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INTRODUCTION

LIFE OF TENNYSON

Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby in Lincolnshire in August 1809, the year that gave birth as well to Gladstone, Darwin, Fitzgerald, Lincoln, Wendell Holmes, and Poe. He was the third son of the rector of the parish, and his two elder brothers Frederick and Charles also were possessed of considerable poetic gifts. But, while poetry seems to have been his by birthright, he none the less passed through a long course of literary apprenticeship. At the age of eight he was imitating Thomson's blank verse; at ten he wrote hundreds of lines in Pope's heroic couplet; at twelve he wrote an epic of 6,000 lines after the manner of Scott, while at fourteen he composed a regular drama in blank verse. Subsequently, he came under the influence of Byron and Keats, and it was chiefly under the inspiration of the former that he wrote most of the poems which appeared, in 1827, along with those of his brother Charles in Poems by Two Brothers.

From Louth Grammar School, the poet passed in 1828 to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became one of a famous band of undergraduates including Arthur Hallam, R. C. Trench, Monckton Milnes, Thackeray, and Edward Fitzgerald. There he won the Chancellor's prize with a poem on Timbuctoo.

In 1830 appeared Tennyson's first substantial volume in verse—Poems, chiefly Lyrical. In this, faults of stilted, conceited diction were obvious enough, nor did the critics omit to seize upon them with malicious glee. A second volume published in 1833 met a scarcely better fate,
though it contained such exquisite pieces as *The Lotos-Eaters* and *The Palace of Art*. The same year, however, saw the death of his bosom friend Hallam, and this left indelible traces on the poet’s nature. His sorrow had a deepening and purifying effect on his genius, and his work thereafter assumed a new strength and vitality.

For the next nine years he followed Horace’s precept, publishing nothing, but devoting himself to polishing and perfecting his art. The result was successful beyond his dreams, for the 1842 volumes not only conciliated his former critical foes, but stamped him as a supreme master of the art of literary craftsmanship. These volumes included such poems as *Morte D’Arthur, Locksley Hall*, and *Ulysses*, and Fitzgerald was of opinion that he never again reached the level of these two slim volumes.

But his fame was now assured, and *The Princess* (1847) only confirmed the certainty of his succession to Wordsworth as Poet Laureate. This he actually became in 1850, which may be called his *annus mirabilis*, for in that year also he married Miss Emily Sellwood, and published *In Memoriam*—his immortal elegy on Arthur Hallam. *Maud* appeared in 1855, the *Idylls of the King* in 1858, and his popularity at the date of the production of *Enoch Arden* in 1864 was such that 17,000 copies were said to have been sold on the morning of publication.

In his later years he wrote several dramas, including *Queen Mary, Harold*, and *Becket*, but his strength did not lie in that direction. Other volumes followed, and in 1884 his long and strenuous life of poetic effort was crowned by his being made Baron Tennyson of Freshwater and Aldworth. In 1890, at the age of eighty-one, he composed his matchless swan-song ‘Crossing the Bar’ —a lyric of exquisite perfection which has sung itself into the hearts of the whole British race. He died in October 1892, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.
Tennyson's Poetic Methods

It is impossible here to enter fully into Tennyson's poetic methods; we shall endeavour merely to elucidate some of those features which serve to discriminate his work from that of others, to point out some of those qualities which may reasonably be called Tennysonian. First, then, in his diction there is that constant pictorial element which he borrowed from Keats, and which appears again in the work of Swinburne and the Pre-Raphaelites. This element enters into all his descriptive work, and there is also a richness of word-colouring suggestive of the sister art of painting. Very little effort is necessary to enable a reader to visualize the scenes, and the language is very carefully chosen so as to have this colour and pictorial suggestion. This is probably also one explanation of his fondness for those double epithets, which are almost invariably 'picturesque'—'breaker-beaten', 'tall-towered', &c.

Secondly, we may refer to his repetition of words and phrases—a device which he borrowed from Milton. *Enoch Arden* has many examples of this, but perhaps a better example than any other is to be found in *Geraint and Enid*,

... and grew
Forgetful of his promise to the King,
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,
Forgetful of his princedom and its cares.

This device, however, is used chiefly in subservience to the wider principle of the harmony of sound and meaning. Very few poets, if any, have ever surpassed Tennyson in this power of making the sound to be an echo of the sense. He achieves this in some measure by his choice
of words, but chiefly by a subtle arrangement of metrical feet. Take, for example, the first line of *Enoch Arden*:

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm.

Here, the spondaic first foot suggests the long wall of cliffs, while in the third foot the word 'breaking' is not only the one exact word to suit the sense, but its trochaic rhythm coming immediately after the iambic rhythm of the second foot forces the reader to pause, and gives to the line just that jar or break which suggests the gap in the cliffs wherein the village lies.

Take again that line:

The little innocent soul flitted away.

Here, the anapaestic third foot and the trochaic fourth give just that light, jerky, flitting movement which suggests the flight of a little bird.

Or, finally, take that magnificently sonorous line:

The league-long roller thundering on the reef,

where the long-drawn-out syllables of the first half of the line suggest the long incoming ocean swell—gathering to a crest, while the word 'thundering' suggests, in a wonderfully telling way, not only by its sense, but by its syllabic structure as well, the crash of the roller breaking into surf.

Lastly, Tennyson was familiar with every device that can make verse flowing and melodious. Thus we find him constantly indulging in alliteration and assonance, though he never lets these run riot as some of his successors do. But besides this, he has a certain richness of vowel music which is hard to describe but easy to hear—sequences of open vowel sounds which make his verse a continual joy to the listener, for half the beauty is lost if it is not read aloud. In fact, it is this vowel-music which gives Tennyson's verse that 'sweetness' which has sometimes been most unkindly criticized.
These are only a few notes which the student must verify and amplify for himself, and we have dealt only with the more mechanical aspect of Tennyson's genius. In the sublimier regions of poetry, others may soar with stronger wing, but in mastery of metrical technique he is without a superior; to quote the phrase he himself uses of Milton—he is indeed a 'mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies'.

**Enoch Arden (1864)**

In some manuscript notes for his son, on *Enoch Arden*, Tennyson wrote that *Enoch Arden* was founded on a theme given him by the sculptor Woolner, and that this particular story came out of Suffolk, though something like it is told in Brittany and elsewhere (*Tennyson: A Memoir*, vol. ii. 7). The story, indeed, with many variations, the tale of the return of a long-absent lover or husband (sometimes even in the form of a demon), is one of the commonest themes in ballad literature and dates as far back, at least, as the *Odyssey* itself. And the selection of a theme, which has thus been approved to be of such intense and enduring human interest, helps to give *Enoch Arden* a force and vitality lacking in some of its author's more ambitious efforts. For, though we may not wholly agree with Matthew Arnold that, in literature, 'all depends on the subject', nevertheless, the old Horatian doctrine, that 'he who chooses a theme according to his powers will find neither command of language nor lucid arrangement fail him', contains in it an element of deep and permanent truth.

The sympathetic representation of scenes from lowly common life was not a new departure in literature, though it had been more common in the novel than in poetic narrative. Crabbe, however, and Wordsworth also afforded
Tennyson examples of 'this, though his treatment is noticeably different from that of either. In Crabbe's work, there is a pervading gloom and an insistence on dismal detail which would be more appropriate in a so-called 'realistic' novel, and is altogether absent from *Enoch Arden*. Wordsworth, again, has many noble and beautiful pieces in this field, such as *Michael*, but, writing in accordance with his theory that there is no essential difference between the language of prose and that of poetry, he tends in such pieces to run into insipid triviality. It is only when the pathos and emotion of the story itself transmutes the words altogether and makes everything sublime that he rises to real poetic eminence. On such occasions, he can attain a bare austere grandeur surpassing anything Tennyson ever wrote; but these poetic peaks are rather far apart, and the rest has little poetic colouring at all. His stories might almost as well have been in prose. But in *Enoch Arden*, the poetic atmosphere is never absent, and from beginning to end the story is charged with a high imaginative quality, and the diction is full of delicate poetic suggestion.

These elements in *Enoch Arden* have, however, been subjected to considerable criticism. Critics are divided in opinion, moreover, for, while Mr. Stopford Brooke thinks the diction so perfectly appropriate to the subject that one does not notice anything jarring about it, Professor Macneile Dixon, on the other hand, seems to regard the poem as a story quite overlaid with fine writing, altogether inappropriate. Walter Bagehot, also, in his *Literary Studies*, vol. ii, discusses it fully as a specimen of the 'ornate style' in poetry. He argues that Tennyson employed this ornate style on purpose to distract attention from the central figure, because 'a dirty sailor who did not go home to his wife is not an agreeable being: a varnish must be put on him to make him shine'. Such crudity
of criticism, coming from one usually so acute and illuminating in his judgements, is very astonishing and may well arouse a smile. But he goes on to say that the famous descriptions in the poem are also inept, because they enlarge on aspects of things which would not have appealed to a sailor man of this sort at all.

Now, underlying all such criticism, there seem to be two fundamental errors. The first is that a poor sailor—a person from common life—is an unsuitable subject for poetic treatment. One would have thought that Wordsworth in his famous Preface had dispelled that piece of intolerant critical snobbery for ever. The passions and the emotions are what give life to all great literature, and these are the common inheritance of prince and peasant alike. It is not the fact of Enoch's being a sailor that is important, but the strength and nobility of his ethical and emotional nature. And surely such natures are as common in lowly life as in high. Yet Bagehot speaks of Enoch as an unreal character—'an exceptional sailor at an exceptionally refined port'—and can actually say that 'as Enoch was and must be coarse, in itself the poem must depend for a charm on a "gay confusion"—on a splendid accumulation of impossible accessories'. Such perversity of judgement is really hard to understand.

The second fundamental error seems to be in regarding the poem as in any sense dramatic. Had it been so, the diction and imagery would unquestionably have had to accord strictly with the characters who used them. But, when the method of presentation chosen is not the dramatic but the narrative, there is manifestly no such limitation imposed. The poet must be allowed to treat his theme in such a way as will, in his opinion, best arouse a sympathetic imaginative reconstruction in the mind of his reader. That Tennyson has succeeded, by his poetic elaboration, in doing this much more effectively
than by any bare literal unadorned narrative (such as Enoch himself might have given) is surely beyond all doubt.

The poem was written when Tennyson was at the zenith of his powers, and thus, as we might expect, the architecture of the poem is wholly admirable. In a letter to Tennyson (see the Memoir, vol. ii. 16) Browning wrote, 'Enoch' continues the perfect thing I thought it at first reading.' It has, indeed, the symmetry and the unity of effect which mark the finished artist. There is also an agreeable crispness and conciseness of expression, and (especially in the transitions) a certain rapidity of movement. The interweaving of incident, too, is deserving of the most careful study. As an example, we might point out how Tennyson takes care to avoid Enoch's stumbling on the happy household immediately on his return, and all the ugly scene that must have followed, but makes him be told the story first by Miriam Lane. But the whole scheme of the poem, the fine handling of the emotional crises, the gradual stimulation and concentration of interest up to the climax on Enoch's return, with the appropriate relaxation of the emotional tension thereafter, are all worthy of the highest praise.

Regarding the story in itself, there is little to be said. There is only one word in the language that is suitable to describe it—the familiar, hackneyed, and much abused word—tragedy. Yet it is not a tragedy in the Greek sense of the word, and, as a drama, would probably fail in consequence. Greek tragedy required that the hero should have a great and noble, but not perfect, character. In it there had to be some ἀμαρτία, some 'error of human frailty', which was the cause of, and led directly up to, the final catastrophe. But in Enoch, there is no ἀμαρτία, and it is difficult to see how any of the three should have acted otherwise than they did. The three charac-
ters being what they were, the whole story evolves spontaneously and inevitably, and bears the stamp of truth to human experience. It is, in fact, an expression of 'the sense of tears in mortal things'—of the inexplicable and eternal mystery of human pain.

In conclusion, it may be interesting to compare and contrast the story with two similar tales. Mr. John Masefield, in a recent poem—The Daffodil Fields, gives an illustration of how Enoch Arden would have ended had Enoch been devoid of his high and chivalrous nature. In Mr. Masefield's story, the woman is thrown over by the unprincipled scoundrel whom she loved, and the good and honest, but rejected, lover does all in his power to induce the adventurer to return to her, but in vain. Finally, she consents to marry the other, and they live happily for a time. On hearing, in South America where he lived, of the marriage, the adventurer is filled with jealousy and returns to England, and the result is the death of all three. By excluding this element of unprincipled passion, Tennyson has given Enoch Arden a dignity and ethical value that stand out the more vividly in contrast with the other.

But a closer parallel still is to be found in that fine old Scottish song Auld Robin Gray where the story is told from the lips of the heroine herself. Here, again, it is the noble self-sacrifice for the sake of her parents that leads the girl to give up her absent sailor lover and marry Auld Robin Gray. And the stanzas that describe the parting between her and her old lover on his return have a pathetic wail and tragic intensity surpassing anything that even Tennyson could write.

O sair did we greet, and mickle did we say;  
We took but ae kiss and we tore ourselves away.  
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;  
O why do I live to say, O wae's me!
I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin;
I darena think o' Jamie, for that wad be a sin.
But I will do my best a guid wife ay to be,
For auld Robin Gray is a kind man to me.

It is not only their deep and permanent human interest,
but also this heroic note of utter self-renunciation, that
gives both *Enoch Arden* and *Auld Robin Gray* assurance
of immortality.
E NO C H A R D E N

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder’d church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower’d mill;
And high in heaven behind it a grey down
With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller’s only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor’s lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play’d
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn;
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow’d, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash’d away.
A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:  
In this the children play'd at keeping house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,  
While Annio still was mistress; but at times  
Enoch would hold possession for a week:  
'This is my house and this my little wife.'  
'Mine too,' said Philip 'turn and turn about:’  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made  
Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,  
Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at this  
The little wife would weep for company,  
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,  
And say she would be little wife to both.  

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,  
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;  
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
To purchase his own boat, and make a home  
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast  
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year  
On board a merchantman, and made himself  
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life  
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:  
And all men look'd upon him favourably:  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May  
He purchased his own boat, and made a home  
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up  
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.  

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
The younger people making holiday.
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large grey eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
There, while the rest were loud in merrymaking,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honourable toil;
With children; first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward; for in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven: thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell:
A limb was broken when they lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one:
Another hand crept too across his trade
Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd
"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing: yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what she brought
Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives—
So might she keep the house while he was gone——
Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea twice or thrice—
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled fatherlike,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.
And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him; and then he said
'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it.'
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle 'and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again
Come Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke 'O Enoch, you are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here'
(He named the day) get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears.'

But when the last of those last moments came,
'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again,
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
And fear no more for me; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it.'

Enoch rose,

Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,

When Annie would have raised him Enoch said
'Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the child
Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
Thro' all his future; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But thro' not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding 'what would Enoch say?'
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold:
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.
Now the third child was sickly-born and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care: nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
'Surely' said Philip 'I may see her now,
May be some little comfort; ' therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falteringly
'Annie, I came to ask a favour of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply
'Favour from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!' half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

'I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said
You chose the best among us—a strong man:
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the world—
For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours: that was his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be
To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all our lives?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:
This is the favour that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks me down;
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:
He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd

'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and everyway,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,  
The late and early roses from his wall,  
Or conies from the down, and now and then  
With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
To save the offence of charitable, flour  
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:  
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,  
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
Light on a broken word to thank him with.  
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;  
From distant corners of the street they ran  
To greet his heartly welcome heartily;  
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;  
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs  
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him  
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd  
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them  
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
Down at the far end of an avenue,  
Going we know not where: and so ten years,  
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,  
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd  
To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd  
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:  
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,  
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him  
'Come with us, Father Philip' he denied;  
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,  
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,  
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,  
Just where the prone edge of the wood began  
To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
Fail'd her; and sighing 'let me rest' she said:  
So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a word.
'Tired?' but her face had fall'n upon her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
'The ship was lost' he said, 'the ship was lost! 390
No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?' And Annie said
'I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well then—let me speak:
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of His creatures. Think upon it:
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours:
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know.'

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
'You have been as God's good angel in our house.
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'
'I am content' he answer'd 'to be loved
A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried,
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a while:
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:
Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
O wait a little!' Philip sadly said
'Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little.' 'Nay' she cried
'I am bound: you have my promise—in a year:
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?'
And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
Then fearing night and chill for Annie rose,
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
Up came the children laden with their spoil;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong.
I am always bound to you, but you are free.'
Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
While yet she went about her household ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
That he had loved her longer than she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?' she ask'd.
'Yes, if the nuts' he said 'be ripe again:
Come out and see.' But she—she put him off—
So much to look to—such a change—a month—
Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
'Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'
And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;
Some that she but held off to draw him on;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own minds;
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;
But evermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty;
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
Careworn and wan; and all these things fell on her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he gone?'
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself a light,
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
'Under a palmtree.' That was nothing to her:  
No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept:  
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,  
Under a palmtree, over him the Sun:  
'He is gone' she thought 'he is happy, he is singing  
Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms  
Whereof the happy people strowing cried  
"Hosanna in the highest!"' Here she woke,  
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him  
'There is no reason why we should not wed.'  
'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both our sakes,  
So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,  
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.  
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,  
She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,  
She knew not what; nor loved she to be left  
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.  
What ailed her then, that ere she enter'd, often  
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,  
Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:  
Such doubts and fears were common to her state;  
Being with child: but when her child was born,  
Then her new child was as herself renew'd,  
Then the new mother came about her heart,  
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd  
The ship ' Good Fortune,' tho' at setting forth  
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook  
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext  
She slipt across the summer of the world,  
Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,  
She passing thro' the summer world again,  
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them; and last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a three-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning 'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;
Then, tho’ he knew not wherefore, started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return’d upon him, had not his poor heart
spoken with That, which being everywhere
lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch’s early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish’d, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her destined course,
Stay’d by this isle, not knowing where she lay:
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill’d the shores
With clamour. Downward from his mountain gorge
Stept the long-haired long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem’d,
With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what: and yet he led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue
Was loosen’d, till he made them understand;
Whom, when their casks were fill’d they took aboard:
And there the tale he utter’d brokenly,
Scarce credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen’d to it;
And clothes they gave him and free passage home;
But oft he work’d among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his county, or could answer him,
If question’d, aught of what he cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro’ all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev’n in that harbour whence he sail’d before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward—home—what home? had he a home?
His home, he walk’d. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro’ either chasm,
Where either haven open’d on the deeps,
Roll’d a sea-haze and whelm’d the world in grey;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither’d holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the Robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro’ the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
Last, as it seem’d, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach’d the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam’d thro’ the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking ‘dead or dead to me!’

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone
Who kept it; and his widow, Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow’d,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby’s death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip’s child: and o’er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem’d he felt the tale
Less than the teller: only when she closed
‘Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost’
He, shaking his grey head pathetically;
Repeated muttering ‘cast away and lost;’
Again in deeper inward whispers ‘lost!’

But Enoch yearn’d to see her face again;
‘If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy.’ So the thought
Haunted and harass’d him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip’s house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip’s dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open’d on the waste,
Fleurish’d a little garden square and wall’d:
And in it thro’ve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn’d the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn’d, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish’d board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth:
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o’er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair’d and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear’d his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss’d it, and they laugh’d:
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father’s knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children’s love,—
Then he, tho’ Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger’d and shook, holding the branch, and fear’d
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open’d it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

'Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! aid me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her peace.  
My children too! must I not speak to these?  
They know me not. I should betray myself.  
Never: no father's kiss for me—the girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my son.'

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street he went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore  
Prayer from a living source within the will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's wife'  
He said to Miriam 'that you told me of,  
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?'  
'Aye, aye, poor soul' said Miriam, 'fear enow!  
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,  
Why, that would be her comfort;' and he thought  
'After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,  
I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.  
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stinted commerce of those days;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
Yet since he did but labour for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
See thro' the grey skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking ' after I am gone,
Then may she learn I loved her to the last.'
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said,
' Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
Before I tell you—swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'
' Dead ' clamour'd the good woman, ' hear him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'
' Swear ' added Enoch sternly ' on the book.'
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
Then Enoch rolling his grey eyes upon her,
' Did you know Enoch Arden of this town ?'
' Know him? ' she said ' I knew him far away.
Aye, aye, I mind him coming down the street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:
' His head is low, and no man cares for him.
I think I have not three days more to live;
I am the man.' At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
' You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
Higher than you be.' Enoch said again,
' My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
My grief and solitude have broken me; 
Nevertheless, know you that I am he 
Who married—but that name has twice been changed—
I married her who married Philip Ray. 
Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes; 
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
Saying only 'See your bairns before you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose 
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied.

'Woman, disturb me not now at the last, 
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us any thing but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood,
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:
This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years,
And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:
It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
Crying with a loud voice 'a sail! a sail!
I am saved'; and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.
NOTES

1. *Long lines of cliff... down*: these first nine lines present the setting for the story—that of a typical East Coast fishing village, such as Tennyson must often have seen in his youth. It is noteworthy also that the scene is drawn from the viewpoint of the sea, the sea which is the accompaniment of the story all through.

5. *tall-towered*: the hyphenated double epithet is a favourite device of Tennyson, as it also was of Keats. The combination of two epithets into one was, however, very common in ancient Greek (cf. Homer’s ἄργυρόποντα, ‘silver-footed’; and πολύμητις, ‘of many counsels’—applied to Odysseus), and is much more common in other Teutonic languages—such as German and Danish—than in English. Tennyson, as here, often makes the two epithets alliterative as well; cf. rough-reddened, hollow-hung, daily-dwindling, &c.

7. *Danish barrows*: mounds of earth erected by the old Danish invaders of England to mark the graves of heroes. These old Vikings used sometimes to bury a dead hero in his ship and then pile earth over this so as to form a mound. Old Eng. beorg or beorh, a mound, hillock.

17. *swarthy*: dark-coloured from the bark with which fishermen tan their nets to preserve them from rotting.

18. *fluke*: the toe or the part of an anchor which catches in the ground. It is flattened and in shape somewhat resembles a flounder or fluke.


36. *little wife to both*: an instance of poetic irony. She actually became wife to both, though none of the three then realized how it would come about.

38. *life’s ascending sun*: a metaphor for young manhood.

55. *down-streaming*: the backward wash of the surf on the beach. Unless there is some one on shore to catch hold of the struggler in the water, landing is often impossible. As the rescuer, too, may be caught by the retreating wave, it is almost as dangerous for him as for the struggler in the water.

58. *purchased his own boat, and made a home*: note the poetic repetition from l. 47.

67. *prone*: here used in the sense of ‘downward-sloping’; usually, however, prone means ‘lying face downwards’ (the opposite of supine). Cf.l. 775. Lat. pronus, leaning or hanging forwards.
68. feather: a difficult word to interpret; probably the poet meant to depict simply the gradual thickening of the branches and leafage as the wood became more dense. Scott uses the word in the Monastery, chap. ii, 'little patches of wood and copse... feathering naturally up the beds of empty torrents'.

86. to the uttermost: notice the poet's insistence on this phrase from l. 46.

94. ocean-smelling osier: a creel or basket of willow-twigs made for holding fish.

98. portal-warding lion-whelp: the figure of a lion-cub which adorned the gateway of the Hall.

99. peacock-yewtree: a yewtree clipped into the shape of a peacock. During the eighteenth century, especially, this sort of ornamental gardening was common in England. It was a fashion introduced probably from Holland.

100. ministering: 'providing'. Lat. minister, a servant, attendant.

110. Another hand: a competitor in his fishing business.

122. China-bound: 'bound for China'. This word 'bound' is derived from the Old Norse buinn, ready, prepared, and was common in Middle English in the form boun.

123. boatswain: a sort of foreman sailor whose duty is to look after the tackle and rigging and to call the seamen to duty with a whistle. From Old Norse bât, a boat; and sveinn, a boy.

129. as when: the 'as' is redundant, and probably due to a confusion of two constructions; (1) 'only as grave as when', and (2) 'no graver than when'.

130. the fiery highway of the sun: the lane of glittering light on the sea, made by the reflection of the sun's beams.

131. And isles a light in the offing: the shadow of the little cloud falls on the glittering stretch of water and looks like a little island amid the light.

isles: here used verbally; 'puts an island into'.

154. Appraised: literally, 'estimated'. O. Fr. apreiser, to value, from Lat. ad, to; pretium, price.

175. raising: 'being raised'. So we hear occasionally, 'The house is building'.

178. as neat... seedling: an example of Tennyson's minute observation of nature. Before a bud blows, the petals of the flower are tightly packed away inside, and in a seed, the various parts of the undeveloped plant are stored neatly in embryo.

179. seedling: here used in the sense of 'little seed', and not in the usual sense of 'young plant'.

186-7. mystery... man-in-God: an obscure passage, but the reference is probably to that mysterious sense of communion with God, which is the very essence of prayer. 'God-in-man' is the longing after God in the heart of man, and 'man-in-God' is the human side of the Divine nature.
193. before you know it: another example of poetic irony; he did come in reality before she knew it, but in a way very different from his expectation.

196. Nay: in response to a look or word from his wife at his speaking so of the child.

205–9. she heard . . . overflow: Tennyson's son records in his Memoir that the poet said that the similes in Enoch Arden were all such as might have been used by simple fisher folk, and he quoted this simile as one of the tenderest he had written.

212. look upon your face no more: cf. Acts xx. 25, where Paul says to the Ephesians 'I know that ye all . . . shall see my face no more'.

220. shipshape: neat and tidy; note the appropriate nautical word: cf. I. 222.

222. Cast all your cares on God: see 1 Peter v. 7.


225. the sea is His . . . it: see Psalm xcvi. 5.

247. chime: 'be in accordance with'.

251. asking overmuch and taking less: the time-honoured fashion of bargaining by which one asks a much higher price than one is prepared to accept, so that the purchaser may fancy he has done a good stroke of business in 'bidding down' the price.

265. the voice: i. e. the doctor.

301. the precious morning hours: the early years of Enoch's children.

326. garth: a yard, garden, or enclosure. This word is cognate with the English word yard, which comes from Old Eng. geard, a yard, but garth is a northern form coming from the Old Norse garthr, a yard or enclosure.

337. conies: rabbits; from Lat. cuniculus, a rabbit.

340. whistled: the noise made by the revolving wind-wheel on the mill.


369. the weary down: the adjective 'weary' does not really refer to 'down' at all, but to the climbers of the down.

370. the prone edge . . . hollow: repeated from ll. 67, 68.

378. reluctant: here used in its literal sense, 'struggling against'. Lat. re, against or back; luctari, to struggle.

382. one dark hour . . . shadow: see ll. 72–9.

469. gossips: an example of how words may degenerate in meaning. Originally the word was God-sib, i. e. related in God, and meant a sponsor in baptism.

470. Abhorrent of a calculation crost: annoyed at the nonfulfilment of their prophecy that Philip and Annie would marry.

477. serpent eggs together: though some serpents bring forth their young alive, most of them lay eggs which are stuck together in a row like a string of beads.
487. *a sign*: some indication from Heaven as to Enoch's fate.

489. *Brook'd*: 'endured'.

490. *struck herself a light*: as lucifer matches were only invented about 1834, she would have had to employ a flint and steel 'a hundred years ago' (l. 10).

493. *Suddenly put her finger on the text*: an instance of a very old superstition, occasionally, perhaps, still persisted in. If one wished immediate divine guidance, the Bible was opened at random, and the first passage to strike the eye or be touched by the finger was regarded as the answer from heaven. The same practice was in vogue among the ancient Romans and Greeks in connexion with the works of Virgil and Homer.

494. *'Under a palmtree'*: see Judges iv. 5.

496. *When lo!... Sun*: Annie had a vision of Enoch, in her sleep, which would correspond closely with his actual position at the time, sitting probably under a palmtree to shade himself from the overhead sun. Through her ignorance, however, of foreign parts, Annie can only associate palmtrees with the Bible, and so at once assumes Enoch to be in heaven.

499. *Hosanna in the highest*: see Mark xi. 8–10; and John xii. 12, 13.

500. *Sun of Righteousness*: see Malachi iv. 2.

503. *Resolved*: here used in the sense of 'freed from doubt'.

506. *So*: 'if'; a common Shakespearian usage.

507. *merrily rang the bells*: cf. l. 80.

520. *the new mother*: the feeling of new motherhood.


525. *riding eastward*: i.e. with billows rolling eastward before a westerly gale.

526. *unvext*: 'unharmed'; used here in the Latin sense of *vexare*, to shake, shatter.

527. *the summer of the world*: the tropics.

528. *the Cape*: of Good Hope; formerly called the Cape of Storms.

531. *continually*: 'continuously', 'steadily'; this was in the region of the trade winds.

532. *the golden isles*: the East Indies. *Aurea Chersonesus*—the golden Chersonese—was the name given by late-classical geographers to the Malay Peninsula. Cf. Milton's *Par. Lost*, xi. 392; and *Par. R.*, iv. 74.

538. *sea-circle*: a circle of ocean bounded by the horizon with the ship as centre. Cf. *In Memoriam*, xii, 'O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large'.

539. *full-busted figure-head*: the figure of a full-chested woman fixed on the bow of the ship.

553. *life so wild*: the animals or birds on the island were so unacquainted with man that they did not fear him or flee from him.
565. Fire-hollowing: from want of tools, Indians and other savages used to hollow out their canoes by means of fire.

568. The mountain wooded, &c.: this passage has been much admired for its elaborate word-painting. Bagehot in his Literary Studies, vol. ii, speaks of it as ‘an absolute model of adorned art. No expressive circumstances can be added, no enhancing detail suggested’. The picture is, of course, deliberately elaborated for the poetical purpose of presenting a poignant contrast to the desolation in Enoch’s heart, longing for ‘a darker isle beyond the line’. Cf. l. 558, ‘Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content’.

lawn: a glade, a space of grass-covered ground. O.Fr. lande, ‘a wild, untilled, or grassy plain’.

570. coco’s: the cocanaut palm.

575. the broad belt: the Torrid Zone.

582. zenith: the part of the sky immediately overhead. Originally an Arabic word.

590. The blaze, &c. notice the effect of the repetition of the words and arrangement in enhancing the sense of monotony.

601. the line: a seaman’s term for the Equator.

606. dewy-glooming: shining with dew in the dim morning light.

611. the pealing of his parish bells: in celebration (the poet seems to suggest) of Annie’s marriage with Philip. Though he knew not why, Enoch shuddered at the imaginary sound.

628. mist-wreathen: the -en is an old ending of the past participle.

629. silent: because of the distance.

633. the long-hair’d long-bearded solitary: cf. Ben Gunn in Treasure Island and Alexander Selkirk on his rescue from the island of Juan Fernandez. The use of solitary as a noun is somewhat archaic, though it was employed by Wordsworth as the title for the second book of The Excursion.

636. inarticulate rage: excitement which prevented speech. Rage in this sense of excitement or emotion is now rare, but cf. Gray’s Elegy, l. 51:

‘Chill penury repressed their noble rage.’

657. her ghostly wall: of white chalk cliffs seen through the haze.

665. His home: the sequence of thought is ‘had he a home; at least, one that could be called in reality his home’.

Bright was that afternoon, &c.: note how, in this passage, the poet makes Nature to be in sympathy with Enoch’s experiences.

666. either chasm: see l. 1. The other chasm was that one ten miles north in whichlay the harbour from which he sailed.

669-71. Cut ... pasturage: the mist rolled up from the sea
and blotted out the road in front and left only a narrow strip of country visible on either side.

671. holt: a small wood or copse. Old Eng. holt, a wood.

tith: tilled or cultivated ground.

674. dead: note the intense effect of the repetition of this word.

686. pool: the harbour.

688. timber-crost: having wooden beams running across the front in a fashion which has become common again of late.

722. comfortable: this word may here be used (as in the Church Service) in the sense of comfort-giving, but probably the poet means it to express the fact that the light spoke of comfort within.

724. as the beacon-blaze allures The bird of passage: it is quite common for birds at night to stun or kill themselves on the glass of lighthouse windows.

728. latest: usually employed only for the last in point of time.

777. thence: from the island.

793. burthen: 'refrain'. This word should be spelt burden, coming as it does from the Fr. bourdon, a humming tone in music. Lat. burdo, a drone-bee. Cf. Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, l. 673:

'This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun.'

803. enow: an old form of 'enough'.

813. stinted: 'scanty', in comparison with the commerce of later days.

834. the book: 'the Bible'.

842. far away: even when at a distance.

876. the bar: the marriage with Philip.

904. a calling of the sea: Hallam, Lord Tennyson, in the Memoir, explains that the 'calling of the sea' is a term used chiefly in the western parts of England to signify a ground swell. 'When this occurs on a windless night, the echo of it rings through the timbers of the old houses in a haven.'

911. a costlier funeral: this is an unfortunate conclusion, as it introduces a sordid mercenary note altogether alien to the high emotional character of the rest of the poem. It is in fact a sort of anti-climax.