I heard of an old lady the other day, to whom all the great men of her time had written. When Froude's Carlyle came out, she marched up to her room & to an old chest there wherein she kept their letters, & she flung them into the fire. "They were written to me," she said "not to the public!" & she set her chimney on fire, & her children & grandchildren ran in. "The chimney's on fire." "Never mind," she said & went on burning. I should like to raise an altar to that old lady & burn incense upon it.

More revealing than this outburst, however, is its occasion. For the Laureate, who, as his grandson remarks, never wrote a letter when he could possibly avoid it, was here sufficiently provoked to address three pages to perhaps the other most eminent Victorian, about their closest mutual friend. "Don't," Tennyson commanded Gladstone, "let Knowles print A.H.H.'s letters." And so by mutual consent, the voice of "a noble type" of "the crowning race," a man, in Gladstone's words, "for whom no monument could be too noble," was suppressed.

As Haight's article suggests, such conspiracies were common during the nineteenth century; the painful repercussions following the publication of Fitzgerald's petulant remark on Mrs. Browning helped to justify all precaution. But Tennyson's

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1 See TLS, 26 January 1973, pp. 87–89. Tennyson's letter, dated 2 December 1883, is in the British Museum (Add. MS. 44484, fol. 168); the section which Haight quotes is printed in Hallam Tennyson's *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* (London, 1897), ii. 301 (see below).

2 Gladstone's reference to *In Memoriam* appears in a letter to Henry Hallam dated 23 June 1850. He had just read part of Tennyson's poem, which he found "an unexampled case among tributes of affection" and surprisingly fresh, "as if it recorded the events of yesterday". The letter is in Christ Church Library (Hallam Papers, Vol. 15, fols. 260–61).

3 In 1861, Tennyson's close friend Edward Fitzgerald had written to W. H. Thompson: "Mrs. Browning's Death is rather a relief to me, I must say: no
letter is merely one episode in a history of reticence, distortion and suppression which surround Hallam's works, a history that offers us a glimpse not only of the man, but also of what people might make of him, of heroes and hero-worship.

The history begins only slightly after the death of its hero. On 3 October 1833, Francis Hastings Doyle stopped by Hallam's house to inquire when his friend might return from the Continent. "Mr. Arthur, he will never come home any more," the maid told him, "he died a fortnight ago." Doyle, who had not been close to Hallam since they left Eton, was so overwhelmed that he staggered away before he could learn the details of the tragedy. Later that day he managed to dash off two letters to Arthur's closest Etonian comrades, James Milnes Gaskell and Gladstone.

Gladstone received the news on 6 October. "It is a deeply, too deeply painful subject", he wrote to Gaskell, and though he expressed compassion for the Hallam family and Emily Tennyson, it was the world, he felt, that had suffered the greatest loss:

There has always been need of him and such as him—now how much more than ever. In an age so critical and pregnant with such consequences to mankind... it was no small joy to behold the growth and proficiency of a man whose soul cared not for the "lust of the eye and the pride of life," but remained a fountain of lofty and pure and undying enthusiasm. He was a man such as the times wanted; one who might have done much by understanding to correct them... When has there been recorded the removal of a more truly surpassing spirit?1

Gladstone excused his eulogistic outburst as an attempt to do justice "to [Arthur's] beloved memory". But, as his postscript suggests, Gladstone felt that such remarks could hardly serve as

more Aurora Leihgs, thank God! A woman of real Genius, I know: but what is the upshot of it all? She and her Sex had better mind the Kitchen and their Children; and perhaps the Poor: except in such things as little Novels, they only devote themselves to what Men do much better, leaving that which Men do worse or not at all" (Letters and Literary Remains, ed. W. Aldis Wright [London: Macmillan, 1889], i. 280-1). Unfortunately—for the Victorians—Browning saw this remark shortly before his own death, dashed off his famous vitriolic sonnet, "To Edward Fitzgerald", and defended it in a letter to the Tennysons (published by Christopher Ricks in TLS, 3 June 1965, p. 464).

1 Part of Doyle’s letter to Gaskell is in the John Hay Library, Brown University (Koofman Collection); the letter to Gladstone is in the British Museum (Add. MS. 44450, fols. 54–55). A transcript of Gladstone’s letter to Gaskell is the property of James Milnes Gaskell.
an adequate memorial. Thus, just three weeks after his death, his oldest friend proposed that "some part of what Hallam had written may be brought together and put into a more durable form, collectively, than it has yet assumed."

Gladstone had some reason to be concerned about Arthur’s writings. Three years earlier, Arthur and Alfred Tennyson had planned a joint publication of their poetry. At the last moment, Arthur had withdrawn from the project. In a letter to Mrs. Tennyson at that time, he spoke of the "exceeding crudeness of style and in parts morbidness of feeling" of his work. But his father later admitted that he insisted that the book be withdrawn. Arthur’s Poems of 1830 was privately circulated only among close friends.¹

As the news of Hallam’s death spread, many of the Cambridge Apostles and other contemporaries expressed a sense of need for a public and lasting memorial. Some tried to place a tablet in his memory in Trinity Chapel, only to be frustrated by the regulations.² Gladstone’s suggestion found the greatest support. On 26 November 1833, R. J. Tennant, an Apostle and one of Hallam’s closest friends at Trinity, wrote Tennyson that "It appears to be a universal wish among [his friends] that, whatever writings Arthur has left should be collected and published, that there may be some memorial of him among us." By 28 January 1834, Tennant reported that Henry Hallam had "nearly determined to print for private circulation some of Arthur’s compositions". Soon afterwards, Arthur’s father wrote to Tennyson, requesting a preface for the publication, and setting forth his principles of inclusion:

I shall be very cautious as to printing any thing that may too much reveal the secrets of his mind, either in prose or verse—& this will preclude the possibility of

¹ Hallam’s letter to Mrs. Elizabeth Tennyson, written during the last week of June 1830, is one of the few autograph letters to the Tennyson family which have survived; it is in the Tennyson Research Centre. Henry Hallam confessed his prohibition in his preface to Arthur’s Remains in Verse and Prose (privately printed, 1834), p. xlv (see below).

² The plaque was forbidden because Arthur had not been a scholar (see Frederick Tennyson’s letter to George Tennyson d’Eyncourt, 18 December 1833, in the Lincolnshire Archives Office, H/113/67).
printing some of his first compositions—among others, his Farewell to the South, already in print, but not circulated.¹

The specific reference helps us understand his father’s somewhat vague general restrictions. “A Farewell to the South” is Hallam’s most ambitious poem, published in 1830, a romantic, Byronic invocation to Italy and an exalted account of his first love affair. Arthur was in Rome in 1827-8 with a number of friends from Eton, and they were not the only men who fell under the spell of a 26-year-old English girl holding court in the Eternal City. Anna Wintour, “La bella Stagione”, became an object of the most intense and purely idealistic devotion. In Arthur’s poem Anna’s identity is veiled, but his romantic adulation given full expression. Henry Hallam, embarrassed by its adolescent fervour, had apparently not wanted Arthur to publish the poem at all, and now he had the chance to make sure it would never be published again. Altogether he reprinted about a third of his son’s compositions, roughly half the material actually in his possession. Tennyson found himself unable to compose a preface, and so Henry borrowed extensively from testimonials of Arthur’s other friends, chiefly James Spedding, in his own account of his son’s life. Tennyson’s only contribution to the volume, in fact, was his request that Arthur’s essay, *Theodicea Novissima*, might be included, a request made by many other friends, and which Henry Hallam reluctantly honoured.

Gladstone was delighted to learn of Henry Hallam’s intention to print his son’s literary remains. Yet, like many of Arthur’s friends, he felt that the writings alone could not do justice to the man. As Spedding had written, “the displays of [Arthur’s] gifts . . . sprang naturally out of the passing occasion, and being separated from it, would lose their life and meaning . . . the compositions which he has left (marvellous as they are), are inadequate evidences of his actual power.”² To supply this lack, to provide a fuller and more personal record of the man, Gladstone proposed

¹ Tennant’s first letter is quoted in the *Memoir*, i. 498–9; his second, to Frederick Tennyson, is at Harvard (Eng. MS. 933[5]). Henry Hallam’s letter, dated 7 February 1834, is in the Tennyson Research Centre.

collecting and publishing Arthur's letters. Here, Gladstone wrote Gaskell, were the real outpourings of his mind, the true evidence of his "distinct and vivid" self-consciousness, and his ability to make "his own inward phenomena the objects of his intellectual energies". Gladstone foresaw no difficulties in matters of decorum: the letters were worthy of preservation aside from any personal consideration, but he himself found only one or two which he might like to keep private. They could be collected now, he suggested, and printed some years later, to circulate only among family and close friends. He had already written to Henry Hallam about the project, and asked Doyle to write to Tennyson.¹

But the response from all quarters was discouraging. Gaskell felt that no selection could do Arthur justice, that Arthur himself would not have approved, and, most important, that many letters were "too confidential a nature for publicity".² It is worth noting that Gaskell had been in Rome with Hallam in 1827–8; he, too, had fallen under Miss Wintour's spell, and most of his letters from Hallam dealt with that affair. Henry Hallam responded coldly that Gladstone's proposal would be up to those to whom the letters had been addressed, with the clear implication that he would have nothing to do with it.³ Even Tennant found his letters from Hallam almost "wholly relating to private and temporary circumstances", and thus unsuitable for publication.⁴ Tennyson, characteristically, never responded. And so the project was forgotten.

About fifty copies of Arthur Henry Hallam's *Remains in Verse and Prose* were printed and distributed in 1834. All were received with thanks and praise. Gladstone wrote Henry Hallam, with typical and genuine humility, that the volume would be a friend and instructor, "a sacred incitement to the performance of duty, though indeed if I know anything of myself, it is that my

¹ A transcript of Gladstone's letter to Gaskell, dated 7 February 1834, is the property of James Milnes Gaskell.
² Gaskell's letter, dated 9 February 1834, is in the British Museum (Add. MS. 44161, fols. 112–14).
³ So Gladstone reluctantly reported to Gaskell in his 7 February letter.
⁴ Undated letter to Henry Hallam, the property of Miss Elizabeth Lennard.
being is of a humbler order [than Arthur's]." Only J. W. Blakesley ventured to mention that he "had hoped to see a selection from [Arthur's] letters included, for there more than on any other occasion was shown that interpenetration of the qualities for which a man is admired and for which he is loved—which I consider as Arthur's peculiar characteristic." The most curious response came from Edward Stanley, later Prime Minister, whom Henry Hallam had met at Christ Church, but who had not known Arthur. He had just seen the book, and took the liberty to ask for a copy, not merely for himself, "but as applicable in some degree to a son of mine, whose career hitherto has been distinguished beyond my more sanguine expectations. Should his bright period of existence be as suddenly closed, may I bear the blow with a fortitude & resignation similar to yours." Thus already Arthur's death was providing a model of inspiration, although here the father's stoic acceptance seems more significant than the son's transfiguration. But Stanley apparently did not receive a copy. Henry Hallam sent the last to Richard Monckton Milnes, telling him that he had deliberately chosen not to have more reprinted: "On every account, I felt that the voice of his inmost heart was not for the careless public." Soon after, Arthur's name disappears from the correspondence of his contemporaries.

In his collected edition of Arthur Hallam's Writings, T. H. Vail Motter depicts Henry Hallam as a model of nineteenth-century suppression, the censor, who, wielding his "blue pencil" over the Remains, distorted or stifled Arthur's true voice. But Henry Hallam's editorial decisions must be seen in both a personal and historical perspective. When he printed his son's poetry and essays in 1834, he had no reason to expect that the name and character of Arthur Henry Hallam would become a permanent part of English literature. The high praise of Arthur's abilities might have been paid to any bright young man who died before

1 Gladstone's letter is dated 23 June 1834; Blakesley's 19 July 1834; Stanley's 2 April 1835. All are at Christ Church (Hallam Papers, Vol. 15, fols. 219, 237-38).
2 Henry Hallam's letter, dated 2 September 1835, is in Trinity College Library (Houghton Papers, 10335).
realizing his promise. And, as even Motter admits, this was no Keats, or even Chatterton. Nor could Henry Hallam see any reason to publish his son's letters; those addressed to him are very prosaic: questions about the family at home, accounts of Debates at Eton, descriptions of friends, despair over mathematics at Cambridge, requests for money, a little politics, a few boyish exuberances, most earnest, certainly nothing extraordinary, nor even, as the small number that survive suggest, worth saving, except as mementoes.

We might chide Henry, perhaps, for not recognizing the value of his son's critical work, especially his 1831 review of Tennyson for the Englishman's Magazine (an essay which Harold Bloom has recently called the best criticism of Tennyson's poetry, and the foundation of the aesthetic movement). But in fact this would be asking too much of Henry, and most of his contemporaries. At the time of Arthur's death, Keats and Shelley were only beginning to gain favour among most college undergraduates, and Wordsworth was still a controversial poet. Leigh Hunt was regularly castigated in most journals. The Quarterly Review had apparently killed Tennyson's career in May 1833. In short, though Victoria was to be crowned only four years later, the prevailing critical precepts were still set by men whose tastes were pre-Romantic or Byronic. The conflicting sensibilities are illustrated in Arthur's letter to Tennyson dated 10 December 1832, written as a number of the Apostles checked over the page proofs of Alfred's second volume of poems at Douglas Heath's house:

We had a long battle with Mr. Heath, a famous lawyer, but no man of letters, about [the last] stanza in the proof [of "The Lady of Shalott"]. We flatter ourselves we floored him; to be sure we were three to one, but he fought well. The principal point of attack was "cloud-white"; he said it was absurd to explain a fixed colour by the most variable hue in the world, that of a cloud. We recovered

1 See p. vi: "No one can pretend that the restored body of his poetry now gives Hallam rank as poet."


3 J. W. Croker's caustic review in the April 1833 number is an interesting example of his pre-Romantic sensibility.
ourselves with all the grace of practised combatants, and talked learnedly about the context of feeling, and the conformity of the lady’s dress to her magical character, till at last our opponent left us in possession of the field, declaring still between his teeth that, for his part, he thought poetry ought to be sense.¹

Arthur had to defend himself in similar fashion against his father’s accusation that he read too much modern poetry:

I am sorry you should think my fondness for modern poetry so excessive as to militate against correctness of general views, or the formation of other literary tastes. I do not believe this is the case. I am much less poetical by nature than you imagine; but till I discover, that what little good I have in me is less closely connected with my poetical inclinations, such as they are, than I now conceive it to be, I shall hardly be persuaded to think I have done wrong in feeding myself with Wordsworth or Shelley. “Misty metaphysics” is soon said; but that phrase in my opinion will apply with far more distinct, & weighty meaning to the works of Lord Byron, than to those of his great cotemporaries.

Yet this eloquent defense was not likely to impress a father who had responded to his son’s account of an earnest debate about the relative virtues of the study of mathematics as opposed to metaphysics with the terse remark: “Your debate between Mat. and Met. is truly ridiculous.”² As the preface to the Remains points out, “metaphysical analysis” may have been Arthur’s greatest pleasure, and strength, but it had prevented him from systematic study and interfered with his poetical talent. And this comment had been made, not by Henry Hallam, but by James Spedding, Arthur’s admiring but judicious contemporary.

In this context, Henry Hallam’s view and treatment of his dead son seems eminently just and reasonable. He reprinted only those writings which he thought were worth preserving, and he made no great claims for Arthur’s stature as writer. It is not surprising to learn that immediately after the funeral Henry went back to his own work, Introduction to the Literature of Europe during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.³

¹ Transcript in the Tennyson Research Centre.
² Arthur’s letter to his father, dated 18 November 1829, is at Christ Church (Hallam Papers, Vol. 9, fols. 142-43). Henry Hallam’s comment on “Mat. and Met.” is relayed, among other places, in Gladstone’s short memoir of his friend, in the British Museum (Add. MS. 44790, fols. 84-88). The debate took place at the Eton Society on 27 May 1826.
³ Henry Hallam’s activities are related in Hallam family diaries, the property of Miss Elizabeth Lennard. Henry Hallam’s last major work was published 1837–9.
James Milnes Gaskell died forty years after his friend, in 1873, leaving behind his letters from Arthur and a journalist son. Charles Milnes Gaskell was a close friend of Henry Adams and an occasional contributor to the *Nineteenth Century*. Five months after James Gaskell's death, Henry Adams and his wife, stretched out beneath a beech tree, heard Charles read Arthur Henry Hallam's letters. Mrs. Adams recounted the episode to her father:

[Hallam] and Mr. Gaskell were both desperately in love with the same woman, who refused them both and made a new bond of friendship between them. The woman, who was utterly commonplace, married a boozy Yorkshire yeoman. Hallam got over his love and died at twenty-two, but Mr. Gaskell, though he married very happily [in 1832], never lost his feeling and has left her a nice pension. Such queer family histories I've tumbled across lately, I might, if I had the capacity, make such a strange story book.¹

Charles Milnes Gaskell had no apparent reason to withhold this "strange story". Anna Wintour died soon after her lifelong admirer; Henry Hallam had died in 1859, and his youngest daughter, Julia, Lady Lennard, was the only surviving member of the family. Most important, "A. H. H." had become the most famous initials in English literature. The *Records of an Eton Schoolboy*, which Charles had privately printed in 1883, contained many of his father's early letters, and provides an illuminating view of Eton under the redoubtable flogging headmaster, Dr. Keate. But Hallam's letters were clearly the main feature of the book.

On 23 October 1883, Gladstone received his copy, and thanked Charles Gaskell the same day: "It is a revived, almost a new image of Arthur Hallam", he wrote enthusiastically, and took the opportunity to mention that he had carefully saved all his letters from Hallam. Charles was cordially invited to see them.² Charles, who had easily obtained permission from Lady Lennard to publish her brother's letters to his father, now revived Gladstone's plan to publish all of Hallam's correspondence. He solicited Francis Doyle to approach Lady Lennard on the idea.

Doyle's letter, dated 1 December 1883, is very diplomatic.

² A transcript of Gladstone's letter is the property of James Milnes Gaskell.
He stressed the great interest of Hallam's letters: "he will be seen at his best, and the more that is known of him the better."

And Doyle did not hesitate to reiterate an essential argument for publishing the letters:

I think that nothing he left behind him quite does him justice for the very reason that his mind was more original & powerful than the minds of us his contemporaries. He required a longer time to master and organize his faculties & though his advancement in strength & ripeness of intellect was moving on with rapid strides, he died, alas, so prematurely that the operation was not fully complete—still even as he shows himself I cannot but think it desirable that he should be known as widely as possible. I can see no reason for objecting to the publication of his letters unless you do so.

Five days later Charles himself wrote Lady Lennard, a little more forcefully, stating that he intended at least to publish Hallam's letters to Gladstone, because of the wide interest in her brother. Lady Lennard finally responded that she would prefer certain of Arthur's letters "from Italy"—in other words, those dealing with Anna Wintour—to be deleted in any future edition. She also did not want Gaskell's present volume reviewed, since excerpts would probably be quoted in the magazines. She specifically did not want him to print her brother's letters in the Nineteenth Century. She failed to mention publishing any other letters. In short, she offered no encouragement.¹

The power that intervened, the voice that persuaded Lady Lennard to withdraw her permission, will be obvious to those who recall that James Thomas Knowles was the founder and editor of the Nineteenth Century. Yet the unfolding of this part of the history is far more complex than Tennyson's simple command to Gladstone would indicate.

Soon after Records of an Eton Schoolboy was published, Monckton Milnes (then Lord Houghton) described the volume to "Milord Alfred"; Tennyson was pleased and interested.² But the prospect of publication in a periodical elicited quite a different response. Tennyson wanted to be sure he had

¹ Letters from Doyle and Charles Gaskell, together with a draft of Lady Lennard's reply, are at Christ Church (Hallam Papers, Vol. 13, fols. 184-88).
² From an account contained in a letter from Catherine [?] Cator to Lady Lennard, dated 14 November 1883, at Christ Church (Hallam Papers, Vol. 13, fols. 171-72).
complete editorial command over all of Arthur's letters, for, as he wrote Gladstone, "Knowles is a very clever man & a kindly—but he is... Knowles of the 19th century & would set the fame of his Review above the fame of your old friend and mine." Yet the bard's real displeasure seemed to be reserved for the editor; in a footnote to the letter quoted by Haight, Tennyson huffed that "Milnes Gaskell has not been gracious enough to send me his book".

Gaskell had reasons to delay. He had been completely faithful in transcribing Hallam's letters, and thus in depicting Arthur's infatuation with Anna Wintour. Moreover, he had candidly stated that Anna "inspired Arthur Hallam's best verses". Such a remark was heretical. Many poems in the Remains were addressed to his betrothed, Emily Tennyson, but only a few of the many to Anna had been printed, with no indication of her identity. And as section VI of In Memoriam suggests, the relationship between Emily and Arthur had been immortalized in her brother's elegy:

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

Perhaps remembering this stanza, Gladstone advised Gaskell to consult with Tennyson's son and personal secretary, Hallam Tennyson, about the propriety of sending Alfred a copy of his book.¹

Propriety is the most courteous word to describe the subsequent events. Gaskell apparently did send a copy of the Records to the Tennysons. On 20 February 1884, however, Hallam Tennyson, ignoring Gaskell, wrote instead to Lady Lennard about the volume:

¹ Transcript, dated 10 November 1883, the property of James Milnes Gaskell. In a letter to Gladstone, dated 6 December 1883 (in British Museum Add. MS. 44484, fols. 181–82), Charles Gaskell mentions another passage potentially offensive to the Tennyson family: Arthur had called Alfred's grandfather a "wretch" who made "most shabby offers" during the negotiations over Emily Tennyson's dowry. But as even the Memoir suggests, Alfred might well have expressed similar sentiments, and this quotation seems to have been a less significant problem.
I have not liked to show my Father the "Records of an Eton Schoolboy," for, as you say, there are some letters which ought never to have been inserted, and some expressions which ought to have been erased. I think that it is useless my asking my Father his opinion about a Review of the book in the "Edinburgh," for he has set your brother on such a pinnacle before all the world, that anything now published concerning your brother can only detract from his fame. Excuse my candid opinion, but you have asked me for it, and I know that my Father has such a deep love for him that he would fain keep all critics at a distance from him.

Lady Lennard, repeating her hope that her brother's letters would not appear in the Nineteenth Century, still expressed regret that Alfred himself had not responded. In an even more characteristic example of Victorian reserve, the Laureate's wife sought to reassure her:

We greatly rejoice that you agree with us as to the Reviews. Certainly fresh and pleasant and thoughtful as these youthful letters are, one cannot but feel that Mr. Gaskell has done well in printing them for private circulation only, lest the public ideal of your brother should in any way be disturbed. For the same reason but on infinitely stronger ground, we have withheld the book from my Ally & I hope that in this also you agree with us. One has to be specially careful with so very sensitive a nature, as you know.

The bulwark of wife and son prevailed. Alfred, apparently, never saw the "disturbing volume" sent to him, though he had certainly known about Anna Wintour and her influence upon Arthur. Shortly afterwards Lady Lennard wrote to Gaskell suggesting that, in any future edition of his work, he should substitute Arthur's letters to Gladstone for those he had published. Thus once again the project of publishing any comprehensive collection of Hallam's letters was abandoned. Gladstone gruffly complained about "the mysterious property that private persons are held to have over the thoughts of the illustrious dead." 2

Between the publication of Records of an Eton Schoolboy in 1883 and Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by his Son in 1897, 1

1 Hallam Tennyson's letter, dated 20 February, his mother's letter and drafts of Lady Lennard's replies are all at Christ Church (Hallam Papers, Vol.13, fols. 191-95). The excerpts are printed by Christopher Ricks in "Hallam's 'Youthful Letters' and Tennyson", ELN, iii (December 1965), 120-2.

several of Arthur’s letters found their way into print, in biographies of F. D. Maurice, Richard Chenevix Trench, and Richard Monckton Milnes. But the fullest treatment of Arthur’s life, and the greatest number of his letters, appear in the *Memoir*, compiled by Hallam Tennyson.¹ Alfred’s son had been marked from his birth as the official heir to the Tennyson throne. Indeed, the Laureate had only accepted the Queen’s offer of a barony after Gladstone assured him that his son could not be elevated to the title immediately. Long before, his son had assumed the role of personal secretary; almost all correspondence after 1875 passed under his scrutiny. As the Gaskell episode makes clear, Hallam Tennyson was jealous of his father’s privacy and position, and this jealousy, shared by the Laureate, grew to an obsession when, upon his father’s death, the burden of biography fell to the son. In fact, Tennyson wished no “long, formal biography”; “Merlin and the Gleam”, he felt, was sufficient. He had seen too many Carlyles discredited by too many Froudes. Yet as the pre-eminent Victorian, the spokesman who sought to create living legends for his age, he certainly had known that his life could not escape the murmurings of innumerable biographers. Perhaps enough of the legend could survive if left in the domain of his son. What better biographer?

This problem has taxed Tennyson scholars for decades. The *Memoir* is the epitome of Victorian evasion. It is the necessary beginning of all Tennyson research, and the end of much. Invaluable, yet unreliable, it stands as the major impediment to the further pursuit of the history of Hallam. For A.H.H. was very much in the domain of legend, and his namesake took extraordinary pains, and much license with fact, to make sure he remained the heroic figure of *In Memoriam*.

Ironically, we would not know how inaccurate and distorted the *Memoir* was, except that two earlier and more complete forms

of Hallam Tennyson’s work survive. The privately printed four-volume Materials for the Life of A.T., and a set of notebooks containing pasted sheets of Hallam Tennyson’s draft manuscript, letters, clippings, etc. are in the Tennyson Research Centre. Hallam Tennyson’s wife, Aubrey, transcribed many letters for her husband’s use, including a separate notebook of those from Arthur Hallam. Afterwards, Hallam Tennyson destroyed all of Arthur’s letters to Alfred, with one minor exception, and a number to other members of the Tennyson family.

There is a total of fourteen complete or partial letters from Arthur printed in the Memoir. Early in his account, Hallam Tennyson notes that “most of [Arthur’s] philosophical and religious letters to my father have been lost”. Yet the editor chose not to print most of Arthur Hallam’s letters in his wife’s notebook, crossing through, cutting out and rearranging the transcripts, with no indication in the printed text. Less than a third, for example, of Arthur’s letter to Mrs. Tennyson appears in the Memoir, and the significant phrase about “morbidness of feeling”, which Arthur repeated nearly two years later to a Cambridge friend, is carefully deleted from the sentence.

It is, of course, important to remember that Hallam Tennyson’s Memoir of his father is not a scholarly work, nor even a biography in the modern sense. It is a charmingly written account that, as Christopher Ricks points out, “at its best [breathes] a sense of what it was like in the immediate vicinity of Tennyson”. Moreover, some of the editorial suppressions show an understandable sense of decorum. Early in May 1832, Arthur, who, we are led to believe, never spoke ill of any man, wrote Alfred about two wealthy Scottish acquaintances currently visiting Somersby. Arthur was concerned that the Scotsmen, Garden and Monteith, would fail to appreciate, and even condemn the simple, often eccentric life of the Tennyson household.

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1 Memoir, i. 44, note 2.
2 See ibid. i. 51. Hallam’s letter to John Pearson, dated 29 February 1832, thanks Pearson for his praise of the volume of poems, but expresses regret that it should have ever been published: “It is full of enormous faults of conception & expression, and, what is worse, of morbid feeling” (letter in the Miriam Lutcher Stark Library, University of Texas).
He warned Tennyson that "G & M are not perhaps worthy of Somersby, tho' they probably think themselves so... When I say 'not worthy', you understand what I mean; I speak only of those views and feelings we have been accustomed to hold most dear." To W. H. Brookfield, perhaps Arthur's closest friend at Trinity, Hallam was blunter. Even if the Scotsmen did like Somersby, he would, in his own words, "have them gagged. You will shake your head, maybe, & ask whose fault it was that they went, & who ought to abide consequences. Still something may be done perhaps in the way of restraint, should either Scotchman prove too garrulous; and I think you might occasionally keep them in check. Nevertheless I hardly know what I mean when I write this; perhaps it had better be considered unwritten; of course it must remain unshown." Other letters show that the high-minded Hallam did not really approve of these worldly, ostentatious but good-natured gentlemen. Yet he was very careful to conceal his feelings, and had little difficulty adapting to their witty repartee and style of life. We can hardly blame Tennyson's son for respecting Arthur's desire to keep his feelings private.

Other deletions show the extraordinary care Hallam Tennyson took to preserve the legend of A.H.H. He prints a letter from Blakesley to Alfred Tennyson which remarks on Hallam's activities in London: "He was not well while he was in London; moreover, he was submitting himself to the influences of the outer world more than (I think) a man of his genius ought to." But these were not Blakesley's words; the manuscript version of this letter shows that Hallam Tennyson heavily inked over the last part of the sentence (after "more than") and supplied instead his own phrase. He apparently felt that Blakesley's original was somehow damning to Arthur's character. It is impossible to recover the original. Later, Hallam Tennyson described a letter from his uncle Frederick written in 1834:

1 A transcript of the letter to Tennyson, in Aubrey Tennyson's hand, is in the Tennyson Research Centre. It is crossed through by Hallam Tennyson. The letter to Brookfield, dated 3 May 1832, is in the Henry E. Huntington Library (HM 19464).
2 See Memoir, i. 68-69.
"He wrote a few lines urging my father to publish in the spring. But he would not and could not; his health since Hallam's death had been 'variable, and his spirits indifferent'." In fact Frederick's letter (written not to Alfred but to their friend John Frere) states that "Alfred will probably publish again in the Spring". Moreover, a heavily deleted section in the manuscript of the letter obviously refers to Charles Tennyson's increasing addiction to opium, a situation which contributed to his brother's variable and indifferent spirits. But Hallam Tennyson would not and could not mention this family problem. Thus, though Frederick's letter did not even suggest the connection, Arthur's death provided a far more acceptable explanation for Alfred's state of mind.1

Other alterations in the Memoir are totally incomprehensible. In his letter of 6 February 1833, Hallam wrote Alfred that he had stopped by the shop of Effingham Wilson, who published Tennyson's 1830 volume, to settle an account. He wrote: "I am confident the £11 will be found a mistake." In the Memoir version, Hallam Tennyson provides a footnote to this sentence: "the sum my father received for the 1830 volume", and Arthur's letter continues with other matters. Yet even in the privately printed Materials for the Life of A.T., the sentence continues: "perhaps a bravado of that saucy cub, his son. Come what may you need not pay it. Take no step yourself. Leave it to Moxon, Tennant, Heath and myself." One can perhaps understand why the joking reference to Wilson's son would be deleted. But for what possible reason could Hallam Tennyson have deliberately distorted Hallam's meaning, turning his father's debt into a royalty?2 The question is baffling, even to a student of Victorian sensibility. I begin to understand the frustration of a former professor who had compared a nineteenth-century expurgated edition of Typee with Melville's original. He told me that he simply could not find any reason for the expurgations, and sadly

1 See ibid. i. 138. Frederick Tennyson's letter, dated 10 February 1834, is in Duke University Library. Ralph Rader, in Tennyson's Maud: The Biographical Genesis (Berkeley: California U.P., 1963), discusses this example in detail (pp. 17-18 and 127, note 57).

2 See Memoir, i. 92-93.
concluded that the nineteenth-century editor had a dirtier mind than his own.

It would be very convenient, and would certainly make this essay more illuminating, if we could ascribe similar motivations to Hallam's nineteenth-century editors. And, of course, this has been done. The evasiveness, the deletion and suppression of material has, ironically, had exactly the opposite effect from the one these cautious Victorians intended. To post-Freudian critics, the relationship between Arthur and Alfred has seemed too close, the grief of *In Memoriam* too intimate, the figure of A.H.H. too idolized. For men who had been through Eton and Cambridge in their decadence, a homosexual misconstruction was enticing. Harold Nicolson's sly references to the hand upon the shoulder, the afternoons on the Somersby lawn, and "Oh! the way he would take one's arm on summer evenings, under the limes", are all derived, in much the same language, from *In Memoriam* and Hallam Tennyson's account. Yet the inspection of manuscripts, the decipherings of passages deleted, the reconstructions of originals offer no grounds for such suspicion—if indeed such things are suspect. Quite the opposite.

To understand this treatment of the man, the zealous protection of the vital surviving evidence of his character and personality, we must recall its role in the development of the legend. The most significant episode in the afterlife of Arthur Hallam (or at least of his earthly "remains") unfolds on a quiet summer evening as the poet and his guests sit singing on the lawn. One by one they depart, the lights in the house go out, and the poet feels the full sense of loneliness, a feeling long known to him.

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fallen leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

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The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
   On doubts that drive the coward back,
   And keen through wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
   The dead man touched me from the past,
   And all at once it seemed at last
The living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirled
   About empyreal heights of thought,
   And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
   The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
   The blows of Death.

The trance is stricken through with doubt, but only momentarily. Nature confirms the experience, the dead man has spoken, has touched the poet's soul, and Tennyson's faith is restored. He is able to grasp the hand he has sought since the beginning of the poem, and thus comprehend the unity of past, present and future, a unity which overcomes Time, Chance and Death.

That this mystical union takes place in section XCV of In Memoriam shows how hard-won and tortuous is the way of the soul. Tennyson himself said that parts of the poem were far more optimistic than his own faith.¹ The one positive, unchanging force, that guides and sustains the poet throughout the poem, is the spirit of Arthur. Hallam's letters play a crucial role in the climactic section of In Memoriam; they confirm the reality of that spirit, a spirit which becomes the model of belief for the age. Thus both Tennyson and his age were concerned that this spirit remain inviolate, that the real character of Arthur Henry Hallam remain true to the legendary figure, the spirit of the crowning race, the man who fought and overcame his doubts, the master bowman of debate and oration.

The creator of this mythical figure had little difficulty distinguishing the man from the legend. Though Alfred called

A.H.H. as near to perfection as mortal man might come (as Hallam Tennyson eagerly reported in the Memoir), he did not hesitate to say that Arthur would not have been a great poet.\(^1\) Still more illuminating is his written note in the copy of a commentary on *In Memoriam* by his friend, the Reverend William Gatty. About one of the numerous passages which compare Arthur to a departed husband and the poet to his loyal wife, Gatty had written that the poet drew a "comparison which typifies his own humble relation to his exalted". Tennyson underlined "humble" and retorted that this was "the relation of one on earth to one in the other & higher world. Not my relation to him here. He certainly looked up to me fully as much as I to him."\(^2\)

And a careful reading of *In Memoriam* shows that this equal relationship is maintained through the process of recovering faith and moral purpose. A.H.H. may be the guiding light, but it is the poet himself (as in most elegies) who undergoes the experience, and thus emerges as the protagonist. In life and afterlife, as Tennyson argues, each man has his own individual path to fulfilment, and each path has equal merit: "He works his work, I mine."

By the end of the century, however, even the tentative faith embodied in *In Memoriam* was called into doubt. Not only God, but Godlike men, the heroes whom the Victorians often worshipped in place of the deity, and in many instances had created, were being, in Swinburne's words, "dethroned, cast out in a day". Hallam Tennyson had not only his father's reputation to protect, but also that of the figure on whom the Laureate had built his trust, A.H.H. Any departure from the saintly ideal of *In Memoriam* had to be suppressed. Hallam Tennyson felt obliged to preserve the period of Alfred and Arthur's friendship as an idyll worthy of the Laureate; if Arthur had indeed fought his doubts, his struggle should be easy, his burden light.

In fact, Arthur's struggle was intense, and the torment con-

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\(^1\) See *Memoir*, i. 38.
siderable. From the beginning of his time at Trinity, he had been depressed with college life, having left behind politics at Eton, his close Etonian friends at Christ Church, and Anna Wintour in Italy. His struggle for university honours to please his father was, as he put it, rotting his soul, and mathematics in particular he found impossible to comprehend. Poetry and metaphysical speculation became his only source of solace. Yet during a trip to Scotland in the summer of 1829, even these supports seem to fail. On 21 July, he wrote his then close friend at Trinity, Milnes, that "In my fits of gloom I so often look death, & insanity in the face, that the impulse to leave some trace of my existence on this bulk of atoms gathers strength with the warning that I must be brief". Two weeks later he again wrote Milnes:

I really am afraid of insanity: for God's sake, send me letters, many letters, amusing letters... any thing to distract me; any thing to give me hope, sympathy, and comfort... I am not master of my own mind; my own thoughts are more than a match for me; my brain has been fevering with speculations most fathomless, abysmal.¹

That Milnes was in Italy, where Arthur spent the only blissful period in his life, distressed him more. There is no sense of defeat, or even resignation, however, merely a constant struggle. As he reported later, he had fought back the monster of Atheism with the principle of God’s bountiful love, though necessarily rejecting all formal religion and all purely rational approaches to belief. Yet the struggle, as he told Milnes later, was not over yet: "My dark hours are less frequent, but they come. For God’s sake do not flatter me by talking of ‘victory in the wilderness’ & ‘selfraised music of the mind’: I am very weak, & fleshy." To Gladstone he expressed similar sentiments—he hoped to make his name honoured in future generations, but only by "inward power, which is its own reward". If not, then he at least had lived, loved, and been beloved—and the suffering of this world (which he readily accepted) was but momentary. And after describing periods of "the most abject despondency mixed with vague dread and strong remorse" to his friend Robert Robertson, he later resigned himself to the unknown purposes of

¹ Arthur’s letters are at Trinity (Houghton Papers 101-8).
the creator: "Perhaps it is God’s will that I should never change it; my natural mood has been always melancholy." \(^1\)

Even Arthur’s engagement to Emily Tennyson was hardly the cheerful serene period depicted in the Memoir. The bright dawn of their relationship, which, Arthur wrote Charles Tennyson, recalled “the sunny season of my Italian youth”, soon passed into shadows cast by the couple’s financial circumstances and an estrangement between their individual temperaments. Arthur’s letters to Emily reflect a progressive, though not unrelieved sense of frustration and despair. In 1831, he could write of his firm conviction that their hope would be answered by God. By late 1832, he wrote of them “tottering down the hill together” and soon afterward he admitted that misery was “always” at his heart: “to love & be beloved by you is to be either most happy or most wretched.” Finally, in April 1833, after all negotiations over the marriage between the two families had come to naught, Arthur cried out in complete despair: “it is a weary, weary time—three years now since I have felt that you were my only hope in life—more than two since we plighted to each other the word of promise. It is indeed a weary time.” \(^2\)

Yet it would be misleading to imply that Arthur’s letters have a predominantly melancholy tone. In August 1831, for example, he wrote to Charles Merivale, who had just returned from the continent and a battle between the Dutch and the Belgians. Arthur imagined the excuses of the defeated Frenchmen:

The article in the Independent, the Belge and such papers are worth framing and glazing, that one may always know how to make the best of a bad business. “No, the army of the Meuse is not defeated!” (a lie of imperial dimensions to start with). “A few cowards must there always be in the bravest of armies!” (how philosophical!). “With the best soldiers it has sometimes happened that, seeing cowards run, an unaccountable panic seizes them, and—and—they run too” (what insight into human nature, and what noble candour!). “Therefore the army of the Meuse has not been defeated!” (Irresistible logic, of a piece with the

\(^1\) Arthur’s letter to Milnes, dated 11 October 1829, is at Trinity (Houghton Papers 1013-14); to Gladstone, dated 14 September 1829, in the British Museum (Add. MS. 44352, fols. 131-32). A transcript of Arthur’s letter to Robertson [Glasgow], dated 2 October 1829, is in the hands of the editor.

\(^2\) Arthur’s letter to Charles Tennyson, dated 12 September 1830, is at Yale; his letters to Emily, dated 5 March 1831, 26 September 1832, 5 December 1832, and 11 April 1833, are in the Wellesley College Library.
valor it defends!). Oh, heroes of September, so wise and brave, what a pity you have got a licking from the Dutchman, but if to such profound measures I might be allowed to suggest an argument, when in future any ignorant man takes upon him to twit you about the army of the Meuse, make your principles a shield for your practice, & say boldly, "We leave it, sir, to fools of the Juste Milieu to stand their ground in battle; we are of the Mouvement, & we run: 'la revolution marche partout' except into the contaminating presence of illprincipled men with muskets in their hands."¹

Twentieth-century accounts of Hallam have hardly helped to illuminate Arthur's "natural mood" or indeed any other aspects of his character. Mrs. Frances Brookfield's Cambridge Apostles, the most accessible collection of Hallam's letters and related materials, must, as Motter warns, be read with the greatest caution. It is a travesty of scholarship; even the occasional accurate fact is virtually discredited by the preponderance of errors.² Other more reliable presentations, such as Morley's Life of Gladstone, Lounsbury's Life and Times of Tennyson, Schonfield's edition of Letters to Frederick Tennyson, and Zamick's publication of Hallam's letters to W. W. Farr (originals in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester), offer at best a limited and one-sided view of this elusive figure. Even Motter's edition of Hallam's Writings provides only a very general outline of the author's character. And like all trailblazing efforts, it has necessarily yielded to the undergrowth of new scholarship and appearance of new materials.³

Thus an edition of Hallam's letters seems particularly appropriate at this time. One hundred and forty years have seen the loss or destruction of much that would illuminate the life and character of A.H.H., yet those years have also allowed vital collections of documents to come to light. Moreover, we have come, through a process of action and reaction, to see the Victorians in

¹ Transcript in the Tennyson Research Centre.
² Mrs. Brookfield, who had access to many collections of the correspondence of many Apostles, published her ingenuous volume in 1906. See Motter's warning on p. 326 of the Writings.
proper perspective, with an understanding of their frame of mind, to borrow Walter Houghton’s phrase, undistorted by either their or our own preconceptions. Most important, full portraits of Arthur Henry Hallam’s illustrious contemporaries are now available in M. R. D. Foot’s edition of Gladstone’s Diaries, Christopher Ricks’s Poems and his fully annotated biography of Tennyson, and Cecil Lang’s forthcoming edition of Tennyson’s Letters, all superb examples of the present state of Victorian scholarship. Hallam’s letters should occupy a relatively minor, yet valuable place in this body.

My purpose, both in this essay and in my edition of Hallam’s letters, is to stimulate, rather than conclude discussion and debate about Hallam’s place in English literary history. For even in the circumspect view which his letters offer, the character and impact of A.H.H. remain curiously hard to gauge. He seems to have inspired a type of reverential awe among his comrades, and invited closer and more intimate friendships than he himself desired. His metaphysical musings—for him a bulwark against disbelief and insanity—often made him appear deeply philosophical, even otherworldly to his comrades. Indeed, he was accused of vanity by a few contemporaries who saw only this side of his character. This elusive attractiveness not only made Hallam seem superior to the world, free from its torments, but also encouraged others to cast him, even while he lived, in their own images. To Gladstone he seemed the master politician; to Gaskell, the forlorn lover; to the Apostles, the great metaphysician and religious thinker. And Arthur’s seemingly quick empathy appeared to confirm these reflections. Yet as his letters to the Tennyson family show, Arthur’s personality was still largely unformed, his purposes undetermined, even at the time of his death.

This incomplete, unformed quality is, I think, curiously appropriate to his permanent embodiment in In Memoriam.

1 The first volumes of the Diaries were published in 1968; Lang’s edition of Letters should appear sometime in 1974.

2 Gladstone’s older brother, John, accused Hallam of vanity in several letters, and John Rashdall, a Cambridge associate and neighbour of the Tennysons, responded to news of Hallam’s death: “the vain philosophic Hallam is dead!” (diary in the Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. misc. e 351).
Arthur Henry Hallam, in Tennyson’s words, becomes the link between man and the crowning race. But as his letters indicate, he, like all parts of creation, had his own sphere, in which, in life as in death, he moved towards that “one far-off divine event”. Like Ruskin’s treatment of the Gothic, or Browning’s “Saul”, or Tennyson’s “Ulysses”, he becomes, in epistle and verse, a symbol of the incomplete in man that aspires to divine perfection.