

absolutely wicked and shocking, like the beliefs of persecutors—and understanding and loving each other, that I sometimes feel as if it ought hardly to be talked about. The most wonderfully and divinely unselfish man I ever knew, Mazzini, whose whole life was self-sacrifice, was so intensely possessed by this faith that if he could have been uncharitable it would have been towards the disbelievers and preachers of disbelief in it. . . .

*To the same (after an illness)*

The Pines,

June 21st, 1893.

How am I to thank you enough for your precious letter? You know what a relief and delight it is to see your beautiful handwriting again, in pencil as legible as ink. I trust you will soon have a nice country place to go to and recruit in, but first you will let me come and see you. I don't believe even this terribly long illness can really have altered you one bit. Ill or well, at all ages, you always had and always will have the loveliest and sweetest face possible and appropriate to whatever was or will be its time of life.

*To the same*

Sep. 7, 1891.

I was so glad to be at home—it is always home where you are—in those first days of sorrow, and to know that you were glad to have me.

*To the same*

Sep. 18, '92.

It felt very sad and odd to me at first (really rather like a first day at school) to go to bed without the thought that I should see you in the morning to look forward to. But I must be thankful for so good a time as I have had and shall always be happy when I think of. The garden and the moorside and the mere will always have the pleasantest of associations for me—and, above all, that beautiful last drive through the wood to your favourite point of view.

*To the same (on a butterfly New Year's Card)*

1894.

Perhaps you know that the same Greek word means "butterfly" and "soul"; or rather the Greek word for "soul" is "butterfly" (or vice versa, for "butterfly" is "soul"). It is certainly

the most beautiful and appropriate image or type of resurrection and immortality that ever was or can be thought of—and therefore very seasonable as an allegory of the new year rising from the grave of the old one.

*To the same*

Ap. 30, 1893.

. . . A corner in the neighbouring woods or copses where I had discovered the loveliest group or natural arrangement of white and pink or red hawthorns I ever saw anywhere ; and just as we got there the sun amiably came out (to please me, who am one of his old-world worshippers—do you know that grand last saying of the dying Mirabeau as he looked at the sunrise he had just lived to see—" Si ce n'est pas là Dieu, c'est au moins son image " ?)—and transfigured and glorified everything.

*To his eldest Sister*

27 Ja., '91.

I am very glad that dear old Irvine [their aged gardener] had so happy an end. . . . I feel with you about the appropriateness for him of that divine old hymn with its " gallant walks."



*To the same (after his Mother's funeral)*

Dec. 4, '96.

I know no such comfort in sorrow as the sight of little children. A look or a smile from them not only *re-assures* one that "of such is the kingdom of heaven," but takes one thither and makes one a denizen of that kingdom—for a few minutes, anyhow. . . .

June 11, '97.

I often and often think of what you said to me on Dec. 1st just outside the Churchyard after the funeral—that we must be more and closer to each other now than ever.

*To the same*

19 Ja., '92.

I have been "on the rampage" tramping over the frozen roads and commons for ten or twelve miles at a rate of from four to five miles an hour (I am told) and enjoying myself outrageously. The beauty of frost in this neighbourhood is something beyond description. The shadows of the frozen sprays or sprigs of heather against the sun at noon on the hard bright ground were so lovely that one had to stop and stare at them ;

and you couldn't wish for a prettier sight than the shining levels of ice covered with skaters of all ages and sizes.

. . . . .

5 Jan., '94.

The whin bushes are miracles of beauty—all swans' down and diamonds and the ground almost too splendid to look at—miles on unbroken miles of starry jewellery or flower-like tufts and clusters of snow.

*To his Mother*

The Pines,  
June 4th, 1895.

I must apologize for being so late in thanking you for your lovely letter of May 21st. I am shocked when I compare the dates. . . . I hope that even in these bad times you will find a nice place with gardens and fields sufficient. Of course removing must be costly as well as troublesome, but to get settled for good in a nice bit of country would surely be worth anything. I should prefer such a retreat as the Shag Rock . . . but possibly it might not quite do for a family establishment.

I am glad you had a visit from Mrs. Boyle and Lady Tennyson, and hope it did not over-tire you.

Perhaps you may care to hear that I am making out a scheme for a narrative poem of King Arthur's time, founded on a beautiful tragic legend about two brothers—Knights of Northumberland. I have not finished my sketch of the story yet, but Walter likes the opening stanzas—inspired by the (late) hawthorns about here which are *too* lovely while they last (the flowers are all over now, of course)—that I am much encouraged to get on with it.

*To the same*

The Pines,  
June 16th, 1895.

I am not quite sure but much afraid that I have not yet thanked you for your letter of the 5th. When one has other writing on hand one is apt, unless one answers a letter at once, to think it has been answered when very possibly it hasn't. . . . I wish you could come and see and smell the haymaking in Wimbledon Park, it is always so pretty. . . . The Yorkshire moors sound very fascinating, but to be again under your roof anywhere would always of course be for me the greatest of all pleasures and privileges. I long to



hear of you settled down to your "villeggiatura" (Do you remember our Goldoni readings when I was a little chap? You got me the modern languages prize at Eton, you know.) . . . Dear good William Rossetti has just sent me the table-cover, which is really a very beautiful thing—much too big for my table—indeed it covers my sofa, which is not a small one. I need not say how much I value a relic of his sister, especially one that was originally his gift to her. . . . It may perhaps gratify you—as it made me very glad to read—what the *Saturday Review* says in its notice of a book on "Lion Hunting in Somaliland." "The pig-sticking adventures are less interesting, though the hand-to-hand fight with a great boar, when Captain Melliss had had to go on foot into the thick jungle, recalls Mr. Swinburne's fine description in *Atalanta* of the slaying of the Calydonian boar, and it is interesting to observe how the plain record of the sportsman literally corroborates the vivid picture of the poet's imagination."

*To the same*

July 19th, 1882.

I have to thank you, as I would and should have done, but for interruptions, by return of

post, for giving me by far the greatest pleasure that anything connected with any work of mine can give me. I know you cannot need to be assured how infinitely more to me than the applause of all the reviews on earth is a word of praise from you—above all, on the subject of my poems on little children. . . . As I said to Watts, What would three columns of large type in the *Times* be compared with three lines from your hand? But I cannot and will not try to tell you the delight you have given me. . . .

. . . My movements must in some degree depend upon yours, as I could not dream of letting you go gadding and gallivanting to foreign shores without our meeting to say goodbye and “*a rivederci*” (the prettiest and most sensible of all forms of parting). I said it to the Burtons (who are leaving England once more) last week, when we dined with them at our old friend Dr. Bird’s. Old Mr. Horne (the poet, Australian magistrate, dramatist, and among other things correspondent—as I may remember—of Mrs. Browning) was of the party—as wonderful a young man of 85 as Mrs. Procter is, at the same age, a wonderful young woman. He has sent me sundry photographs of children in sign of sympathy with my poems on the subject. . . .



I hope this tardy note may reach you,  
but I fear it may not, before you start for  
Bonchurch. I trust the change will  
do you good, & that when you return you  
will be well enough & good enough to call  
on me.

Alwin Burne



*To the same*

The Pines,  
Easter Day, April 5th, 1885.

. . . Your letters *did* come last evening—just at dinner time. I did not answer them the same night because I had a fancy that I should like the first words I wrote in this new year of my life to be addressed to you. . . .

. . . What stuff people talk about youth being the happiest time of life! Thank God . . . I am very much more than twice as happy now as I was when half my present age just twenty-four years ago.

It *would* be nice if you could come down here some warm spring day and take a short quiet drive along my favourite road with me, which I have so long wanted you to see in its beauty—the moor miscalled a common, the quaint old town (and especially one long lovely bit of old weather-stained many-coloured wall, which we all delight in) and the beautiful lawns, meadows, avenues, and copses of Wimbledon Park. All this you might see in an hour's gentle drive. I have taken the walk before breakfast more than once.



*To the same*

The Pines,  
June 16th, 1886.

I have been walking this afternoon over the roads we drove over yesterday, following exactly the trace of the carriage (except that in going out to Wimbledon I took the heath or the open down instead of the high road skirting it) and going over in my mind every minute and every incident of the drive which I shall always remember, I am sure, as one of the most thoroughly delightful things I have to remember in all the days of my life. It was quite perfect as a realization of all my dreams; and every inch of the way to-day, every turn and every tree and every change of prospect, was more enjoyable to me than even it ever was before. . . .

*To the same*

The Pines,  
Sept. 21st, 1890.

I am unhappy to think of your having suffered so much as I fear you must have done since I last saw you. But I cannot think you will ever look "very much altered" to me. I may say now how I have been longing to see you again and

thinking of the happy time I had under your (temporary) roof last year. Every morning my first thought was of delight that I was going to see you, and every night my last and strongest was one of thankfulness that I had had another day of you. . . .

*To his eldest Sister*

Dec. 27, '95.

If only poor Coleridge could—if only poor Rossetti could—have taken the same wholesome and happy and grateful delight in Nature as Wordsworth and Tennyson did and as Walter and I do, they would have been so much happier—and (I hope and think) such much better men.

*To his youngest Sister*

The Pines,  
June 21, '5.

Very many thanks for my returned proofs. I am very really happy to hear that you read my little old story with interest, but rather sorry you "wish it hadn't been letters." Do you know that *all* the novels approved and admired by Dr. Johnson were cast in that form? Of course, as I said

to M——\* in a letter written after I received your note, it wants more attention than a flowing narrative, and bores the reader of our days unless he cares to think while reading—a little ; but I have just got a letter by return of post saying she doesn't think it at all a bad way of telling a story. But I know Walter is right in saying that the public will agree with you and the book won't sell half as well as if it had been written in the third person. M. has not seen anything of it : you are the only person whom I have sent or should think of sending the proofs to.

You will, I know, be pleased to hear that your liking of the little bit of description of " the different homes " was anticipated more than forty years ago (the letters are dated just about the time I wrote them or perhaps a year earlier) by our dear Ned Jones ; who was as cordial and delightful in his enjoyment (rather than criticism) of the whole book. I should never be surprised to find you and him agreeing on any point.

*To his Mother*

The Pines,

June 8th [no year given].

I need not say how glad I was to get your letter the day before yesterday . . . besides the message

\* The editor.



from dear old Uncle Percy\* who was so kind a host to me in past years. I suppose it implies that he would be pleased rather than bored or put out by receiving the copy of my last new book which I shall tell Chatto to send him. I am very sincerely and deeply gratified by what he says of my Shakespeare book. It is a great pleasure to me always that anything I do should find favour in the sight of old people (*let alone* one's nearest relations), and I have had great good luck (I think) generally in that line and especially of late—beginning with Hugo himself, and going on with Trelawny, Halliwell-Phillipps and Collier—the Patriarch of the whole tribe. Add up their four several ages, and it would be going on for four hundred years—the time of the Wars of the Roses. Think of corresponding with four men whose lives united would reach back to the days of York and Lancaster (or nearly as far!).

Talking of old age naturally reminds me of the venerable Bertie, who in spite of the certainly capricious weather continues to enjoy his usual health and spirits. His aunt, I am sorry to say, left us yesterday, having stayed just long enough to hear the end of a new poem which I finished the day before in honour of dear old Landor—another friend of ninety years upward. It is

\* The Honble. Percy Ashburnham.

800 lines long—280 longer than that on Hugo. I fear the length will frighten you, but Watts deliberately pronounces it the finest thing I ever wrote. I am very glad if it is, for I hold his memory in the most sincere affection and reverence, and can very honestly declare that I would sincerely prefer to any success or profit or notoriety the knowledge that I had done something to spread his fame or serve his memory or help to widen the circle of his admirers and students or to hasten the inevitable but too long delaying date when all Englishmen will agree in ranking his name among those of our noblest countrymen and greatest writers.

[The following extracts are of a political nature, and are given as specimens of his views and feelings on the questions of the day.]

*To his Mother*

The Pines,  
Dec. 8th, 1882.

. . . I was very glad to have news of you all and to be assured, as I knew I should be, of your kind sympathy both in my enjoyment of the honour done me and the kindness shown me in Paris, and also in the one serious drawback to that

enjoyment. After all it is only on rare occasions that I really feel the want of ears, going out so very seldom as I do—and I am unspeakably thankful that my eyes, which I should feel the want of more than most people, are so good and strong.

I am grieved at two pieces of news in the papers—the trouble which has overtaken poor good Mrs. Joynes, who was so infinitely kind to me, at the age when I most needed kindness—and the death of M. Louis Blanc, one of the very best, bravest, gentlest and most unselfish men in the world. Even the *Times* cannot pretend or venture to question that. I shall always remember with pleasure the one evening I spent in his company, when I had the honour of converting that eminent Republican and Socialist leader to Jacobitism (which I always boast of) by the surely unanswerable argument that if we had succeeded in bringing back the Stuarts and driving out the Guelphs, England would now be a Republic. For we never could have been quite such servile idiots as to recall the Hanover rats—if we had once driven them out—and we certainly should have had to get rid of the Stuarts a third time—we *could* not have stood more than 20 or 30 years more of their government—and *faute de mieux* (as royalists would say)—*faute de pis*, as I should say—we



must have proclaimed the Commonwealth of England—this time without the Puritanism and Militarism which made the ruin of Cromwell's Government inevitable as soon as the personal influence of the great usurper and dictator was removed by his death.

I hope I have not bored you by my historical argument in favour of the Jacobites—but I am proud to say that the great republican historian to whom I first explained it seemed really struck by its originality and plausibility, and admitted most courteously that I had made out a good case.

*To his youngest Sister*

Sep. 24/99.

I had all but forgotten what I had "made a note of" to tell you. A week or two since I received a request to let my name be added to a committee of sympathizers with that unspeakable old villain Paul Kruger and his lying thieving murdering Boers; a committee convened to protest against the wickedness of the Government which (as far as I can see) *is* very seriously to blame for not giving the rascals far shorter shrift—by the despatch of an ultimatum *months* ago. I think you would have approved of the note

which informed these worthies that I was about the very last man in England to allow my name to be associated with theirs.

*To his Mother*

The Pines,  
Ap. 9th, 1883.

I send you the number of *Rappel* containing my letter on the "Irish Question" which you said you should like to see. Of course I did not ask the editor to suppress either my signature or the mention of ——'s name as the encourager of tortures and murderers of women; it was my friend Auguste Vacquerie's own consideration and forethought which induced him to do so—greatly to Watts's relief and satisfaction—rather than expose me to the chance of such reprisals as are usually practised or attempted by those noble and heroic patriots who have made the very name of Irishman as loathsome in the American republic as in the English kingdom. If I can find the numbers of the *Pall Mall Gazette* containing the very curious and interesting history of the extermination of a league of Irish murderers by the united action of private citizens in America, I will send them to you. I think you will—as Watts does—agree with me that there is some danger of

these wretches being the means of introducing into England the spirit of Lynch law—which is perhaps better than none at all: and that if the English people is once thoroughly roused by excess of provocation, there will and must be a risk of blind and unjust retaliation—of which there has been more than enough on both sides in the past. In reading my letter, you will understand that the *Rappel* had been quoting the tyranny of former English rulers, and especially of Cromwell, as an explanation of the existing spirit of Ireland towards England; and though of course not a justification, a palliation of Irish political crime. This, I need not tell you, is the favourite plea of Irish orators and writers; and I thought it would be a good and useful work to point out that it is about as just and reasonable as it would be to suggest that the horrible atrocities exercised by French kings on whole provinces of France in the name of the Church and the Monarchy should be laid to the charge of the existing French government. Bad and cruel and stupid as the English—under considerable provocation, it must be admitted—have sometimes, and too often, been in their rule of Ireland, there is nothing even in that unpleasant part of our history comparable to the horrors of the “dragonnades” which Louis XIV. inflicted on his subjects to please the Church, his mistress,



and that sainted prelate Bossuet : but nobody suggests that the South of France should rise in rebellion against any form of government in consequence of what happened two hundred years ago. And yet, if the argument is worth anything in the one case, it must be worth as much or more in the other.

*To the same*

The Pines,  
May 16, 1886.\*

I really cannot tell you—I should have to use very demonstrative language if I tried—how much pleasure your approbation of my late political work gives me. Of course it was a great interruption to other things ; but I really thought it was every loyal Englishman's duty to do what he could at such a time against such traitors, such cowards, such time-servers and such idiots, as infest the ways of politics just now. It was something, certainly, for one man—quite outside the active or political or social world—to get a hearing for what he had to say, and an opening for the attack he had to make, in three leading papers at once. And I may say, from what I hear, that the

\* I am inclined to think this is a wrong date. The poem and other incidents mentioned in the letter belong to 1887.

attack has not fallen flat. But my old and dear friend Blind's letter was of course the great proof to me that all my friends for whose opinions I cared a brass farthing were and must be with me. People nowadays seem to forget . . . that the first principle of a Republican is and must be Unity (without which liberty can only mean licence—or pure anarchy—or pretentious hypocrisy) and that Republicans ought in common consistency and honesty to be the first to protest against a party of anarchists and intriguers whose policy is to break up the state. . . . And now I send you—as in duty (and pleasure) bound, the first copy printed of my \* ode—that is, one of the two first copies—the other going back to the printer's. So you will be the first to read it outside this household (except of course the magazine people); and I hope you will like it. I got up two mornings running at five o'clock to work on it, so as to get it finished in good time. Watts was much taken with the 26th † stanza in particular, about the recent triumphs of science: I

\* "The Commonweal."

† XXVI.

The forces of the dark dissolve,  
 The doorways of the dark are broken;  
 The word that casts out night is spoken,  
 And whence the springs of things evolve,  
 Light, born of night, bears token.

want you to like the 36th \* and I doubt not you will approve of the compliments paid to the present Unionist government, and the allusion to its precious predecessor, in the 40th and the five following. But I will say I never wrote anything that I thought better of than I do of the last seven stanzas.

[The four extracts which finish the collection are from letters addressed to myself. There is more difficulty in making a selection from these on account of the jokes and fictitious matter which bulk largely in our correspondence of many years.—EDITOR.]

The Pines,

Sep. 11, '99.

Here is your promised proof. I shall be glad if you like the play as well or half as well as [Watts] does. He *is* satisfactory! He borrowed this proof to go thro' it for the second time and is if anything more cordial and enthusiastic than when I read it out to him. . . . I have followed the

\* XXXVI.

Thy quickening woods rejoice and sing  
Till earth seems glorious as the sea,  
With yearning love too glad for glee  
The world's heart quivers towards the spring  
As all our hearts toward thee.



real dates exactly—it all happened, and I wrote it all in the month of June (you will recognize my Norse abhorrence of hot weather and southern climate here and there—how could our Northmen stand it! and fight in it!)—and where I have altered the facts of history, it has been only to raise the characters to a rather higher level, and tone down what was too naïf or primitive in half-savage straightforwardness for anything but a Saga. Hildegard is entirely my invention: in the two earlier English plays on the subject the love affair of Almachildes is simply a vulgar intrigue between a fast young soldier and a girl of no character in the royal household. Rosamund, so far from dying with the husband she had immolated to the memory of her father, bolted with Almachildes across the frontier into Pannonia, where in due time they were slain, if I rightly remember, by Lombard avengers of their great warrior king. I think you will agree with W. that my alterations are both poetical and moral improvements on the real story.

Oct. 11, '99.

I am truly grateful to you for telling me just what you think about the subject of my new play. It is certainly a queer as well as a grim story, and

it is very good of you to say what is very gratifying to me, that "no one could have told it as I have done, with such delicate touches," but the skull-cup and the wife's desperate revenge always fascinated me when I was quite a little fellow and read "Rosmunda" with my mother.

[These are some remarks upon the MS. translation of a modern Icelandic play, which I had lent him to look at.]

[1899.]

I have now read "The Cavemen" carefully through, which was much pleasanter to do in your beautiful handwriting than in "type-writing," which is my abhorrence. I couldn't try to read anything type-written. It is a very curious and interesting work. The fault in it seems to me the want of centralized interest—the diffusion of shifting interests among so many changing characters that it is impossible, even if you remember who is who, to bring your attention to bear and keep it fixed on any definite or definable point. When I read the 14th page I *did* sympathize with Valnastakk (or shall we say, Coat-o'-mail?) in his delight and sympathy with a swirling spate. There is nothing on land so lovely and exciting and "sympathique" to look upon—except the

finest waterfalls. Once when I was quite a little boy—years before Eton, I think—my father came into my bedroom at Mounces (I wish you had ever been with us there), took me out of bed, wrapped (or happit) me in a blanket and carried me through the garden, across the road, through the copse and down the bank to see the place where I had bathed that morning before breakfast, in a clear pool at the foot of a waterfall—and where there was now neither waterfall nor pool, but one unbroken yellow torrent roaring like continuous thunder. Perhaps I didn't enjoy and don't (as you see) remember it! . . .

How beautiful are the words of the dying man at page 53. I might say much more if I had time, but will only congratulate you on the achievement of a rather considerable task. If you *will* know, I think the killing of a wretched old carline rather horrid—I have a certain reverence for age and sex, however unpleasant any particular crone may make herself. . . . [He ends this letter by saying] I have just room and time to add a word of thanks to B—(the “Baby Kinswoman” of his exquisite poem) for her delicious primroses. They are under my eyes and nose as I write. . . .

(He never forgot to acknowledge little gifts, and more especially appreciated those of a child.)



(Here is a characteristic description of a storm.)

I say, have you heard or read about the great and glorious thunderstorm of last Tuesday? I had the jolly good luck to be caught in it—on an open common or moorland. I don't know if you're like me in that, but the sight of lightning and the sound of thunder do and always did intoxicate me—a harmless and wholesome intoxication, but I know no other word for it. I bet I've told you how my tutor caught me once two-thirds out of window on the top story and jerked me down violently by one leg when I was bathing in storm. "*What on earth* are you doing?" "Oh, sir, *isn't* it *nice*?" (I felt that "jolly" was too commonplace a word for anything so superlatively jolly.) "NICE!" said Mr. Joynes, in large capitals, "It's *awful*" . . . You should have seen how lovely the lightning was—and heard the thunder reminding "poor Mr. Handel" that even he can only imitate its *really* heavenly music. Once there came, or seemed to come down just straight in front of my face such a wonderful momentary flower of pure white fire, complete in its calyx and its petals *literally* radiating from the lovely centre, that one felt it was almost too heavenly for a dweller on earth to see. And the rain was a real bath. I was a drenched rag when I got home—

soaked through from head to foot—but it did me no end of good. I wish I could command storm at will, like a witch. But perhaps it might be rough on other people.

(This gives a little more about the “Etretât” episode.)

. . . Sport is all very well and wholesome by way of training, but such a death\* is no more desirable than mine would have been when I was swept out to sea for over two miles and picked up at the last gasp by a French fishing boat . . . in the 'sixties. It was a jolly good lark, and the fellows who had saved my life couldn't make enough of me. The friend I was staying with at “Etretât” (another old Etonian—dead now, poor dear fellow) when I came back again as his guest next year, and was rather astounded at finding myself rushed at, seized by arms and legs, hoisted and cheered, and carried all down the street with shouts of welcome, by the fisher folk and sailors who knew me again at once, said to me after I was let down in rather a dishevelled state of mind and body, “Why, don't you know you're their hero?” and I said, “I don't see where the

\* I have not the quotation at hand, but it refers to a youth killed in sport of some kind. (Ed.)

hero comes in—if I'd gone in after somebody who was drowning it would have been a creditable sort of thing—but it was just an accident." But did I ever tell you about our going out afterwards with these fellows fishing pieuvres—real live pieuvres? and the oldest grey-haired fisherman said he quite believed that there were such pieuvres as could hold a strong man down and suck him to death. . . . I put my little finger to the round cup-like tip of one of the suckers or tentacles of quite a little one, evidently dying—when I pulled it away it hurt so that I looked at the tip of my finger expecting to see it all raw and bloody—but it had not quite taken the skin off. . . .



## EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT.

I THINK these excerpts, though only a few of many that might be quoted, are sufficient, being spread over a large portion of the writer's life, to give a fair idea of the deeper side of his character, as well as to show how little in essentials the character altered with time. Certainly the more brilliant, if sometimes erratic, coruscations of his genius, as well as the perfervid Republicanism which became a part of his nature, were modified to some extent in later years; but the spirit and the fire were there, and there was no diminution of his intellectual and creative power, up to his last days. The time of his vivid and fiery youth was not that of his best production. It was in the little home at Putney, with its quiet household routine, varied by the visits of intimate friends, varied for him, too, by his own visits to relations, or to the friends afflicted with pain and trouble, whom it was his province to amuse and cheer—his one annual holiday by the sea—his daily walks, communing with nature and the

little children whom he loved ; it was among these surroundings that the great imperishable works of his life were brought forth. His deafness, which increased with years, made him averse from mixing in society on a large scale, but every other faculty was as keen as a youth's, and his enjoyment in his friends' company was unquestionable. Neither, as the letters plainly show, did his literary work hinder him from attending to the claims of his family. Over and over again, the New Year brings his first written words to his mother—after her death, to his eldest sister. Birthdays and family anniversaries were remembered and marked ; and he often writes with pleasure to one of the home circle describing some gift which he has in store for another member of it—some book, curio, or autograph—with an amusing and childlike insistence on keeping it a dead secret. Indeed, the children's lover had a great deal of the child always in his composition, as many of the finest characters have ; and it was among the most attractive features, to those who knew him, in a personality hard for the outward world to understand, and which will perhaps never really be fully understood.





## APPENDIX

A LETTER which has been preserved, written by Charlotte Countess of Ashburnham to her daughter, mother of the poet, contains an interesting reference to Algernon's first months at Eton. She mentions a visit from a cousin who also had been to place his boy at Eton—

“and had heard from Dr. Hawtrey such a character of dear [Algernon]! his cleverness, his amiability and *goodness* in every way, in short as if the boy of highest character in the school. . . . Dr. H. was quite ignorant of the relationship.”

Some old diaries kept by Miss Julia Swinburne, aunt of the poet, also contain some entries—of the shortest, but not without interest—regarding Algernon. On the 7th April, 1837, occurs the line—“Heard from Charles that J. had a son born Ap. 5<sup>th</sup>, 5 a.m.”

In the July of the same year we read: “Chas. and Jane and their infant arrived about 9”—that being for their accustomed stay at Capheaton in Northumberland, with the grand-parents. It was thus at 3 months old that the poet was introduced to the county for which he retained through life the utmost love and admiration—the cradle of his race.

Under date of 24th April, 1849, is the entry: “At 2 Cha<sup>s</sup> took Alg<sup>n</sup> to Eton, his first going there.”

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM THE REVD. FATHER  
CONGREVE (OF COWLEY).

Our Tutor, Mr. Joynes, introduced Swinburne and me when we came to Eton, as boys who would have as an excuse for comradeship that we were neither of us good at the games in the fields—football, cricket, etc.—I, because of some physical infirmity, he because of his absorption in literature.

So we accidentally became friends. I have still a little book of his which he gave me, writing in it my name and his own in his large childlike handwriting—"Talfourd's Tragedies."

For our walks we generally tended to the solitude of the fields along the riverside. He used to discourse with me at large about Elizabethan Dramatic Poets, of whose plays he knew pages and pages by heart. In these solitary paths he would intone for me innumerable stately lines from them, "mouthing out his hollow o's and a's" with the fervent inspiration of poet or prophet. He could not trudge along the grassy path as I did, but rather seemed to dance along a little before me, with eyes and hands lifted up, as he gave out the great words with enthusiasm.

We met again later on at Oxford, and I remember his leaving me his first edition of Tennyson's Poems that I might copy for myself several short poems that were omitted in all subsequent editions.

## ALGERNON'S PARENTS.

(Page 10 of "Recollections.") "His parents were the last persons, etc." This must not be taken as implying that his parents were either unsympathetic, or unappreciative of any talent displayed by

their children. I should like to draw attention to this, because Admiral Swinburne has been sometimes spoken of as a stern disciplinarian, with no leaning to the gentler arts of poetry, painting, and music. To us who knew him the impression seems entirely wrong. A disciplinarian undoubtedly he was, as his profession and training required of him: stern he could be when necessary; but a more wise, tender and affectionate father could hardly exist. I do not think he was a great reader of poetry, but he could appreciate what was good; and Algernon, as we have seen, speaks with pride and pleasure of his father's having read the whole of his "Bothwell"—no small undertaking. Music he loved, and painting also, without practising either art himself, though he could draw and design, and was something of a mechanical genius, devoted to turning and carpentry of all kinds. Several of his sisters were accomplished artists, favourite pupils of Mulready and Turner: and an uncle—Edward Swinburne—devoted the whole of a long life to the brush; his works, though he painted only for love of the art, being worthy to rank with those of Varley and Barret and other great water-colour painters of the time.

And what shall be said of the mother, whom Algernon adored with a lifelong affection, reverence, and admiration—fervent in sympathy where they agreed, gentle, respectful, and delicately reticent where they could not see eye to eye? It seems impossible and unfair not to speak of her, in any memoir of him, in whom she inspired a devotion which nothing could shake. She was worthy of it. She possessed a character and temperament full of brilliancy and fire, with a strong serious or spiritual side to it—enthusiastic, decided, self-reliant in the best sense, and



withal a fund of humour which charmed all who were familiar with her, and which she transmitted in no mean share to all her children. The most watchful, sympathetic, and affectionate mother—save one—that I ever knew, it is not difficult to estimate the effect of her influence in moulding the character of her first-born. His own references to their old readings together—the words “you taught me that, you know”—which occur more than once among his letters, show how he valued her teaching, to the end of his life. With regard to her opinion of his work, he has repeatedly said that in respect of her praise or approbation, the criticisms of the public were as nothing in his eyes. And in all that he addressed directly to her, whether in verse or in prose, we find the same spirit of tender affection and lofty admiration.

The portrait which is here reproduced gives to my mind a far better, more truthful idea of her gracious and dignified presence than any ordinary photograph ever taken.

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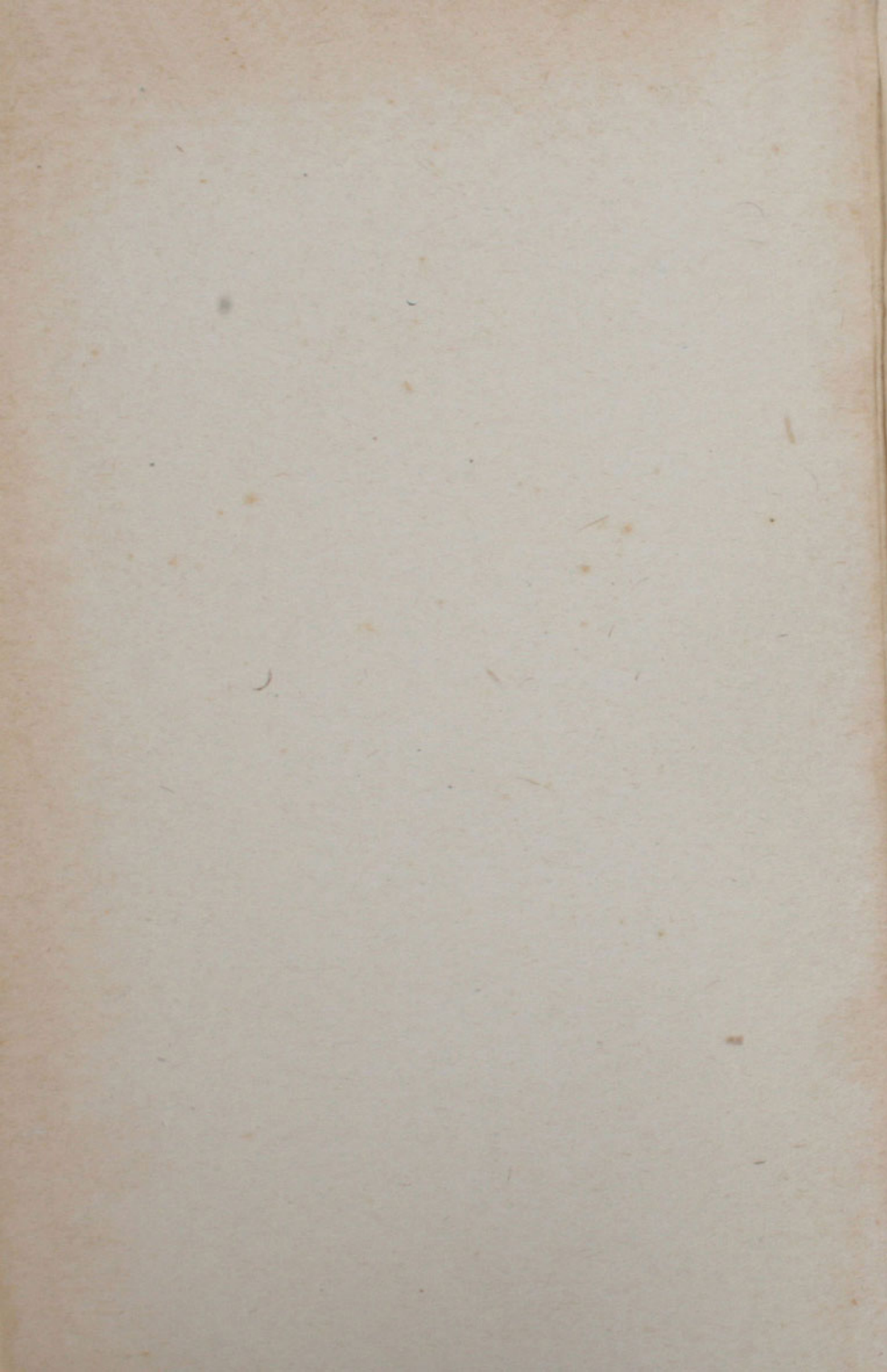
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