiculous. Aubrey de Vere even advised Patmore to suppress the 'Payche' odes which nakedly deal with the divine love in the metaphor of human love. There are others who criticise those portions of Angel in the House which celebrate the delights of marriage. For instance, Professor Fairchild somewhat cynically argues that 'Virgin marriage between two persons who are capable of performing the sexual act and who intensely yearn to do so is psychologically, morally, and spiritually perverse'. 37 It seems that Fairchild is unable to

accept the sanity of Patmore's doctrine of purity and virginity in marriage. Fairchild's conclusion is that Patmore's deepest spiritual message is inconsistent with what he (Patmore) often says. We thing that Fairchild's criticism is hardly fair. We further fail to understand how Housman (whom Professor Fairchild quotes in his book) calls Patmore's treatment of human and divine love as a 'nasty mixture of piety and concupiscence'. Houseman's criticism may be attributed to his celebacy or puritanism. We, however, feel that there is hardly anything 'nasty' in Patmore's treatment of love.

Patmore believes that proper control of physical passion and subordination of the will enhance the purity of married love and it is only through this purity that one can 'Pursue the contemplative way of the divine nuptial'. According to Patmore it is, therefore, necessary that purity and virginity should be striven at by the married partners. Thus, we see that Patmore's emphasis on virginity in marriage is not at all 'puzzling' as has been alleged by Fairchild. Patmore does not hesitate to proclaim that:


39. Ibid., p.317
Love makes the life to be
A fount perpetual of virginity\textsuperscript{40}

Patmore's idea of virginity in marriage is strengthened by the idea of Aquinas to whom marital act can be an act of virtue provided there is a proper disposition and control of lust. In one of the odes of the Unknown Eros entitled 'The Contract' Patmore tells us that the sin of Adam and Eve was the 'loss of a right attitude towards their desires'. The poem also suggests that through proper restraints man may increase his spiritual powers. The spiritual strength that man attains from a voluntary renunciation of sexual acts gives rise to the purity and virginity of mind which are essential in all love, whether physical or divine. In other words, Patmore's contention is that although marriage offers to man enough opportunities for sexual acts, man must exercise his control over his passion and sublimate it, in order to enjoy higher love. If, we read The Angel in the House carefully, especially the brilliant and elaborate section entitled "The Espousals", we will not with admiration the skill with which Patmore develops the progress of the passion. And when we read the odes of The Unknown Eros, we realise how the poet endeavours to sublimate this earthly passion to the level of the divine. What raises

\textsuperscript{40} 'Deliciae Sapientiae De Amore', The Unknown Eros. Book II, p.415.
an ironical smile in some critics is the union in Patmore of sensual passion and religious fervour. Obviously the difficulty with physical images is that they mean different things to different people. And when people are faced with the imagery of love, there is likely to be a greater disagreement. So, it depends on the individual whether the effect of a sensual image is good or bad. It may be said that there are passages in the Scriptures more sensual than any in Patmore. Yet people continue to read them with scare a protest'.

The strength of Patmore's distinctive idea of love lies in its transcendentalism. It has been rightly emphasised by Osbert Burdett that "His (Patmore's) original contribution to Western mystic literature is to supply the emphasis, elsewhere lacking, on the divine nature of human love". 41 Patmore's glorification of married love is based on a supernatural hypothesis. Briefly stated, Patmore's belief was this: the love is to the beloved as God is to the human soul. Marriage is the precursor to a higher mystery. Earthly marriage is nothing but a symbol of the divine marriage between the human soul and God. Patmore's doctrine is that "Nuptial love bears the clearest marks of being nothing other than the

rehearsal of a communion of a higher nature". 42 Even in his earlier poems Patmore makes it clear that earthly love leads to divine love. It is in this vein that Patmore writes:

For all delights of earthly love
Are shadows of the heavens, and move
As other shadows do; they flee
From him that follows them; and he
Who flies, for ever finds his feet
Embraced by their pursuings sweet. 43

The poem from which the above lines have been quoted tells us that all love is of desire or benevolence, but all desire we owe the God, and through nuptial love desire transmutes itself to divine benevolence. The strength of Patmore's distinctive idea of love lies in its transcendentalism.

Patmore's belief that wedded love is not an end in itself but a means to the union of the soul with God may explain why his wedded lover asks:

Why having won her do I woo?

It is because of this that even in perfect marriage man runs after something greater (divine love) which cannot be attained here on this earth. In his characteristic manner Patmore puts it thus:

42. 'Love and Poetry', Religio Poetae, p.338.
43. 'The Wedding Sermon', The Victories of Love, p.325.
'Every one who has loved and reflected on love for an instant, knows very well that what is vulgarly regarded as the end of that passion is, as the Church steadfastly maintains, no more than its accident. The flower is not for the seed, but the seed for the flower. And yet what is that flower, if it be not the rising bud of another flower, flashed for a moment before our eyes, and at once withdrawn, lest we should misunderstand the prophecy, and take it for our final good? 44

Further, the fact that there is something illusive in the earthly marriage and the mystery of 'never quite satisfied pursuit' of love convinces Patmore that the security and hope for true marriage lie in the mystical knowledge that marriage is a rehearsal of the divine conjunction between God and the human Soul. It is because of this realisation that inspite of the earthly tone of The Angel in the House, the poem has its supernatural significance as well. Patmore reminds us that:

Though love is all of earth that's dear,  
Its home, my children, is not here:  
The pathos of esternity  
Does in its fullest pleasure sigh. 45

Some critics on the basis of the earthly tone of The Angel, come to a hasty conclusion that Patmore's work falls into two independent parts, one containing and concluding with The Angel in the House dealing with

44. The Precursor', Religio Poetae, pp.230-231.  
45. 'The Wedding Sermon: The Victories of Love, p.333.
human love, and the other consisting of the Odes, dealing with Divine love. But Edmund Gosse, Frederick page, J.C. Reid, Osbert Burdett and others are of the opinion that there is a perfect continuity of thought and philosophy between Patmore's earlier poems and the later ones. In a letter to Arthur Symons written in 1893, Patmore writes:

'The meats and wines of the two are, in very great part, almost identical in character; but, in one case, they are served on the deal table of the octosyllabic quatrian, and in the other, they are spread on fine, irregular rock of the free tetrameter.'

We too hold that there is no discrepancy whatsoever, and that the 'realism' of the earlier style and the sublime mysticism of the later are part and parcel of one perfectly consistent genius. Patmore himself wrote: "It must be impressively shown that Felix and Honoria also look to Heaven for the fruition of their love." The theme of The Angel had, for Patmore, a significance beyond itself. He noted that love promises more than it performs. Natural love, therefore, he inferred to be the precursory revelation and rehearsal of that infatuation which God showers upon the soul, and the

nature of this Divine courtship could, he said, he apprehended only by the study of its antitype in nature. "The Odes, therefore," as Osbert Burdett opines, "provide the transcendental philosophy, which is built upon the data of experience, and these data it is the delight of The Angel to provide". Thus, it is clear that though Patmore's philosophy is grounded in the home and on the family it ultimately rises to heights of mystical communion, for which every experience, in the course of a human love affair, has been rehearsed. For as Patmore writes: "Divine love and sweetness cannot exist where there has been no knowledge of natural love and sweetness". Patmore poetry leads up then from thoughts about love to a deep philosophy of it leading again to a mystical and Catholic conception of marriage.

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49. 'A Safe Charity', Courage in Politics, p.50
PATMORE'S NUPTIAL ANALOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to give a view of Coventry Patmore's nuptial analogy as it occurs in his poetry. We feel that this investigation will show objectively the development of the poet's theme throughout his published work.

Married love, particularly its 'sacramental significance', was Patmore's theme and symbol. He was convinced that love was "sure to be something less than human if it is not something more". For Patmore it was always 'something more' - the love of husband for wife was a symbol of God's love for the soul. This idea provided the inspiration for all his literary work. The nuptial analogy correlates his early poetry with his mature poetry and, in a very large measure, marks the relationship which exists between the whole body of his poetry and the prose works written towards the end of his life.

Patmore's nuptial analogy was both experimental and derivative, since it was partly a product of his personal religious and aesthetic experiences and partly a result of his reading and study of the

1. 'Love and Poetry',
ideas of others. A study of the experimental factor is necessary for a complete understanding of Patmore's analogy and its significance has been justly noted by Edmund Gosse when he writes that "He (Patmore) had formed a certain exclusively aesthetic notion of marriage as sacrament". Patmore's aesthetic and subjective notion of nuptial love received a firm intellectual and speculative basis after his conversion when he came into contact with the writings of Catholic saints and scholars such as, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross, St. Bernard, St. Teresa and Marie Lataste.

The three main examples of Patmore's nuptial analogy in his poetical works are The Angel in the House (1884, 1856), The Wedding Sermon (1862), and The Unknown Eros (1877, 1878). His earlier poetry (Poems, 1844, and Tamerton Church – Tower, 1853, 1854) gives but little indication of the theme that was to become his main preoccupation, and The Victories of Love (1862) which includes The Wedding Sermon, is a sequel to The Angel in the House and merely a concrete application of his theme of married love.

In The Angel in the House, the analogy between human and divine love appears as a theme recurrently suggesting itself within a long, didactic narrative.

2. Coventry Patmore, p. 45
Quite early in this poem Patmore states that his aim is to set forth his analogical theme:

This little germ of nuptial love,
Which springs so simply from the sod,
The root is, as my song shall prove
Of all our love to man and God. ³

In another Prelude entitled 'The Paragon', he implies that the mutual opposition between the sexes in married love has its prototype in the supernatural order

The nuptial contrasts are the poles
On which the heavenly spheres revolve. ⁴

Later in the same poem Vaughan, the hero, expresses this same other-worldly point of view while contemplating the beauty of his future wife:

'You fit the taste for Paradise,
'To which your charms draw up the soul
'As turning spirals draw the eyes'. ⁵

In the Prelude called 'The Prototype', Patmore associates human nuptial love with God's own love Himself. Influenced by the passage in the first book of the

³. The Angel in the House, Book I, Canto VI, p.96
   'Love Justified'.
⁴. A.H., Book I, Canto II, p.72
Old Testament,\(^6\) he asserts that God made both man and woman to his own image and likeness, and not man alone:

Female and male God made the man
His image is the whole, not half,
And in our love we dimly scan
The love which is between Himself.\(^7\)

Patmore's contention is that in the mutual love of husband and wife, we can discern, though 'dimly', the love which exists in the Persons of the Trinity. This is the highest conception of human love in relation to divine love enunciated by Patmore in *The Angel in the House*.

Patmore further reinforces his idea of nuptial analogy when, in the first book of *The Angel in the House* he makes Vaughan seek the basis of his love for his future wife and find it in the loveableness of God himself as reflected in her:

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6. *Genesis* (2:27) which tells how Jehova, on the sixth day of creation, took some of the dust of the soil and moulded it into an image resembling Himself, and gave it life, and he called it man, and placed it at the head of all creation.

7. A.H., Book I, Canto VIII, p. 107, It may be pointed out that the scripture does not tell us that woman too was created after the image of God. In the *Genesis* we are told that Jehova took a rib from Adam's body and out of it created Eve. Patmore's conclusion is probably based on the assumption that as Adam was the highest creation of God, Eve, who was to be the life-companion of Adam, must have necessarily been created after God's own image.
I loved her in the name of God
And for the ray she was of Him. 8

Almost the same thought appears in the axiom which
Vaughan advises every true lover to remember when
he is tempted to sin against his sacred love:

Lest sacred love your soul ensnare,
With pious fancy still infer
'How loving and how lovely fair,
'Must he be who has fashion's her!' 9

Finally, in a Prelude entitled 'A Demonstration',
Patmore gives a practical application of this
supernatural significance of nuptial love:

Nature, with endless being rife,
Parts each thing into 'him' and 'her',
And, in the arithmetic of life,
The smallest unit is a pair,
And thus, oh, strange, sweet half of me,
If I confess a loftier flame,
I more than love thee, thee I am. 10

It may be observed that there is practically no diffe-
rence between the idea expressed in these lines

8. 'Going to Church', A.H., Book I, Canto X, p.121
9. 'Aurea Dicta', Book I, Canto XI, p.126
and the idea contained in the lines from 'The Prototype' quoted above. In both the poems the idea of 'Sexual Duality' has been brought forth to prove Patmore's contention that sex is a relationship at the base of all things natural and divine. When Patmore says that nature "parts each thing into 'him' and 'her', "he is simply repeating what he had expressed in 'The Prototype', namely, that 'Female and male God made the Man". Human nature is comprised of both sexes and one is reciprocal to the other. This division into two and reconciliation into one is, as Patmore points out, at the root of all existence. In confessing that he loves God more than he loves his wife, he does not diminish the love he has for her. He reconciles his human and divine love by distinguishing the manner of his love:

.... Him loved I most,
But her I loved most sensibly. 11

Thus there is no doubt that The Angel in the House contains the "germ" of the poet's nuptial analogy. Patmore had convinced himself, and remained convinced, that nuptial love contains the key, for men and women, of spiritual truth, that the love

between husband and wife reflects the love of God. As Louisa Wheaton has very ably expressed it, "The Angel in the House looks as simple as it is reality subtle. In the very heart of love's mystery the poet discovers that human love is but a symbol of Love Divine, and that earthly marriage is only a shadow of some undreamed of spiritual nuptials between the soul and God". 12

In The Wedding Sermon (1862) we find that Patmore reflects his interests in the analogous aspect of nuptial love. In this respect it is similar to The Angel in the House. In The Wedding Sermon Patmore's theme of nuptial analogy received a more deliberate and extended treatment. The didactic nature of the poem gave Patmore more scope to express himself on his favourite subject in a manner that the narrative form of The Angel in the House did not allow.

There is a close similarity in thought and expression between some of the Preludes of The Angel and certain lines of The Wedding Sermon. Take for example, the opening lines of The Wedding Sermon:

12. 'Emily Honoria Patmore', in Dublin Review Vol. 163, No. 327, (1918) p. 208
The truths of Love are like the sea
For clearness and for mystery. 13

In these lines Patmore compares the truths of love
to the clarity and profoundity of the sea. Paradoxically
the 'truths of love' are quite clear to us in their
human aspect but in their divine aspect they are very
mysterious. These lines closely resemble a Prelude
of The Angel where Patmore speaks of:

Love's living sea by coasts uncurb'd
Its depth, its mystery, and its right
Its indignation if disturb'd
The glittering peace of its delight. 14

This mysterious aspect of love becomes intelligible
to us with the help of the human aspect of love which
we can very well appreciate. The human aspect of love
serves as a key enabling us to unlock the door leading
to the mystery of divine love. So Patmore's advice
is to:

... fathom well the depths of life
In loves of Husband and of Wife,
Child, Mother, Father: simple keys

14. 'The Symbol', The Angel in the House, Book II,
    Cento XI, p.197.
To what cold faith calls mysteries.\textsuperscript{15} God's own love for us is particularised and placed within the apprehension of our minds and senses. It is through the love of marriage that we are able to arrive at the very life of truth, which to Patmore is 'real apprehension':

Chiefly God's Love does in it live
And no where else so sensitive.\textsuperscript{16}

The beautiful opening passage of stenza IV of \textit{The Wedding Sermon} reveals the deeply supernatural basis which Patmore's nuptial analogy had attained. Human reason could never have known the tremendous worth of nuptial love without God's revelation. That revelation tells us that Jesus Christ, "Heaven's bold Sun-gleam", raised the divinely - instituted state of marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. Nuptial love is now what it could not have been in pagan times - a symbol of hope in the eternal love and glory which awaits us in heaven:

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{The Wedding Sermon}, pp. 322-323.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{The Wedding Sermon}, p. 323 - These lines may be compared with the words of Vaughan in \textit{The Angel in the House}, I, X, p.121

... Him loved I most,
But her I loved most sensibly
No giddiest hope, no wildest guess
Of Love's most innocent loftiness
Had dared to dream of its own worth,
Till Heaven's bold sun-gleam lit the earth
Christ's marriage with the Church is more
My Children, than a metaphor
The heaven of heavens is symbol'd where
The torch of Psyche flash'd despair.\(^\text{17}\)

Patmore constantly reminds us that earthly love is only a symbol of divine love, that love which has its beginning in this life has its culmination in the life to come. Patmore's belief in the continuity of love is expressed in no ambiguous manner in the following lines:

Though love is all of earth that's dear
Its home, my children, is not here;
The pathos of eternity
Does in its fullest pleasure sigh.\(^\text{18}\)

While developing his theme of nuptial analogy Patmore defines the nuptial contrasts as "the poles on which the heavenly spheres revolves".\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{17}\) The Wedding Sermon p. 324
\(^{18}\) The Wedding Sermon, P. 333
\(^{19}\) The Angel in the House, Book I, Canto II, p. 72
This idea is repeated in *The Wedding Sermon* but with a change of imagery. Here human love is likened to the tides of the sea:

In Godhead rise, thither flow back
All loves, which, as they keep or lack
In their return, the course assign'd,
Are virtue or sin.  20

Similarly, in the fifth stanza of this poem, where Patmore speaks of the necessity for unselfishness in marriage, he reinforces his nuptial analogy:

... all delights of earthly love
Are shadows of the heavens.  21

Thus we find that in *The Wedding Sermon*, Patmore carries his theme of nuptial analogy a step further to establish its supernatural basis. In a sense, *The Wedding Sermon*, prepares us for the culmination of the nuptial analogy in the odes of *The Unknown Eros*. As Osbert Burdett puts it: "It is the middle point of rest to which either the epic or the odes, when considered separately, must be referred".  22

Nowhere does Patmore present his theme of nuptial love more vividly and skilfully than in the odes of *The Unknown Eros*. In these odes Patmore rises to the very summit of his poetical powers. Yet the majority of these odes (the three "Psyche" odes are the exceptional) continue to express this analogical relationship thematically, in much the same manner as Patmore's earlier poetry had done. It should be remarked, however, that the poet's new medium, the irregular ode, was more suited, by reason of its flexibility, to express his nuptial analogy symbolically.

There are forty-two odes in this sequence. Of these all but six are concerned with the theme of nuptial love. These six odes deal with philosophical or political subjects. As Quiller-Couch remarks:

"It is well to begin by separating those which take hold of the doors of Heaven from those which exhaust themselves in constructive damnation of Mr. Gladstone".  

The remaining thirty-six odes dealing with the theme of nuptial love may be conveniently grouped into those which are chiefly concerned with human love and those which have for their subject the divine element in human love.

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Practically all the odes found in Book one of *The Unknown Eros* are directly concerned with human love. The first three poems ('St. Valentine's Day', 'Wind and Wave', and 'Winter') are all Nature poems in which a Wordsworthian vision of living things is fused with Patmore's own vision of love. Here Patmore employs the seasons of spring, summer, and winter to symbolize nuptial love. Spring is a symbol of pre-nuptial love; summer, a symbol of love developed and transformed by grace; and winter, a symbol of love's attainment of a 'plenitude of peace'. In 'St. Valentine's Day', spring is addressed as the "quick praevernal Power",

Fair as the rash oath of virginity,
Which is first-love's first cry.

Here Patmore with his beautiful imagery describes the awakening of pre-nuptial love in a maiden. In a lovely parable of the earth in February putting by the austerities of winter, Patmore tells us how the cold austerity of the virgins maid is transformed into the "warm, fruitful response of mature love":

Go to her summons gay,

---

Thy heart with dead, wing'd Innocencies fill'd
Ev'n as a nest with birds
After the old ones by the hawk are kill'd

'Wind and Wave' speaks of marriage in its sacramental aspect. In it the poet describes the effect of the wind on the summer sea. When the wind blows softly, it creates gentle ripples on the surface of the sea. But as the wind gains force and momentum, huge waves are formed on the bosom of the ocean and finally these waves crash on the beach. The imagery helps depict the fruition of love, its consummation in marriage and its surging on to "an unguess'd weal". This analogy is clear from the following lines:

She, as a little breeze
Following still Night,
Ripples the spirit's cold, deep seas
Into delight;
But, in a while
The immeasurable smile
Is broke by fresher airs to flashes blend
With darkling discontent;
And all the subtle sephyr hurries gay,
And all the heaving ocean heaves one way

'Tward the void sky-line and an unguess'd weal;

And so the whole
Unfathomable and immense
Triumphant tide comes at the last to reach
And burst in wind-kiss'd splendours on the deaf'ning beach. 26

The third poem, 'Winter' depicts the season in the calm and serene atmosphere. "It is not death, but plenitude of Peace" 27 that Patmore finds in the silence of the season. The profound silence of the season symbolizes the transformation of human love into divine contemplation with all the tranquillity and peace of mind. Here the spirit of love has transcended the physical desires.


It is interesting to note Prof. Fairchild's interpretation of this poem. He is of the opinion that "Wind and Wave is a remarkable symbolic rendering of the sexual act". (Religious Trends in English Poetry, Vol. IV, p.319). It seems that he has taken the poem as symbolising the surge, climax and repose of the sexual act itself. We have, however, no evidence whether Patmore had such a meaning in his mind when he wrote this poem. Nevertheless, we do not rule out the possibility of such an interpretation, especially when we find that in some of the poems of The Unknown Eros Patmore employs direct sexual symbolism.

27. 'Winter', The Unknown Eros, Book I, p.354.
We find this nature symbolism inter-woven in the texture of *The Angel in the House* and *The Victories of Love*. The theme of nuptial love in the remaining odes of this first book emphasises the various aspects of human love, particularly its joys and sacrifices. The important exception among the odes of Book One is the one called 'Beata', in which the nature symbolism implicitly associates human and divine love. In this ode Patmore shows how God's infinite attributes tend to become finite for man when he loves, just as white light is refracted from a prism and broken up into its constituent colours. The rays of infinite Heaven striking upon woman:

Renounced their undistinguishable stress
Of withering white
And did with gladdest hues my spirit caress
Nothing of Heaven in thee showing infinite

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28. Cf. The last four lines of 'The Symbol' (*The Angel in the House*, Book II, Canto XI, p.197), already quoted in a previous page of this chapter, and *The Victories of Love*, p. 265, first 10 lines from the top.

Save the delight. 30

It is interesting to compare this ode with the two lines previously quoted from The Angel in the House:

I loved her in the name of God,
And for the ray she was of Him.

The theme of the ode is identical to the theme of his earlie poem. Here he elaborates it through the effective use of a nature-symbol. He addresses his idealised love for the benefit of his readers and then, with the help of his nature-symbol, he makes the transition between human and divine love.

The eighteen odes of the second book of The Unknown Eros are concerned principally with the divine aspect of nuptial love. The fifth ode of this Book, 'Sponsa Dei' (The Bride of God), is Patmore's characteristic presentation of his nuptial analogy as a theme. In the first twenty-one lines of this poem he describes the engaging beauty of a virgin "Who yet sick longing breeds for marriage". Then, the poet asks:

30. 'Beata' The Unknown Eros, Book I, P.356. It may be observed that the image of the poem anticipates a passage in 'Dieu Et Ma Dame', (Religio Poetae, P. 350) : "Woman, that opaque surface in which the rays of Deity end, and from which they are reflected in all the multiplied splendours which whey have gathered by being transmitted through the priamatic and refractive spheres that intervene".
Who is this only happy she,
Whom, by a frantic flight of courtesy,
Born of despair
of better lodging for his Spirit fair,
He adores as Margaret, Maude, or Cecily.\(^{31}\)

Towards the end of the ode, Patmore simultaneously reaches the answer to the question he had posed and the very heart of his nuptial analogy:

What if this Lady be thy Soul, and He
Who claims to enjoy her sacred beauty be
Not thou, but God.\(^{32}\)

The analogy of the poem is clear. Man's love for his 'Margaret, Maude, or Cecily' is analogous to God's love for the human soul, which is always feminine to God. The poem emphasises the theme that human love is a shadow of divine love, that beneath the earthly experiences of love and courtship is "the burning heart of the universe".

In the three Payche odes of the second book of *The Unknown Eros*, Patmore attains the maximum of objective, artistic control. The sincerity of expression with which Patmore delineates his nuptial analogy in


32. 'Sponsa Dei', *The Unknown Eros*, Book II, P. 404.
these three odes, is unique in the history of English love poetry. The nuptial analogy ceases to be merely a theme within the sound and meaning structure. The nuptial "idea" is indissolubly united with its symbolic expression.

Father Connolly has remarked in his excellent commentary on The Unknown Eros sequence that Patmore finds his inspiration in the divine element in human love. Appropriately enough, he chose as the personification of this love a pagan god who fell in love with a human being. This god was Fros (to the Romans Cupid, the god of love) Patmore's three odes describe the beginnings and intimate nature of this love between Eros and Payche. And this very love is a symbol of God's overwhelming love for the human soul. Patmore had already insisted upon the analogous character of human love in his earlier poetry. His notion that the pagan myths were types or prefigurements of Christian ideals made him use such a symbol taken from pagan mythology. Earlier, in The Wedding Sermon, he had given us an indication of this myth and the Christian doctrine:

33. Connolly, Mystical Poems. P. 149.

34. Gosse says of the odes: "They are founded on a favourite doctrine of Patmore's, that the pagan myths, even when they seem gross and earthy, contain the pure elements of living Christian doctrine in symbol". ( Coventry Patmore, P. 238 ).
Christ's marriage with the church is more,  
My children, than a metaphor,  
The heaven of heavens is symbol'd where  
The torch of Psyche flash'd despair.

The pagan concept of love, as represented by "the torch of Psyche", is contrasted with the Christian concept of married love, which, far from "flashing despair" symbolises the "heaven of heavens".

Although the language of the odes is rich in the sensual imagery of pagan love poetry, the final symbolic effect is attained when the poems are read in their entirety. For this reason, it is almost futile to quote lines or even isolated passages from the Psyche odes, but some passages may be quoted in order to show how Patmore has re-clothed certain key ideas expressed in his earlier poetry and to give some idea of the maturity Patmore has reached in the expression of his idea of nuptial analogy.

All the three Psyche odes are written in a dialogue form. 'Eros and Psyche' and 'Psyche's Discontent' are dialogues between Eros and Psyche. 'De Natura Deorum' is a dialogue between Psyche and the prophetess of the Delphic Oracle.

In 'Eros and Psyche', Patmore has symbolised, in the espousals of the pagan god and Psyche, the mystical

35. The Wedding Sermon, P. 324.
marriage of God and the soul. In describing the intimacies of this union as represented in the espousals of Eros and Psyche, Patmore makes Eros say to Psyche:

So oclas your childish arms again around my Heart:
'Tis but in such captivity
The unbounded Heavn's know what they be.\textsuperscript{36}

In the above lines we find that Patmore symbolically draws our attention to the element of union ("captivity") in divine love.\textsuperscript{37} This element of union in conjugal love and the possibility of understanding that union in reference to the divine union had already been emphasised by Patmore in \textit{The Wedding Sermon}. After speaking of "that sweet love which, startling, wakes Maiden and Youth" and thon grows into the more perfect love of the nuptial state, Patmore asks us to remember that it is this union that makes heaven intelligible to us:

'Twas this made heaven intelligible
As motive, though twas small the power
The heart might have, for even an hour,

\textsuperscript{36} 'Eros and Psyche', \textit{The Unknown Eros}, Book II, p. 423.

\textsuperscript{37} It is quite probable that he is making specific allusions to the mystery of the Incarnation, and the divine intelligence of this union in love.
To hold possession of the height
of nameless pathos and delight'. 38

The continuity of love had appeared as a theme in Patmore's poems before the odes, but it received its final development only in the odes. In the tenth stanza of The Wedding Sermon, nuptial love was only the beginning of love, since.

The Pathos of eternity
Does in its fullest pleasure sigh. 39

But in 'Eros and Psyche' the middle ground in love's continuity is supplied. Mystical marriage with God through grace is a far loftier union than the union effected through "mortal nuptials", yet even this supernatural union with God through grace will have its consummating perfection only in the clear vision of God, that is, the "beatific vision". So, Eros tells Psyche that.

........these are only your espousals; yes,
More intimate and fruitfuller far
Than aptest mortal nuptials are;
But nuptials wait you such as now you dare not guess. 40

38. The Wedding Sermon, P. 321
39. Ibid., p. 333.
40. 'Eros and Psyche', The Unknown Eros, Book II, p. 432
The other two Psyche odes are symbolical expressions of the soul's reaction to the infinite condescension of God in offering her His love. In 'De Natura Deorum', we see the soul's anxiety and wonder at the completely 'gratuitous character' of God's love combined with her vigorous efforts to know more about the inmost nature of that love. Pythoness, the Delphic priestess, who is a symbol of divine revelation, summarises for us the two-fold reaction of Psyche to her god's condescending love. One the one hand, Psyche bashfully recognises her complete unworthiness and yet the reality of Eros' love for her fills her with the deepest joy. The prophetess attempts to encourage Psyche and to reconcile her two conflicting emotions by attributing their source to the very nature of the god she loves — to the fact that he is "more than mortal boy":

'The Bashful meeting of strange Depth
and Height
breeds the forever new-born babe, Delight;
And, as thy God is more than mortal boy,
so bashful more the meeting, and so more
th joy.'

41. 'De Nature Deorum', The Unknown Eros, Book II, P. 428.
The mysterious nature of this love between a lowly mortal and a majestic God and its attendant Delight had been suggested in *The Angel in the House* where Patmore referred to love's.

.....depth, its mystery, and its might,
Its indignation if disturb'd,
The glittering peace of its delight. 42

The ode 'Psyche's Discontent' symbolically expresses the soul's desire to suffer for the God she loves. This longing of Payche to prove her love for Eros by sacrifice and penance was also expressed in 'Eros and Psyche' where she insisted that pain endured for love of her god would only be an increase of joy:

Should's thou me tell
Out of thy warm caress to go
And roll my body in the biting snow,
My very body's joy were but increased;
More pleasant 'tis to please theo than be pleas'd. 43

Similarly, in 'De Natura Deorum', the Prophetess discovered that Psyche had been mortifying her flesh to purify her soul's love for Eros:

43. *'Eros and Payche', The Unknown Eros*, Book II, P. 432.
But whence these wounds? What Demon thee onjoins
To scourge thy shoulders white
And tender loins. 44

But in 'Psyche's Discontent', her love for suffering iscarried to the bitter extreme of willingness to bear even the pain of temporary separation from her lover. In the patient acceptance of this pain she feels that her love for Eros will be strengthened and intensified

I ask, for Day, the use which is the wife's:
To bear, apart from thy delight and thee,
The fardel coarse of custodary life's
Exceeding injucundity,
Leave me a while, that I may shew thee clear
How Goddess-like thy love has lifted me. 45

In summary, it may be said that the Psyche odes of The Unknow Eros secuence are the most perfect expression of Patmore's nuptial analogy in his poetry.

That is the progressive revelation of the poet's thought on nuptial analogy. We have seen that Patmore's nuptial analogy developed with the successive

44. 'De Natura Deorum', The Unknown Eros, Book, II, p. 428.
45. 'Psyche's Discontent', The Unknown Eros, Book, II, p. 432.
Poems. In *The Angel in the House*, the analogy between nuptial love and divine love was a simple theme appearing occasionally in *Preludes* and the background of his narrative of human love. In *The Wedding Sermon*, the theme became clearer as greater emphasis was placed on the supernatural significance of nuptial love. The nuptial analogy reached its full maturity only in the mythological symbolism of the *Psyche* odes. This detailed symbolism is embodied concretely in the beautiful imagery of those odes. With this appreciation of the content and development of the nuptial analogy, it is now possible to proceed to an interpretation of the mystical element in Patmore's Poetry.
ALICE MEYNELL'S LOVE POETRY

Approximately one fourth of the poems in the collected poems of Alice Meynell may be regarded as love poems. Even a cursory reading reveals their range and variety, not in poetical ingenuity — for she attempted few material variations — but in the number of fancies both pleasant and perceptive, that she has about emotional life. Within this body of work two general divisions are obvious. They are, first, Alice Meynell's early love lyric, sensuous often earthy; second, her later poems, poem that reveal her nature and abiding passion in a real form, the dark questionings and occasional haunting fears and disillusionments that age brought to her together with serenity and sense of fulfilment.

What we have here, then, is a charming history of our poet's experience of love. This is its true value to us. For here we can trace Alice Meynell's experience through the troubled days of hotblooded youth to the calm of old age. Here we can see her development from an almost primitive greed of the senses to the experiencing of a love, more spiritual than physical.
According to psychologists there are two periods, adolescence and the age of fifty noted for the actual mood for love. During these periods of life vague desires produce a pleasant sense of anticipation. At such moments a man gives himself up to a sylph-like figure of his fancy. Alice Meynell is no exception to it. As a love poet she is a robust and happy lover of former days. She has written of her beginnings: 'I began to write when I was about nine; it had no kind of promise in it, nothing noticeable or even excusable, except a good ear for prosody'.

She published her first volume of poetry the *preludes* in 1875. For a very long time she continued writing secretly. Later she showed these early poems to an American friend of hers who appreciated her compositions and disclosed the fact to her parents. This aroused their interest in the creative power of their daughter. During her early years of service to the Muse, Alice Meynell came into contact with a priest who became quite precious to her. He had received her into the Church when she accepted Catholicism quite early in life. The intimacy with the priest inspired her to write poetry with increased vigour. He took absorbing interest in her verses and was a source of constant encouragement to her. But the intelligent woman knew the rules of the Church and thought it better to abandon this friendship. About her love poetry of the

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1. Tuell, A.K. *Alice Meynell and her Literary Generation*, p.18
early period, Alice Meynell writes in one of her sonnets:

A poet of one mood in all my lays,
Ranging all life to sing one only love,
Like a west wind across the world I move.
Sweeping my harp of floods mine old Wildways?

These lines bear eloquent testimony to her great interest in love and life. This period of life is characterised by gaiety which knows no bounds. Like the west wind days, her poetry possesses wildness for which Alice Meynell was all praise. She is very eloquent when she thinks of her west wind days and is quite confident that her days shall last:

'The countries change, but not the westwind days
Which are my songs. My soft skies shine above,
And on all seas the colours of a dove,
And on all fields a flash of silver greys'.

But it is, however, shocking that the zest for life so beautifully expressed in the first few lines of the above-quoted poem does not last long. The last stanza shows a complete change in her mood - a realisation that the sweetest things of life are not meant for her. The central source of her verse is going to be not the wildness of the west and characterising her love, but the tears that life brings in its train. The thought which she cherishes most

2. Poems (1923) p. 44
3. Ibid p. 44
and considers to be her priceless possession is

I make the whole world answer to my art

And sweet monotonous meanings. In your ears

I change not ever, bearing, for my part,

One thought that is the treasure of my years,

A small cloud full of rain upon my heart

And in mine arms, clasped, like a child in tears

The first phase of her poetic production is chiefly
caracterised by the composition of love poems which are,
in essence, the poems of separation. Not unlike the
metaphysical poets who wrote poems of voluptuous love and
sacred love simultaneously, Alice Meynell too, produced
love poetry mostly voluptuous during her early period and
wrote a poem or two which showed her leanings towards
sacred love - the love of Christ - which reached its
culmination in her **Later Poems And Last Poems**. Her love
poetry of this period is akin to that of Robert Herrick: As
in Herrick, the two strains of the poetry of the
seventeenth century are well discernible, so in Alice
Meynell also, the strains are well marked though there is
no doubt a heavy burden of sadness in Alice Meynell's
poems, the rest for life is not always at a low ebb. The
imprints of her personality on the multitude of poems is
quite visible even during this period. The poems seem to be
made of a breath of fresh air, love-fancies, and address to
flowers. The light joy of a frivolous heart, a fancy pleased

4. **Peom (1923)** p. 44
by whatever has grace or beauty, the trenuous melancholy of a reveller who remembers how ephemeral is that which charms him. Such are her moods. To the latter she turns again and again as she watches the flowers - the daisy, the blossoms of the fruit trees, the fresh and green meadows. The essence of the mood is well expressed in a 'A song of Derivations':

I am like the blossom of an hour.
But long, long vanished sun and shower
Awoke my breath in the young world's air
I track the post back everywhere
Through seed and flower and seed and flower.

Or I am like a stream that flows
Full of the cold springs that arose
In morning lands, in distant hills;
And down the plain my channel fills
With melting of forgotten snows.5

The ephemeral character of beauty is also brought into focus by the poet in 'Your Own Fair Youth'. She knows that the charm of youth is a fleeting phase of life. It will be destroyed by the fell hands of time. Similarly joy is an occasional thing in the drama of life which is full of pain. She writes:

5. Poem (1923) p. 45
Your own fair youth, you care so little for it,
Smiling towards Heaven, you would not stay the advances
Of time and change upon your happiest fancies
I keep your golden hour, and will restore it.

To guard all joys of yours from Time's estranging,
I shall be then a treasury where your gay,
Happy, and pensive past for ever is.

The intensity of the poet's feeling is contained in the first line of the sonnet 'Thoughts In Separation' when he experiences the pain of separation even at the time of meeting the lover:

We never meet; yet we meet day by day
Upon those hills of life, dim and immense.

The poet is aware of her meeting with the beloved everywhere:

Our guardian spirits meet at prayer and play.
Beyond pain, joy and hope, and long suspense,
Above the summits of our souls, far hence,
An angel meets an angel on the way.

But the parting produced poetry of profound poignancy. 'Parted' expresses a lack in her life, a sort of vacuum which aches her all the time. Every object of nature is full of life but the she is full of sadness. This contrast has been beautifully expressed in the following:

6. Ibid p. 45
7. Poems(1923)p. 21
8. Ibid p-21
Although my life is left so dim,  
The morning crowns the mountain-rim  
Joy is not gone from summer skies,  
For innocence from children's eyes,  
And all these things are part of him\(^9\).

Later the poet feels that her beloved is not banished, for the earth is still green, she argues:

'He is not banished for the showers  
Yet wake this green warm earth of ours  
How can the summer but be sweet?  
I shall not have him at my feet,  
And yet my feet on the flowers\(^10\).

The thought of her loved one being away pains the poet immensely. The beloved is silent and is out of the reach of the poet. What disturbs her most is that sadness does not leave her alone.

Farewell to one now silenced quite  
Sent out of hearing, out of sight—,  
My friend of friends whom I shall miss  
He is not banished, though, for this,  
Nor he nor sadness nor delight?\(^11\).

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9. Poems 1893 p. 39  
10. Poems 1923 p. 10  
11. Ibid p. 10
Even the objects of nature have felt the absence of her lover. They are filled with inexpressible sadness:

Though I shall talk with him no more
A low voice sounds upon the shore
He must not watch my resting-place,
But who shall drive a mournful face
From the sad winds about my door. \(^{12}\)

The poet is willing to adapt herself to her new conditions and be oblivious of the joyful days passed in the company of the beloved. 'His tears must not disturb my heart' is an expression of her innermost feelings.

The period of separation is an extremely painful affair. Very few are able to reconcile themselves to their changed condition, Alice Meynell, not unlike others, was all the time haunted by the presence of her beloved. The thought of his always continues to disturb her. Her sadness which she accumulated in her heart ever since her childhood found its outlet in her early love poetry. She is, however, happy that social barriers can not stand in her way. In 'Beloved' the poet speaks of the darkness and solitude after separation. She feels that the silence of the woods has also been disturbed. It has become one with her pensive songs. She writes:

\(^{12}\) Ibid P-10
Oh, not more subtly silence strays,
Amongst the winds, between the voices,
Mingling alike with pensive lays,
And with the music that rejoices,
Then thou art present in my days.13.

The silence on the part of the lover is vexing. She feels life is at its height in other places merely because her lover is silence personified.

Full, full is life in hidden places,
For thou art silence unto me.
Full, full is thought in endless spaces.
Full is my life. A silent sea
Lies round all shores with long embraces.14.

The poet is conscious of the presence of the beloved in every object of the universe.
Most dear pause in a mallow lay,
Thou art interwoven with every air.
With these the wildest tempest play
And snatches of thee everywhere
Make little heavens throughout a day.15.

The image of the loved one as 'silence all unvaxed' and 'silence all unperplexed' and 'secret and mystery' makes an undying appeal to us. In another stanza of the same lyric, she speaks highly of the loved one when she recognises his healing touch during the period of distress:

13. Poems (1923) p-5
15. Poems (1923) p-5
O pause between the sobs of cares!
O thought within all thought that is;
Trance between laughters unawares!
Thou art the form of melodies,
And thou the costasy of prayers.\textsuperscript{16}

'To the Beloved Dead' is another love poem. It was considered a fine piece of art when it first appeared. The poet is immensely grieved to think of the beloved lying in wind and rain.

Though the beloved is dead, the poet consoles herself by thinking that she can never have a separate entity. He is a part and parcel of herself. Death cannot create any barrier:

Dead thou, dost live in me
And all this lonely soul is full of thee.\textsuperscript{17}

In her love songs, she sings of him and him alone. He is the inspirer of her songs.

Thou song of songs:-- not music as before
Unto the outward ear
My spirit sings thee inly evermore
Thy falls with tear on tear
I fail for thee, thou art too sweet, too dear.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
16. & Ibid \hspace{1cm} p. 6 \\
17. & Poems (1893) P-11 \\
18. & Ibid \hspace{1cm} P-11 \\
\end{tabular}
Away from his beloved, the poet feels a void in her heart and pines for a glimpse of his:

Of thee, thee, thee, I am mournfully aware.

Contained in one pure mind

'Regrets' is a description of the state of mind of the poet after the passing away of the beloved. She has no rest in life. Only the thought of her beloved brings true consolation. Every action of the poet bears the impress of her beloved:

So in the tide of life that carries me
From where they true heart dwells,
Waves of my thoughts and memories turn to thee
With lessening farewells.

The same idea has been superbly described in yet another poem, 'After A Parting'. The more the poet wants to be oblivious of him, the more he haunts her:

Farewell has long been said; I have foregone thee;
I never name thee even.

The beloved is omnipresent:
Thou dost beset the path to every shrine;
My trembling thoughts discern
Thy goodness in the good for which I pine;
And if I turn from but one sin, I turn
Unto a smile of thine.

19. Ibid p-11
20. Poems (1923) p-15
21. Poems (1923) p-17
22. Ibid p-17
It is beyond her power to forget him; for her life is conditioned by him. To her, he is faith and hope and her life without him will be deprived of its pleasure. She writes:

How shall I thrust thee apart
Since all my growth tends to thee night and day-
To thee faith, hope, and art?
Swift art the currents setting all one way;
They draw my life, my life, out of my heart. 23

After the less of the beloved, the poet though shaken to her foundations, does not lose heart and is quite sure that she shall have an envious position in her heart. There is a ray of hope in the midst of the loss of all happiness:

I would the day might come, so waited for,
So patiently besought,
When I, returning, should fill up once more
Thy desolated thought;
And fill thy loneliness that lies apart
In still, persistent pain.
Shall I content thee, O thou broken heart,
As the tide comes again. 24

23. Ibid P.-17
24. Poems (1923) P-15
That time's fell hands destroy the beauty of everything in the world is the bitter experience of all lovers. The lover is aware of this and tells the beloved:

My fair, no beauty of thine will last,
Save in my love's eternity.
Thy smiles, that light thee fitfully,
Are lost for ever - their moment past -
Except the few thou givest to me.
Thy sweet words vanish day by day
As all breath of mortality;
Thy laughter, done, must cease to be,
And all thy dear tones pass away
Except the few that sing to me

Alice Meynell's love poetry reminds us of Shelley. Like him, she too is the poet of youth with all its beauty. Sometimes we find in her early verse, which is chiefly love poetry, the utterance of a mind which ranges the fresh fields of life in rapture and in awe.

Though we have strayed from the place of heather
Your cry and mine speed on together
Above the spring and the summer weather.

25. Ibid P-31
Thus it can be said with a measure of confidence that the love poetry of Alice Meynell is the typical song of youth. The thought of her mind is, as she confesses in her sonnet, the poetic confidence, a weight potential of pain:

A small cloud full of rain upon my heart
And in mine arms, clasped, like a child in tears\(^{27}\)

Alice Meynell feels that youth is fraught with uncertainties. She knows the touch of the present upon the future. 'A Letter From A Girl To Her Own Old Age' is expressive of the girl's mind. It is full of her wild thoughts, its imagery is of the winds of the flowering season, of driven clouds about the great hills. It has a strain of sadness which characterises Alice Meynell's early verses:

Only one youth, and the bright life was a shrouded.
Only one morning, and the day was clouded
And one old age with all regrets is crowded\(^{28}\)

The one who now thy faded features guesses,
With filial fingers thy grey hair caresses,
With morning tears thy mournful twilight blesses\(^{29}\).

\(^{27}\) Poems (1893) p-55
\(^{28}\) Poems (1923) p-36
\(^{29}\) Ibid P-36
The study of the love poems makes it abundantly clear that Alice Meynell's love poems are more often than not the expression of sadness which was deeply engrained in her nature. A hypersensitive woman, Alice Meynell was almost incapable of facing the onalaughts of life, love and time, and that is why she often gave way to despair. What really lends poignancy to her poems is the intensity of passion in her life which evokes the love poetry of the highest order. All love poetry is passionate and Alice Meynell was not a passion-free poet.

There is, however, an undertone of joy in her west wind days of her youth. 'The Garden' presents the true picture of love-laden heart. The poet feels elevated. Her happiness at the coming of the poets, it seems, will know no bounds:

My heart shall be thy garden. Come, my own,
Into thy garden; thine be happy hours
Among my fairest thoughts, my tallest flowers,
From root to crowning petal, thine alone.

My heart has thoughts, which, though thine eyes hold mine
Flit to the silent world and other summers,
With wings that dip beyond the silver seas.

The thought of the poem 'A shattered Lute' in the feeling of real joy the poet feels in touching the heart of the lover who knows not that he alone fills her mind and heart:

30. Poems (1923) P-22
I touched the heart that loved me as a player
Touches a lyre; content with my poor skill,
No touch save mine knew my beloved (and still
I thought at times; Is there no sweet lost air
Old loves could wake in him, I cannot share?).

Oh, he alone, alone could so fulfil
My thoughts in sound to the measure of my will.
He is gone, and silence takes me unaware.

But in the last stanza of the poem the joy almost vanishes and the poet compares herself to a shattered lute

The songs I knew not he resumes, set free
From my constraining love, alas for me!
His part in our tune goes with him; my part
Is looked in me for ever; I stand as mute
As one with full strong music in his heart
Whose fingers stray upon a shattered lute.

Alice Meynell has Herrick-like simplicity, the same zest for life, the same charm and strangeness as a personality, the same frank contentment of spirit, the same self delighting and innocent passion as Herrick's. But she has greater directness and an intensity that Herrick cannot match. Less effective as a lover, she is more effective as a singer.

31. Poems (1923) P-27
32. Ibid P-27
From her love Alice Meynell had gained contentment and peace though she grew restive on occasions, being a woman of moods and memories. These love poems are not mere literary exercises but human documents. We are charmed by her early naivety of manners, her freshness of youth amidst disillusionment and her deep and abiding interest in life and love, though it is an interest charged with wistful and pitying amusement at life and its pretensions.

CONCLUSION:

Patmore who occupies a unique place in the history of Religious poetry was essentially a poet of love in the initial stage of his poetic career culminating in his quest for soul. He pursued the theme of love all through his life. He was a poet of passion not in the abstract but of purified love. Not unlike the elder poet, Alice Meynell, too, began her literary career with the publication of the Preludes, the first collection of her poems written in the prime of her youth giving expression to her passion. One fourth of her first book of poems contains her love poems.

Patmore's approach to love is most realistic. He did not pin his faith on the abstract notions of love. His aim was to show that love reached its climax in marriage because he believed that marriage is order. So the proper flowing of love is to be achieved
in marriage. Alice Meynell did not have any such conception of love but her poems love show that she, too, had or great regard for the poetry of love and believed that passionate love looks the poetry of the highest order. In her love poems we have frequent references to the troubled days of her youth culminating in the calms utterance of her old age.

Patmore firmly believed that marriage was a sacrament. It was based on personal intention. Like all catholics he believed that the bounds of marriage should be strong enough to rule out any possibility of the dissolubility of the married state. Alice Meynell was under the spell of catholicism. Her poetry bears eloquent testimony to it. Her personal life and her marriage with Welfrid Meynell are evidence her absolute faith in catholic way of life. During her early years Alice Developed intimacy with a catholic priest who had become very precious to her. This association with the priest was a source of her inspiration and made it possible for her to produce her love poetry of great significance. She calls herself a poet of one mood in all my days, ranging all life to sing one only love. Patmore's poetry of love is full of passion and Alice Meynell treats into the footsteps of her great senior poet. The entire work of Patmore shows that both men and women play active
role in the pursuit of love both before and after marriage Alice Meynell did not differ with him in this regard.

Patmore was well aware of the dependence of marriage and virginity. It is true that his conception of marriage was closely related to her conception of marriage. He stood for the control of lush. Alice Meynell's personal life and her literary career clearly show that she considered virginity to be a very precious possession. An incident of her youth is an evidence of emphasis on virginity. She had abandoned. The association with a Catholic priest who was all too precious to him as it was not in peeping with widely accepted notion of morality and marriage and was also against the sacred conception of marriage.

Not unlike Patmore, Alice Meynell emphasised the importance of the control of physical passion. The purity in love could help one immensely in pursuing the contemplative way of life. The proper restraints should be imposed on sensuous desires for the acquisition of spiritual power. Both Patmore and Alice Meynell aimed at the luminous union of sexual passion with religious fervour. Alice Meynell love poetry of her youth is voluptuous in character but the poetry of her later years shows clear leanings towards sacred love - the love of Christ. It is also equally true to say that distinctive idea of Patmore's love
lies in transcendentalism. He believed that the wedded love is not an end in itself but a means for the achievement of the union of the soul with God.

Alice Meynell's love poetry is the typical song of her youth fraught with uncertainties. It is full of her wild thought having a strain of sadness which is the real mark of her early poetic output. All love poetry is passionate and it cannot be gainsaid that both Patmore and Alice Meynell were not passion free poets. A continuity of thought and philosophy is easily discernible in Patmore's poetry but it cannot be said that it is absent in Alice Meynell's work as the work of her early years testifies to her leanings towards the love of Christ in particular and mysticism in general. Here love poems are precious documents characterised by the freshness of her wild days - her youth vilerant with love and joy not unmixed with sadness.

We are inclined to believe that the "realism" of their early style and their quest for soul in their later poetical work are indicative of their consistent genius. Patmore's philosophy based on love and touches its highwater mark in her poems of mystical thought. Alice Meynell's later poetry is highly religious and shows her at her best. It leads her from thoughts about love to her quest of the soul for God. Both
Patmore and Alice Meynell have magnificently succeeded in giving a faithful transcription of the drama of spirit. It cannot be denied that their early poetry laid the foundation alone of their later religious poetry. Hence the importance of their love poetry cannot in anyway be underestimated.