



Tuckerman and Tennyson: "Two Friends . . . on Either Side the Atlantic"

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FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN (1821-73), the American poet whom Tennyson most profoundly influenced and who in turn enjoyed an unusually close and prolonged friendship with the British laureate, has been relatively unknown until recently. Partly as a result of his response to Tennyson's early work, Tuckerman developed an antiromanticism that placed him outside the American poetic mainstream. Since the first complete edition of his poetry appeared in 1965, however, Tuckerman has been increasingly anthologized.¹ We can better understand the originality of Tuckerman's achievement and the value of reviving his poetry, I would argue, if we carefully examine the influence Tennyson had upon him. Much is also to be learned about Tennyson from Tuckerman's reports of a visit with him, from the remarkable correspondence between the two poets, and especially from Tuckerman's commentaries on the master's poetry and Tennyson's responses, which not only identify allusions

¹ N. Scott Momaday, ed., *The Complete Poems of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965). Some good selections of the best sonnets and "The Cricket" have appeared in most of the American literature and poetry anthologies published since Momaday's edition. Four editions of Tuckerman's *Poems* appeared in America and England in the 1860s. Tuckerman was then essentially forgotten until the American poet Witter Bynner became interested through an essay on Tuckerman by Walter Prichard Eaton in the January 1909 issue of *Forum*. Bynner was so impressed by the poetry Eaton liberally quoted that he contacted the poet's descendants in Amherst, Massachusetts, who revealed a collection of unpublished poems. Three discovered sonnet series, plus the two series in *Poems*, were published in 1931 by Knopf as *The Sonnets of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman*, with an appreciative but discriminating introduction by Bynner in which he explained why he ranked Tuckerman's sonnets among "the noblest in the language . . . not bettered in their kind by anyone of his time or since."

missed by Tennyson scholars but also provide new critical insight.

I

Tuckerman came under Tennyson's influence at a fortuitous time. The young American had felt the spell of Emerson's liberating transcendentalism, had left a law career and what he called the "coldness everywhere" of materialistic Boston, and by 1847 was pursuing a life of vague genteel bliss in central Massachusetts. But his rationalistic Anglican background and the influence of his brother Edward, who was a brilliant lichenologist and a careful student of Coleridge, gradually inclined Tuckerman to reexamine the growing transcendentalist orthodoxy. In time his understanding of high romanticism—not only its post-Enlightenment yearning for transcendence but also its sense of the severe reality and limitations of the natural world and of the history and nature of language as a limited but essential product of the mind—surpassed Emerson's. Tuckerman learned to look at nature carefully, rather than merely to apostrophize it, and he used his remarkable gift of total recall to study the tradition of English poetry thoroughly, including all of Tennyson's published works, as he began to write poetry himself.

Tennyson was extremely popular in America. Even before he was well known in England, his work was pirated by American newspapers, and Tuckerman probably began to read him while at Harvard, if not earlier. Tuckerman's commonplace book includes copies of some of Tennyson's poems, especially sonnets, published in 1832 and 1833.² In 1845 Tuckerman purchased a copy of the two-volume American edition of *Poems* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1842) and in 1850 received a copy of the identical English edition (London: Moxon, 1842) from his brother Samuel. These two sets, heavily marked over a period of years, with some comments copied or repeated from one to the other, are especially interesting be-

² Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, commonplace book in the Tuckerman Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

cause they record Tennyson's own comments about several of his poems.

Tuckerman received these comments in person when he visited the famous poet for three days in January 1855, at the conclusion of a European tour begun in the summer of 1854. Other American poets visited Tennyson, notably Emerson in 1848, but Tuckerman seems to be the only one who was able to have long talks with the laureate and to draw him out fully. Tuckerman's granddaughter related a family anecdote concerning the visit: "When he first came to Tennyson's door, he was rather gruffly received. But when Tennyson realized that Tuckerman was more than casually familiar with his poetry and could quote at length from it, he adopted a more cordial attitude."³ The anecdote is confirmed and elaborated upon by Charles K. Tuckerman in his *Personal Recollections of Notable People*; he includes a summary of a letter (apparently now lost) from his cousin Frederick about the visit.

Tennyson's manner was not uncivil, but it clearly indicated that the visitor was regarded by him as one of those innumerable bores who intrude upon the retirement of literary men for the sole purpose of gratifying a morbid and idle curiosity. My cousin felt that,

³ Samuel Golden, *Frederick Goddard Tuckerman: An American Sonneteer*, University of Maine Bulletin 54, no. 12 (April 1952), p. 18. Margaret Tuckerman Clark, the poet's granddaughter, placed the meeting she described in 1851, and Golden therefore posited *two* meetings, the second in 1855. But all direct evidence, especially letters from Tuckerman's wife Anna to her mother, indicates that Tuckerman traveled alone to Europe in 1851 and met Tennyson only on the second trip he made, with Anna, in 1855. (These letters, apparently unexamined by Bynner, Golden, or Momaday, I found among family papers in Amherst at the home of Hugh Clark, Tuckerman's great-grandson.) The visit is corroborated by Emily Tennyson in *Lady Tennyson's Journal*, ed. James O. Hoge (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), p. 42. There are, however, serious contradictions in the evidence about the *exact* dates of the visit. Emily Tennyson dates Tuckerman's arrival on 12 January (*Journal*, p. 42), and letters of hers and Alfred's mention three days together. Emily's redacted "journal" is notoriously untrustworthy, however, and is contradicted by the letters of Anna Tuckerman to her mother (esp. 21 January), which clearly indicate that the visit took place the same days of the week as Emily notes but one week later, her husband being gone from her, on his trip to Farringford, from 19 to 22 January. A further complication is that Tuckerman himself alludes to the journey as just recently completed in a letter to his brother Edward, but it is unclear whether the date of that letter is 20 January or 26 January.

under the circumstances, the shorter he made his visit the better, but he was determined to let Tennyson know that he was an ardent admirer of his poetry, and that he had come to see him as a pilgrim comes to a shrine where his heart and sympathies may find expression. He therefore, in a few words, thanked the great man for the privilege of meeting one who had so largely contributed to his intellectual enjoyment. Tennyson scanned the features of his guest, as if searching to know how much sincerity there might be in his avowal, and, to test the matter, asked which of his poems he preferred, and what particular passages he chanced to remember. My cousin could not have desired a more gratifying question, and thereupon referred to his favourites and quoted line upon line, and then longer passages, with such unfeigned enthusiasm that it was evident the poet had before him a pure and unadulterated disciple.⁴

Tuckerman, indeed thoroughly familiar with Tennyson's work and probably able, given his developed gift of recall, to quote *all* of it, including the revisions, must have impressed the laureate. Tennyson invited the younger poet to spend a long weekend visiting with him in his "smoking attic," where he seems to have become convinced of Tuckerman's depth of appreciation and critical judgment as well as his memory. A friendship matured quickly and seems to have persisted for some time.⁵ Although correspondence from 1855 is all that survives, the length and unconstrained ease of the few extant letters from Tennyson, who hated the chore of letter writing, is strong evidence of the depth of the relationship.⁶

That exchange of letters, along with the notes that Tucker-

⁴ Charles K. Tuckerman, *Personal Recollections of Notable People* (London: R. Bentley and Son, 1895), pp. 22-26.

⁵ In addition to several letters to Tuckerman, Tennyson's wife Emily, who handled much of the poet's correspondence, wrote a letter of sympathy to Tuckerman's sister after his death in 1873. See *The Letters of Emily Lady Tennyson*, ed. James O. Hoge (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974), p. 301; see also pp. 72, 86, 146.

⁶ Charles Tuckerman also notes the continuing strength of the relationship. In *Personal Recollections* he quotes from a letter to himself from Tennyson, "very many years" after the visit: "I remember with great pleasure your cousin's visits to me, and I am glad to find in yourself something of the interest in the old country which distinguished him" (pp. 25-26).

man made in his copies of Tennyson's *Poems*, indicates that during their time together Tennyson, in his singular chant, read through all or most of his poems, commented on them, and seriously considered and freely discussed Tuckerman's observations. When they parted Tennyson gave Tuckerman the original manuscript of *Locksley Hall*, which, as Tuckerman reported in a letter to his brother Edward a few days later, was "a favour of which I may be justly proud as he says he never did such a thing in his life before, for anybody."⁷

Tuckerman was, of course, deeply affected. His letters to Tennyson following the visit are effusive but also show that Tuckerman was not intimidated and that the poets dealt with each other quite openly. Tuckerman's first letter, sent from Windsor just before his return voyage (31 January 1855), praises "the surpassing beauty of your Idyll, [and] of Maud [new poems read to him just before the two parted], scraps of which are floating through my head like 'fragments of the golden day.'" Tuckerman's ability to remember an obscure line from the pirated editions read years before is revealed in another comment:

The Locksley Hall, your most valued gift, contains also a part of The Golden Year; . . . In reading this fragment I have discovered a curious substitution of sound for sense. You remember the line, "Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore." In the American editions this is printed, "Yet seize the daily gain upon the shore."⁸

Tuckerman trusts that Tennyson "will yet see America, for where else can I repay you. . . ."

⁷ Frederick to Edward Tuckerman, 26(?) January 1855, Autograph File, Houghton Library. The *Locksley Hall* manuscript was given to the Yale University Library by Tuckerman's granddaughter. All quotations from the Houghton Library manuscripts used by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University. All manuscript materials by the Tuckermans used by permission of their heir, Hugh Clark of Amherst, Mass.; those by the Tennysons by permission of their heir, the present Lord Tennyson of Paris.

⁸ Tuckerman to Tennyson, 31 January 1855. Typed copy in Houghton Autograph File. Tuckerman apparently could remember whole poems from a single hearing, because in this letter he promised Tennyson not to repeat in America "the unpublished poems, which you did me the honor to read me . . . until I see them printed."

Should the Russian overrun Europe, or the "auri sacra fames" of publishers become insatiable you will there find one (among many) who will proudly serve you to the extent of his influence and fortune. May this feeling, the growth of many years, the flowering of a few days, yet bear fruit.

Tennyson responded quickly, on 6 February 1855. He reports that he was worried that Tuckerman's ship (which sailed 3 February) might have been caught in a bad storm that had passed over the Isle of Wight and that he would not be "easy" until he heard that his friend had "safely arrived at your pleasant-sounding Greenfield, Mass." He recalls their "talks over my little fire in my wind-shaken attic," thanks him for his gifts (a fine pipe, which "I sit and smoke to your memory," and Webster's *Dictionary*), and hopes "that if ever you come back to us you will put up at no hotel but in my house; and I, if I come to you, will likewise find you out, and we will be as happy together as two friends may on either side the Atlantic."⁹

This friendliness further encouraged Tuckerman, and his letter of 22 February is barely restrained, even using one of Tennyson's own images in ultimate tribute:

How often . . . in the solitude of the sea did my thoughts return to Farringford; how often did I think of all that I *would* have said to you. . . . Since my return to America a warm and eager interest has been manifested in my personal knowledge of yourself, one young friend said to me "You have seen Tennyson, it is the event of a lifetime." Another, "I hope you told him what we think of him in New England." In fact your fame in America among the names of the age seems to stand alone, as sometimes in the very ardour of sunset we see a single keen star.¹⁰

Tuckerman had learned that, unknowingly, he had been somewhat presumptuous in one of his critical comments:

⁹ Tennyson to Tuckerman, 6 February 1855, original in Houghton Autograph File. As an additional gift, Tuckerman promised to send some volumes of Poe, whom they had discussed, but in the meantime Tennyson received those very books from another friend and had Emily hastily write Tuckerman (8 February) to save his effort.

¹⁰ Tuckerman to Tennyson, 22 February 1855, typed copy in Houghton Autograph File.

Do you remember my quoting some [anonymous] lines one evening from a newspaper and objecting to the rhymes "blunder'd" and "Hundred," thinking it should read "blundered?" I had then seen exactly *three* lines, and knew nothing of the connexion. Judge then of my surprise at discovering the whole poem in an American paper, with your name attached.

He continued that he had read "The Charge of the Light Brigade" with "astonishment and delight," thought it "a most noble performance, the finest irregular Ode ever written upon the grandest subject," and hoped "that this poem will not receive any alterations. (Of course I refer to your general habit of retouching your poems and not to any remarks of mine.)" Tennyson had probably enjoyed keeping quiet about the authorship of those three lines when Tuckerman first attacked them, but he took the criticism seriously. When he wrote back in July, promising to send Tuckerman a copy of *Maud and Other Poems*, which would include "The Charge of the Light Brigade," Tennyson reported that it would come "with the 'blunder'd' that offended you and others omitted. It is not a poem on which I pique myself but I cannot help fancying that, such as it is, I have improved it."¹¹ But Tennyson, as he often did, went too far in trying to please "others," and Tuckerman, who had not wanted the *line* omitted but only the self-conscious *syncope*, apparently told him so. On 17 October, responding to a letter of Tuckerman's not now extant, Tennyson wrote,

Many thanks for your critique of *Maud*. She has been very roughly treated on this side of the water. You are quite right about the *Charge*. I was overpersuaded to spoil it.¹²

¹¹ Tennyson to Tuckerman, 8(?) July 1855, original in Houghton Autograph File. Bynner, in his introduction to Tuckerman's *Sonnets*, p. 29, and Golden, *Tuckerman*, p. 20, both misread this passage; they substitute "blunders" for "blunder'd" and thus encourage the mistaken notion that Tuckerman objected to more than the artificiality of the syncope.

¹² Tennyson to Tuckerman, 17 October 1855, original in Houghton Autograph File. This is a note by Tennyson written across the top of a letter from Emily. Charles Tennyson, in his *Alfred Tennyson* (London: Macmillan, 1949), p. 288, assumes, because of Tuckerman's criticism reported in his 22 February letter and Tennyson's references in his 8 July and 17 October letters, that the

II

Tennyson's influence—"the growth of many years, the flowering of a few days"—did indeed "bear fruit." Tuckerman recorded, in one or the other set of *Poems*, the comments Tennyson had made to him concerning specific works and returned to his close study of those poems and then of the new ones Tennyson sent. The annotations yield a great deal of information about both Tuckerman and Tennyson. For example, by "Mariana" (Boston, 1:10), Tuckerman writes, "Tennyson considered this his best poem."¹³ Next to a stanza of "The Miller's Daughter" (London, 1:13), which begins "In idle sorrow set me not / Regret me not, forget me not," Tuckerman comments, "Tennyson said his brother Charles wanted to know if he could get in something here about 'tare and tret!'" (Terms common in the nineteenth century, *tare* is a deduction, in weighing a commodity, for the container, and *tret* is a deduction for wastage.) In a note at the beginning of the "The Lotos Eaters" Tuckerman indicates that "In reading this poem aloud the author was quite struck by [my] sug-

laureate "had been over-persuaded by Tuckerman and other friends to alter the first version for publication in the *Maud* volume . . . by omitting the key line 'someone had blundered,'" had then reconsidered, and went back to the original version for the "soldier's copies" and subsequent publications. But Tuckerman had no objection (as others did) to the rhyme or to the political criticism; consistent with his own developing poetic practice at this time, he merely wanted Tennyson to avoid an archaic poeticism and accept the perfectly good slant rhyme of "blundered" with "Hundred" instead of "blunder'd."

¹³ Most of the marginal notes from the London edition are quoted by Samuel Golden, in his *Frederick Goddard Tuckerman* (New York: Twayne, 1966), p. 38. I have included in my examples many of the significant annotations available only in the Boston edition, of which Golden apparently was not aware. N. Scott Momaday first called the Tennyson works, as well as a number of other volumes from Tuckerman's library, to my attention. Most of Tuckerman's volumes (both editions of the 1842 *Poems*, the 1848 Boston edition of *The Princess*, and the 1845 London, first edition of *Maud and Other Poems*) were placed in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, by Tuckerman's granddaughter, Margaret Clark, but the copy of the 1851 London *The Princess*, which Tuckerman had marked extensively, and thirty-three other volumes, clearly only a small part of Tuckerman's original library, have remained in the family, until now not examined by students of Tuckerman. These volumes, and other informative memorabilia and letters at the home of Hugh Clark in Amherst, are in the process of being donated to the Houghton Library. In the text I have referred to Tuckerman's two 1842 editions of *Poems* by their places of publication.

gestion, that he might have written strand for land in the first line" (London, 1:175).¹⁴ And later on in the same poem, by the line "Is there confusion in the little isle?" Tuckerman notes that "Tennyson in reading this poem to me, remarked that it was not usual for people to ask and answer their own questions."

Tuckerman's annotations augment our knowledge and understanding of Tennyson's "parallelisms" to his own and others' works. The exhaustive notes on allusions and sources in Christopher Ricks's definitive edition of Tennyson's works sustain many of Tuckerman's identifications. For example, Tuckerman quotes a passage beginning "But I the mirror sweet would be" alongside Tennyson's very similar lines in "The Miller's Daughter," "That I would be the jewel / That trembles at her ear" (London 1:110); and Ricks refers to the same passage from Thomas Moore's *Odes of Anacreon*.¹⁵ But Tuckerman also points to many other sources, not noted by Ricks nor, it seems, by other scholars. At the beginning of Tennyson's "The Palace of Art," Tuckerman writes, "There is an old poem by [Stephen] Hawes (1505) called 'the Palace of Pleasure' of which I have only seen a portion but which commences . . .," and then quotes the first stanza, apparently from memory (London, 1:136). He goes on to pencil a number of stanzas alongside passages that Tennyson had obviously based upon them.

In "The Palace of Art" Tuckerman discovers a number of subtle relationships to other works. He quotes beside "O soul, make merry and carouse" Shelley's "And I and you / My dearest soul will then make merry," but he adds that the passage is "also scriptural." Tuckerman notes Tennyson's appropriation of "grateful gloom" from Dryden but also points to a number of passages—from Wordsworth, Byron, Shakespeare, Chaucer,

¹⁴ Sometime later Tennyson commented, "'The strand' was, I think, my first reading, but the no rhyme of 'land' and 'land' was lazier." See Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 89.

¹⁵ *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Ricks (London: Longman's, 1964), pp. 379-80. I am greatly indebted to Ricks's edition for this kind of information; Ricks provides the complete (English) publication history for all of the individual poems, dates all internal variants, and traces sources.

Milton, the Wisdom of Solomon, and others—that he clearly did not think were borrowed directly but still thought it important to indicate were in some way *related*.

Most often Tuckerman revealed a passage expressing a similar feeling or tone (e.g., "Compare the manner of this with the close of the 2d act in *Cymbeline*" [London, 1:36]). Sometimes he called attention to a similar meter or movement, even though the matter was different. Tuckerman was not interested in source scholarship or in displaying his own erudition but in expressing, and demonstrating, a particular view of poetry, of its tradition, and of the human mind. He was calling attention to the power of one mind to relate to another, even to arrive at similar ideas, images, or expressions independently, and he valued literature as a grand accumulation of those relationships.¹⁶

Evidence exists that Tennyson would have agreed with Tuckerman's views on poetic tradition. In 1880 he attacked an essay by J. Churton Collins that had described Tennyson's supposed "borrowings." Declaring Collins's essay accurate in pointing to parallels but mostly "nonsense" in its conclusions, Tennyson insisted that his poetic images were "made" from nature, not copied from other books; obviously he thought of himself as a rediscoverer of what others may have known independently. He concluded, "I will answer for it that no modern poet can write a single line but among the innumerable authors of this world you will somewhere find a striking parallelism. It is the unimaginative man who thinks everything borrowed."¹⁷

¹⁶ In his London edition of *The Princess*, p. 98, Tuckerman marks a passage describing a group of people fluctuating to and fro "as flowers in a storm." He writes, "There is a curious coincidence here, between this passage and one in the early writings of Hawthorne showing how two men of high genius have hit independently upon the same image, though the American Author was not then acknowledged—'This time the party wavered, stopt, and huddled closer together; thus tossing to and fro they might have been fancifully compared to a splendid bunch of flowers suddenly shaken by a puff of wind.'" The Hawthorne passage is from "The Wedding-Knell," published in 1836 and collected in the first volume of *Twice-Told Tales* (1837).

¹⁷ Quoted by H. P. Sucksmith, in "Tennyson on Genius," *Renaissance and Medieval Studies* 2 (1967): 88, the source of the information used in this paragraph.

Even if Tennyson had not consciously intended, or perhaps even recognized, that certain ideas, words, feelings, or perceptions resonated in his poetry, Tuckerman in his notes does; and at times Tuckerman seems to be *adding* a resonance important only to himself as a development of the thought or feeling. Thus, the note itself becomes a connection, part of the heritage.

Such a view is Anglican; it is not romantic. The poet is rather one of many anonymous builders of a cathedral than an isolated, independent hero, Emerson's "endless seeker, with no past at my back." Tuckerman's perspective was shared with his fellow Anglican, Tennyson. In a comprehensive essay on "Tennyson's Methods of Composition," Ricks traces some of the poet's numerous "self-borrowings," how he moved portions of only slightly changed earlier poems into later ones, often with great effectiveness. Ricks argues that these passages, nearly always dealing with the subject of change through time, reflect Tennyson's own anxieties about time and change.

[I]n a world of unending flux, a world where all seemed ephemeral (even the works of the greatest poets), a world where personal identity was a mystery and often a burden, Tennyson found some rallying-point in the continuity of his own creativity. . . . To revise a published poem was to show that the past was not done with, irrevocable, immutable. To quarry from his unpublished work was to show that the past was indeed a quarry, its geological obduracy the source of its riches.¹⁸

Tuckerman had similar anxieties, a nominalistic sense of flux and of unrecoverable loss through time. But with his acquired understanding of his tradition and by virtue of his own poetic efforts, he developed a faith in philosophical realism and in the power of language to make bridges across the subject-object void; he believed language to be a substantial and necessary, though tragically limited, connector of mind to objects because language is the inspired creation of human minds, which are similar to the mind of the creator both of

¹⁸ Ricks, "Tennyson's Methods of Composition," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 52 (1966): 228.

those minds and of objects. Tuckerman's notes to Tennyson's poems establish Tennyson as able to demonstrate against the "ephemeral" a "rallying point," not only in "the continuity of his own creativity" but also in "the works of the greatest poets." The notes further demonstrate Tuckerman's own capability—that he understood that being part of such a tradition required a serious, painstaking apprenticeship.

III

Beginning with what is apparently the earliest of his surviving Tennyson volumes, the 1842 Boston *Poems*, we find Tuckerman carefully writing in the margins all changes from the earlier printings he had seen. Even the slightest isolated word changes, such as "to" and "the," are indicated. Comparing Tuckerman's emendations to the dated variations in Ricks's edition of Tennyson's works reveals that Tuckerman not only reviewed editions published earlier than those he possessed but that he continued to incorporate revisions from later editions, through 1855. By this means, at least by 1850, Tuckerman appears to have been instructing himself in his chosen craft. By the time he went through *The Princess* for at least the second time (apparently in the summer of 1851, using the fourth edition, which he had purchased in London), he was actually engaged in a tentative kind of *rewriting*. Tuckerman not only made judgments about which were the best versions of words and lines from former editions but also cut lines and even whole sections. These cuts (too large-scale to demonstrate effectively here) seem skillfully to remove the fat in flabby passages and thus provide increased muscle to the syntax. Tuckerman thereby reduces the vague luxuriance that makes the poem, despite great lyrics like "Tears, Idle Tears," finally a failure, what Ricks calls a "therapy of evasion," a kind of smokescreen for Tennyson's unresolved ambiguities.¹⁹

Tuckerman had matured to a point where he could make self-instructive judgments about how some things his mentor

¹⁹ "Tennyson wrote [*The Princess*] after the worst five years of his life, and he created a complicated series of evasions such as could temporarily stave off his dilemmas and disasters." Ricks, *Tennyson*, p. 190.

was doing both *had been* and also *might be* improved. He could also venture to criticize Tennyson's diction. By "An eagle *clang* an eagle to the sphere" (*The Princess*, 1851, p. 59), he writes, "This word is used as a good poetical word, but not very expressive I suppose of an eagle's cry, which is said to resemble a dog's" (later he cross-references "Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone" to Wordsworth's "Thou too be heard lone eagle . . . / The hungry barking . . .," p. 167). And when Tennyson slips badly with a pronoun reference, Tuckerman remarks drily, "It seems in this College of Women that the neuter gender was under an interdict also, even the *messages* were feminine" (p. 62).

But the visit with Tennyson moved Tuckerman to new respect, and he returned for a time to close study of his master and openly acknowledged Tennyson's influence, particularly on Tuckerman's new sense of the dimensions of sound in poetry. In his 22 February 1855 letter, Tuckerman wrote to Tennyson,

I have been reading the "In Memoriam" since my return and never has its solemn music affected me so deeply for how could I help hear a

"voice the richest-toned that sings"

chanting these strains

"From point to point with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law."

Your reading in truth made a deep impression upon me . . .

In his 31 January letter he had said,

In regard too, to your manner of reading or chanting, I feel that it must be the true one; at all events I cannot recite your lines—the exquisite ones for instance—

"Came glimmering through the laurels
In the quiet evenfall,"

in any other way.

At this period (despite his earlier criticisms of Tennyson's language), Tuckerman's tendency toward the kind of diction in this passage increased, and "glimmering," for instance, oc-

curs with almost embarrassing frequency for a while in his manuscript poetry (the word was revised out before publication of his *Poems* in 1860). Tuckerman also began to use Tennyson's chant in reading his own work.

IV

News of Tuckerman's good fortune and the continuing relationship with Tennyson spread through America's literary circles. Emerson, in a letter to Tuckerman in 1861, referred to "Your friend Tennyson," and a reviewer of Tuckerman's 1860 *Poems*, noting the influence of Tennyson, alluded to the friendship. But the most profound effect of the visit, I believe, was to begin to move Tuckerman, in important and beneficial ways, beyond the influence of Tennyson into his own independent realm. The most respected and popular poet writing in English had spent long periods of time with Tuckerman; he had shared, in many ways as with an equal, ideas, judgments, and responses concerning poetry.²⁰ That poet obviously continued to feel affection for Tuckerman and to value his judgment. This experience ultimately helped Tuckerman gain the confidence to depend less on models, including Tennyson, and to develop his own unique poetic talent.²¹

Marshall McLuhan has claimed that Tennyson's "Mariana" shows "that the most sophisticated symbolist poetry could be written fifty years before Symbolism."²² In a study of Tuckerman's remarkable early poem *Sonnet I:10* (1857), I

²⁰ There is no evidence that Tennyson either read or heard any of Tuckerman's poetry during the visit or, indeed, that he even knew then that Tuckerman wrote poetry. In a letter dated 22 October 1855, which includes quite extensive comments on *Maud*, Tuckerman wrote, "I remember once saying to you that I was no poet. The remark perhaps should have been that in your presence I dared not claim such a title, for it seems to me only poets can fully appreciate and enjoy the singular beauty of 'Maud.'" This letter is reproduced in [Hallam Tennyson], *Materials for a Life of A[lfred] T[ennyson]*, 4 vols. (n.p., [1894]), 2:152-53.

²¹ A useful influence study of Tuckerman is John Raymond Getz's "The Originality of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977).

²² Marshall McLuhan, "Tennyson and Picturesque Poetry," in *Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson*, ed. John Killham (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), pp. 67-85.

have explored how Tuckerman, partly through Tennyson's influence, created not only symbolist but sophisticated "post-symbolist" effects fifty years before post-symbolism.²³ That combination of influence and originality persisted and is still clear ten years later, when Tuckerman wrote what is generally considered his greatest poem, "The Cricket."²⁴ That poem, though much influenced by Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," drew upon Tennyson's newly published "Tithonus" for its subtle tone and rhythmic effectiveness, and in stanza 3 it reached back for powerful echoes from "Tears, Idle Tears." Yet "The Cricket" improves on Tennyson's work, I am convinced, in the completeness of its achieved acceptance of *human* life and language (as opposed to the yearned-for simplicities of divine or animal existence), with death and limitation as necessary parts of that life.

We have, then, a unique and revealing friendship across the Atlantic. Tuckerman, a young American poet, finding his way through the swamps of Emersonian romanticism, was guided by his adulation and intense study of Tennyson's early work. The two became friends, and their correspondence and Tuckerman's commentaries give us added insight into Tennyson's mature work and into the process by which Tuckerman achieved his own independence and maturity.

²³ See my "Tuckerman's Sonnet I:10: The First Post-Symbolist Poem," *Southern Review* 12 (Spring 1976): 323-47.

²⁴ "The Cricket" was discovered in the Tuckerman Papers in Amherst and first published by the Cummington Press in Cummington, Massachusetts, in 1950. Yvor Winters quickly responded with a fine explication and dangerously high praise in his essay, "A Discovery," *Hudson Review* 3 (Autumn 1950): 453-58.

Eugene England, *Professor of English at Brigham Young University, has recently completed a critical biography of Tuckerman and is currently at work on a book on Shakespeare and Melville.*