An Analysis of

In Memoriam

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Class '96
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Rhythm is inherent in the human breast, and the universe is filled with it. The voice of nature greet us everywhere and their music is sweet. Is it rhythm in nature or in language, there is no power which appeals more strongly to the emotions.

"Music," says one, "is almost divine, and there is music in poetry. It is those who have sung to the world the sweetest songs, who are remembered longest. Of these, there have been many, each great in his day, but above all for sweetness of song and tender thought stands the name of Alfred Tennyson, whose life began at Lincolnshire, England 1809.

As with all great poets, his genius was inherited. Without attempting any review of his life or preparation for his calling, we go at once to his works, of which there are many. Perhaps no other writer has contributed so much to literature as he did this one of England's greatest poets.

His field is broad and varied. He has entered the fields of science, art and
Philosophy, you track into the world of myth and superstition; searched out the beauty of ancient tongues, thus unifying
and widening our world of thought.

As a writer of lyrics, he was eminently successful. The beauty and simplicity of
language and thought as characteristic of
his production is especially true of his
narrative writings. But his elegy,
the finest in all the language, is best
known of all his works. This poem is
down and full of thought, the expression
of his deepest feelings, his hopes, doubts and
anxieties. Its meaning is sometimes obscure
and requires careful thought; so that an
extensive analysis of *In Memoriam* is
impossible in limited space. An attempt
only is made to tell the story in fewer
words but as claims it made for original
thought except as an interpreter of the
meaning of his views.

The poem is continuous and connected,
but for the purpose of analysis it may be
divided into parts.
At the opening of the sermon, he recalled a creed which taught that out of the troubles of life men may rise to better things. Small beautifully expresses the same thought in these words: "This sorrow builds the shining ladder up, three golden rounds we must accomplish. Where our feet, firm planting nears God, the spirit climbs and both its eyes unsealed."

The poet must find it hard to believe that the great sorrow which had come into his life, in the death of his much loved friend, Arthur Hallam, is for the best. The old creed does not bring him comfort. Every hope seemed crushed, but at times he wonders if coming years will find him attaining to "higher things", because this sorrow has come to him. "Then," he asks, "shall I find the interest of tears? But death cannot end all. Life cannot die. It is better that he suffer thus than to forget his friend. It is difficult to return again to his former self. He compares his present life to a Yew tree, which sends its roots deep into the soil, and though spring returns..."
for the whole of nature, the tree looks always gloomy. In his life seems mixed with that of the departed; sorrow is always with him. The springtime brings its blossom for all alike, but sorrow pierces only the winter gloom of the foliage.

A sorrow cruel fellowship from life it takes all joy and sunshine. Is it then a blessing? or shall I drive it from me? forget the past and sweet memories of their early friendship? In grief we lose control of will and grief is forgotten; but with the morning makes the will and arias Thou shalt not be part of loss.

Words cannot express the deepest emotions of the soul. Words seem useless, he hesitates to express his grief, for they cannot tell what he feels. But he must cry out—it is his only comfort though it be only the shadow of what he feels. At times this does not bring any comfort, he gives up to sorrow, mixture it by the actual sight of the places where he and his friend had met, to hellamis home he wanders, andHere the loneliness of it all breaks upon him with greater force.
But why weep: all must come sorrow knew, for
the morning must to evening but
some heart did break.

The thought of sorrow being common to all
makes not his more easy to bear.

Standing thus amid the familiar
scenes, he compares himself to a lover who
has arrived at the home of his love to find
her gone. He is sad, the place has lost
the charm now that she is gone. The
lovers wandering by the gate of the deserted
gardens may find some withered flower
which his lady love had dropped and he keeps
it as a token of the past. As the poet
takes some flowers which Arthur had loved
and places them upon his tomb.

The picture his sister as she adorned herself
for the return of her lover, he comes not
again, for just as she is standing before
her mirror thinking: "This will please him"
he is dying; but she feels and knows it not.

During the walk amid the old familiar
scenes, he turns his thoughts to the home coming
of the ship, which is to bring Arthur's body
back to England. He pictures its course of
passage and watch for the first glimpse of the white sails.

"Tenderly, oh, ship, bear him home to those who mourn."

Maynard's creed words beat "for the way." He would have the voyage calm and beautiful—symbolic of him who slept. But the thought again is forced upon him: that only as a memory does he come, yet sometimes he thinks he must, him in life again, when the ship arrives. Yet, death seems only a dream, but as soon to be made real.

Suddenly a storm arises; he feels for the safety of the vessel; he sends up a prayer for its safe return, and at last, upon a calm, beautiful day, the ship enters harbor with its precious freight. The burial is over. "He rests beneath the clapper rod," a thought more beautiful than to know that.

"Peace be as often clasped in mine, Should tires with tangles and Such skin."

He now realizes that Arthur is not dead, he is not dead, the sleeper wears the mask of sleep— he must still live, somewhere he shall see him again.
He would that he might impart to him the life that almost dies in me; — yet battling but to bring me pain." Perhaps life would be sweet to him; perhaps he would have made of it something more noble than I can make. When he was with me, I loved him much, but now that he is gone, his greatness widens. Five years, they had been friends. Life there was joy. Now, all is darkness; but yet, he wishes to live that he may prove his love true and lasting. In this she finds consolation: "To better to have loved and lost. Then never to have loved at all." Perhaps it is the arrows of the present which illumines the past. As the earth, viewed from another planet, appears not a bright star, so time adds brightness to past joys. Doubt and fear arise, but the stronger faith is greatest. With this, the first division of the journey ends. She must gain a view of the life which lies before, and which he is determined to live as best he can.
Another Christmas tide has come. One long year has passed since Bellamy's death. There is now a vacant chair in their home circle. "And how are we to keep at Christmas "ever, which brings us more welcome guests?"

She had been the life of their social gatherings in years gone by. With sadness they now join in the usual activities of the season. Religious festivities arise at this time. Regrets once more from the dead, but of his absence in the unseen world, we know nothing. And is it there, in there—a future life? Does the death end all else, we have love with us now! Let us cherish that. Yet, he says:

"My own dear life should teach me this,
That life shall live forever more!"

If this life ends all, why live at all, for it is full of sorrow, and without a purpose. "Were best at once to sink it down!"

He dreaded death, but fears lest he may just overtake his friend, he will have grown to be so much his superior, while he love more remain a life behind."
The life is lingering in darkness, while
Arthur is advancing. Truth then
continues after death he thinks. But
again he tries to banish the foreboding
thoughts. "I vex my heart with fancies"
for when we meet again the old love will
return. They cannot forget the past.
Yet he cannot see into the dim future.
but when the mistletoe has rolled away they
will know as they are known, for their
"Do shade can be lost
For that step down behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall
bloom
The eternal landscape of the past."
The poet cries to his friend to be near him,
while passing through the shadow of doubt
and to lead him on to the realm of
eternal day. Yet, do we really want
the dead with us? If he were to meet
Arthur, would he not select imperfections
and love him less because of them? But,
"Greater wisdom have the dead; they
would see with eyes divine — and forget our
faults."

There is much in nature that is  
irresistible. The life of early ages has  
become extinct. Then, the questions may  
not man  
"Whose soul do you feel, also quick?  
This is all a mystery; man cannot comprehend.  
In this state of doubt he leaves me and  
turns again into a more cheerful train.  
"Farewell, my sorrows, and the wrong  
to ring to wildly."  
Why mourn for him longer. He is richly shrouded  
but what of it? I shall see my works  
shall fail," he says.  
At this time it is thought that a period of  
rest follows, for the spirit of the poem changes  
to a more hopeful view.  
He would not that there be no sorrow  
for the dead, but he has resolved it shall  
need a more cheerful face. It shall be to  
have a gentle spirit, leading him on to a  
beautiful life, and the world shall not know that  
he mourned. He forgot not the past, but  
becomes more resigned to his loss.  
"Sweet end to with me as thou wilt  
but if love not a little grain shall be  
spilt. He repines in the thought."
that since his own life has been made nobler for having been with his friend, may it not be so with Arthur, for:

"I think effect as loves in me
A part of mine may live in thee."

Perhaps the world may wonder at his apparent forgetfulness, but grief has only made him kinder and sympathetic towards his fellow man; so he cannot forget for his inner stay can never die.

The poet dreams of Hallam—walks with him as of old, but awakes, alas! to find it only a vision.

"So many worlds, so much to do,
So little time, such things to be.
Since there was so much to be done, let reasons
perhaps Hallam may have been needed elsewhere to carry out the Divine purpose. However he exists somewhere and his work wherever it may be is "worth all tumult of acclaim."

The fourth division of the poem opens with the return of another Christmas Eve, not as chequered as the last, but yet over all a "quiet sense of something lost" could not
have healed their wounds as quickly? he asks. No, but not long, nor grief there are dry. A life time is too short for such love, but perhaps it may be that they should be parted. He begins to believe that the Divine will must do all things for the best.

He welcomes the glad New Year, and longs for the Spring time to bring new life and cheer. Again on the wings of fancy he is borne and pictures a future, as it may have been had Arthur lived.

Such visions are vain; the poet calls again and he wanders back to childhood and the old school days. Things have changed, the old faces are gone. Bright visions of home, evenings with his friends, and how "by night we lingered on the lawn."

He cannot lose sight of the thought of Helen's superiority. He compares it to two partners of married life, one of who is intellectually greater than the other.

"Her life is long, he sits apart." The man becomes so absorbed in his work that he seems cold and indifferent in his home. But she loves him yet, and treasures the
memories of their early devotion. So, the poet looks up to his friend, whom he thinks so much above him. Yet he says:

"I cannot understand; I love."

Soon the poet is to leave his old home. The gasps in the old familiar scenes, and meditates. Unseen and unloved the flowers will bloom, the ruffling brook sing on unheard. Strangers will soon take his place, and the sacredness of the old associations will be unknown to them.

Again the Christmas bells are rung, and with the new year he finds himself in a strange land. The holly now stands ungathered. The old customs have been dropped.

The season is kept with reverence. He welcomes the glad New Year, and hopes it will bring with it much of good.

"Ring out wild bells to the wild sky.
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
With the new year comes new hope to the poet. The last division of the poem, we have made begins with Hallam's birthday anniversary. Joyously they will keep the day, and "ring the songs he loved to hear."
Horns makes a final resolution to cease
this vain bewailment of his loss, and instead,
gather wisdom from his sorrow. The many
virtues of Arthur are often upon his lips.

Once more he revisits Arthur's home,
this time in a more hopeful state of mind,
for he has reached a higher, deeper faith,
but yet he does not understand.

The earth has undergone many
wonderful changes. Where once a city stood,
now sweeps the mighty ocean.

The hills 'melt like shadows, flow from
form to form.' Though all things may
change, he will still hold on to his faith,
for it is not farewell; I am sure we shall
meet again.

The closing pages are
full of hope. He feels and knows a higher
power and ever in the works of
nature manifestations of it. With a
last touching tribute to Arthur, the poem closes.

From weakness he has grown to
strength. With a supreme trust he
calmly make, until his work shall be
finished, knowing that the far off
throne art ever nigh; I have thee still,
and I arose; I shall not lose thee tho extracted.

The fame of this elegy is world-wide. If I had been the author, only contribution to literature, he would be remembered as great: Milton, Shelley, and Arnold each have written elegies, but as an original and scholarly production, "In Memoriam" is beyond all others.

His style is natural, language simple, and imagery beautiful, and true to nature.

One writer says of the production: The grave majestic hymnal measure swells like the peak of an organ, yet acts as a brake upon undue spasmodic outbursts of discordant grief. It is a serene and truthful panorama of refined experience; filled with pictures of gentle, scholastic life, and of English scenery. This and all the changes of a rolling year, expressing, moreover, the thoughts engendered by these changes. Among the author's productions it is the most valued by professional readers and men of fame, and from it many beautiful quotations are taken.
Though written over half a century ago, civilization has not advanced beyond its power.
The great mind of the poet, read far into the future, and saw the same great world
with its strife and unrest, that today humanity is struggling with, and the
lessons given to the world through the expressions of Alfred Tennyson's
noble soul, and sympathizing heart, shall
continue to touch and uplift man to
a nobler, higher life as long as time
shall last.