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# We're All Anglo-Saxons Now: Alfred Tennyson and the United States

OWEN CLAYTON



IN 1862, one year into the American Civil War, Alfred Tennyson attempted to travel incognito while on holiday around Yorkshire and Derbyshire. Ever wary of public attention, the Poet Laureate refused to tell strangers his name. At a hotel in Buxton, his enigmatic appearance led one of the guests to mistake him for a member of the Confederate States of America (Monckton Milnes 81–82). It is apt that Tennyson was confused for a secessionist, since the American Civil War had marked a turning point in his relationship with the United States, particularly with the South. Having previously considered America to be an undifferentiated mass of money-grubbing “Yankees,” the war highlighted to Tennyson that there were, in fact, Americans like him: that is, men sceptical about the expanding capitalist world of finance and speculation, who retained “Old World” virtues of gentlemanly behaviour and a belief in traditional forms of authority.

This article will analyse Tennyson’s changing relationship to the United States, arguing that he mixed different forms of Anglo-Saxonism, cultural and racial, throughout his work. The poet first associated Americans with what he saw as the exploitative practices of the transatlantic literary marketplace, but the Civil War caused him to modify his opinion. After this conflict, he would maintain a personal preference for Southerners along with a distaste for “Yankees.” This discrimination paralleled an increased suspicion of the United States’ imperial ambitions, though his attitude to post-bellum America was mixed with admiration and feelings of Anglo-Saxon solidarity. As a result of what he understood as its superior federal system of political organization, he came to see the United States as the likely successor to a declining British Empire. He would eventually adopt an ideology akin to Manifest Destiny in “Kapiolani” (1892), a work that encapsulated his sense of a coming shift in global power.

The issue of copyright affected Tennyson’s early views on America. Due to the absence of an international copyright treaty, his work was reprinted in the United States without the need to pay royalties. This benefited Tennyson’s reputation, but not his bank balance (see Ledbetter). At the start of his career, he received a more favourable reception in the American than the British press, and by mid-century he had become the most imitated poet in America. Yet like many British writers, he was aghast at the apparent theft of his work in newspapers and pirate book editions.

Significantly, Tennyson had felt bullied by the American editor Charles Wheeler into an early publication of his two-volume *Poems* (1842). Wheeler wrote to Tennyson to declare that if he did not allow *Poems* to come out, the firm of Little & Brown would produce an unauthorized version based on previously published works. The poet reluctantly agreed, correcting some of the earlier works for the new volume, while adding and abandoning others. Tennyson expressed his anger in an 1841 letter to Edward Fitzgerald, pointing out the civil-yet-threatening tone of Wheeler's letter (*Letters* 1: 188).<sup>1</sup> He would always associate Americans or, rather, the figure of the "Yankee," with the commercially driven maltreatment that he had experienced in the early 1840s.<sup>2</sup>

Yet though it was no doubt important, copyright was not the main factor influencing his feelings about the United States. Of greater importance and complexity, as I will discuss below, were questions of Empire and the future of the Anglo-Saxon "race." There has been a great deal of work on Tennyson and colonialism, but little on his association with Britain's most powerful former colony.<sup>3</sup> The only book-length study of Tennyson's American reception is John Eidson's *Tennyson in America* (1943). When scholars have read Tennyson transatlantically, the focus has been on his influence upon American writers.<sup>4</sup> This has tended to obscure the fact that Tennyson was more popular in America than he was in Great Britain.<sup>5</sup> Though his influence in the United States was, as the essayist Hamilton Wright Mabie wrote in 1892, "diffusive, pervasive, atmospheric" (553), the poet's own relationship to America has been neglected. Scholars have claimed that Tennyson was not interested in the United States, or even that he had an active aversion both to it and to its people.<sup>6</sup> While he did associate those from New England and surrounding states with financial acquisitiveness, he differentiated between Americans from the North and those from the South. He based this distinction, as I will show, on what he perceived as the North's corruption of traditional Anglo-Saxon values.

Though I will deal largely with letters and "minor" poems, the implications of my argument extend further. As we shall see, Britain's national poet was deeply involved in transatlantic dialogue, debate, and exchange, both of a poetic and political nature. Tennyson's representation of the British Empire cannot be seen in isolation from the threats that it faced, particularly from the growing power of the United States. This sense of impending threat was important beyond the poems discussed here, most obviously in Tennyson's own *Idylls of the King* (1859–85), as well as for a broad range of literary representations of the British Empire, America, and the Anglo-Saxons.

#### ANTEBELLUM ATTITUDES: ANGLO-SAXONISM AND "HANDS ALL ROUND" (1852)

During the nineteenth century, according to Donald Scragg, the Anglo-Saxons achieved "a standing and cultural significance higher than at any

time before or since" (21). Tennyson is a notable example, with a clear interest in Anglo-Saxon affairs being evident in many of his poems and plays, including "Godiva" (1842), *Harold* (1877), "The Battle of Brunanburh" (1880), and *The Foresters* (1881). This interest affected his early attitude toward America, which, despite concerns about the transatlantic exploitation of his poetry, was informed by a thoroughgoing Anglo-Saxonism. This ideology saw Britain and America as sharing a particularly close bond—as being two societies born out of shared principles of religion, cultural values, and law. According to this view, for example, Protestantism was a purer and more democratic form of religion, having thrown off elaborate forms of worship and belief in the authority of Catholic popes and priests. Seeing the Anglo-Saxons as the most democratic group in history, Victorian Anglo-Saxonists produced historical studies that idealized the *witenagemot* as a forerunner of representative democracy. These scholars believed that the legal framework of the Anglo-Saxons had provided a guarantee against authoritarianism, at least until the invasion of England by William the Conqueror. The Anglo-Saxons were guardians of liberty against more dictatorial cultures, such as the Catholic French or, worse still, the Islamic Turks.

From mid-century, a more racialized form of Anglo-Saxonism developed. Texts of scientific racism such as Joseph Arthur comte de Gobineau's *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races* (English translation 1856), as well as anthropological studies such as Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon's *Indigenous Races of the Earth* (1857), suggested that the Anglo-Saxon or Aryan branch of the Caucasian race was inherently superior to other ethnic groups in terms of energy, morals, and intellect, a fact that explained the dominance of Great Britain and the United States in world politics. These two strands of Anglo-Saxonism, one cultural and the other racialist, coexisted throughout the rest of the century. They often appeared in overlapping forms, as in the work of the Orientalist Max Müller, active at the University of Oxford from 1850 until 1875, who believed that possession of a unified language equated to racial unity. By the end of the century, however, racialist arguments had overcome philological ones, as summed up by Isaac Taylor's influential *The Origin of the Aryans* (1890), which argued that "Language . . . is mutable, race persistent" and that the most reliable method to determine the latter was the "shape of the skull" (45, 63). The eventual victory of anthropometry and craniometry over language and law has overshadowed cultural Anglo-Saxonism in later scholarship, which has tended to concern itself with nineteenth-century anthropological explanations of racial difference.

Both of these traditions influenced Tennyson. He had imbibed cultural Anglo-Saxonism from a young age, and he was an avid reader of the racial philologists. His father's library, which is in the Tennyson Research Centre (TRC), and which formed the basis of his home schooling, contains several foundational Anglo-Saxonist texts. These include Tacitus's *Germania* (circa 98) and Paul de Rapin-Thoyras's *History of England* (2nd ed., 1832–3; items 335,

277). Tennyson's own library holds Sharon Turner's *The History of the Anglo-Saxons* (2nd ed., 1807; item 2238), a seminal work of cultural Anglo-Saxonism, as well as later texts by racial philologists including Rasmus Christian Nielsen Rask's *A Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Tongue* (1830; item 1854), Samuel Laing's *Modern Science and Modern Thought* (1855; item 1344), John Mitchell Kemble's *The Saxons in England* (1849; revised ed., 1876; item 1307), and several historical works by Edward Augustus Freeman (items 955–59).<sup>7</sup> In addition, Tennyson was personally familiar with Müller and Kemble, the latter being a fellow Cambridge “apostle.”

Damien Love argues that claims of “Anglo-Saxon origins . . . barely established a foothold” in Britain, while “the Vikings have attained a much more potent hold on popular culture than the Anglo-Saxons have ever done” (463). Love goes on to suggest that Tennyson's acceptance of racial blending in “A Welcome to Alexandra” (1863) is incompatible with Anglo-Saxonist thought. Although this poem does construct Britons as a mixture of “Saxon or Dane or Norman we, / Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,” none of these sources, not even the “Celt,” is necessarily outside of Anglo-Saxonism (*Poems* 2: 31–32). This body of thought was broader and more complicated than Love's conflation of it with ideas of racial purity suggests. Some strands, such as the one promoted by the mid-century magazine *The Anglo-Saxon*, included the Celts in a broad Caucasian family. Moreover, Anglo-Saxonist ideology contained both polygenetic and monogenetic strands. Turner, for example, argued that the human race was one and attacked previous writers for denigrating and denying Britain's Celtic origins (Turner 3–4). Taylor, in an attempt to mend a schism between the racialists on this point, later argued that the Celts were the original Aryans (Taylor 296). Even Josiah Strong, one of the most virulent proponents of the Anglo-Saxons' providential duty to dominate the globe, claimed that “The marked superiority of this race is due, in large measure, to its highly mixed origin” (171).<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, Tennyson's views on race were more complex than the reading of a single poem will attest. In *Idylls*, for example, he portrays the defeat of the noble Celtic King Arthur by the Saxon invader as a tragic but necessary stage in the development of Great Britain, a land in which the logical-yet-savage Saxon could dominate, but also benefit from, the supposedly ineffectual and more-naturally poetic Celt. Tennyson felt that the Celt's supposedly artistic temperament, which many “Celticist” writers, including James MacPherson and Matthew Arnold, argued for, was an important part of the national and literary character of nineteenth-century Britain, yet he also distrusted the Celt and warned against interbreeding. “The Celtic race,” as Tennyson once stated in order to explain his opposition to William Gladstone's Home Rule policy, “does not easily amalgamate with other races, as those of Scandinavian origin do” (qtd. in Hallam Tennyson 338). Yet despite advocating a belief in fixed bloodlines here and elsewhere, at other moments Tennyson represented the terms “Celt” and “English” as abstract

cultural values related to character, behaviour, and law—even, as Matthew Reynolds has convincingly shown, to the extent that to be English meant “the subjugation of the Celt within” (216).<sup>9</sup> That Tennyson contradicted himself at various points on the issue of race is unsurprising, given the length of his life and the confusions of racialist thinking during the Victorian period.

Tennyson’s poetry wavers between cultural and racialist forms of Anglo-Saxonism. Some texts advocate law and liberty as the binding qualities of the English nation. This is the case in “Hail Briton!” (1832), for instance, which idealizes feudal England as a land in which “The cords of order and of law” were knitted around the “will” of every peasant (*Poems* 1: 28). Similarly, “You ask me, why, tho’ ill at ease” (written 1833, published 1842), describes England as “The land, where girt with friends or foes / A man may speak the thing he will; / A land of settled government” (*Poems* 1: 7–9). Other works advocate a more essentialist view. In “The Palace of Art” (1833–42), for example, the speaker refers to “the supreme Caucasian mind” (*Selected Edition* 126) while an unpublished draft of “To the Queen” (1851) states that “The noblest men are born and bred / Among the Saxo-Norman race” (*Selected Edition*, 1–2). The latter reference to a “Saxo-Norman race” aligns Tennyson with a British tradition of Anglo-Saxonism, overlooked by Love, which understood the Normans to share a common Viking ancestry with the Saxons, and which claimed that the events of 1066 had reunited ancient Germanic-Norse tribes.<sup>10</sup> In *Harold*, Tennyson’s play about the Norman invasion, William the Conqueror states his belief that “Of one self stock at first,” the Conquest will “Make them again one people—Norman, English ; / And English, Norman” (*Works* 5.2). However, Tennyson’s work is also inconsistent about the Normans. In *The Foresters*, he mixes the legend of Robin Hood with an Anglo-Saxonist interpretation of Magna Carta. Discussing King John, Robin prophesies: “For aught I know, / So that our Barons bring his baseness under. / I think they will be mightier than the king” (*Works* 1.2). Robin’s prediction is that Saxonism, with its associated elements of freedom and liberty, will defeat John’s Norman tyranny through the signing of Magna Carta. Tennyson’s confusion around the status of the Normans—Vikings, English, French, or whatever they be—is a confusion at the heart of Anglo-Saxonism itself. This confusion is appropriate, since fear of a French invasion played a crucial role in shaping his early attitude to the United States.

In 1851, Napoleon III came to power in France following a *coup d’état*. Tennyson was outraged, as is clear from his colourful reference to the President of the Second French Republic as a “French Dutch pseudo-Corsican-bastard-blackleg kite-eaglet” (*Letters* 2: 47). He had literal nightmares about a French invasion of Britain, a prospect that was still troubling him in 1859, when he asked the Duke of Argyll whether someone might put a “bullet into Louis Napoleon’s forehead before he gets to London?” (*Letters* 2: 236). In his desperation, Tennyson wrote a number of nationalistic works: “the most contemptuously depreciated poems of his career,” according to

J. Timothy Lovelace (7). One of these, “Rifle Clubs!” (1852), advocated for the formation of a domestic defence force and the arming of British citizens, perhaps on the model of the United States (*Poems* 2: 469–70). In another poem—“Hands All Round,” published in the *Examiner* 7 February 1852 under the pseudonym “Merlin”—he overcame his annoyance at American publishers and called for aid from those whom he saw as Britain’s closest relations:

Gigantic daughter of the West,  
 We drink to thee across the flood!  
 We know thee and we love thee best;  
 For art thou not of British blood?  
 Should war’s mad blast again be blown,  
 Permit not thou the tyrant powers  
 To fight thy mother here alone,  
 But let thy broadsides roar with ours.  
 Hands all round!  
 God the tyrant’s cause confound!  
 To our great kinsman of the West, my friends,  
 And the great name of England, round and round.

Oh rise, our strong Atlantic sons,  
 When war against our freedom springs!  
 Oh, speak to Europe through your guns!  
 They can be understood by kings.  
 You must not mix our Queen with those  
 That wish to keep their people fools:  
 Our freedom’s foemen are her foes;  
 She comprehends the race she rules.  
 Hands all round!  
 God the tyrant’s cause confound!  
 To our great kinsman in the West, my friends,  
 And the great cause of Freedom, round and round.  
 (*Poems* 2: 37–60)

The proposed American military intervention is a “great cause,” part of the progress of a Hegelian “Freedom,” the cause’s greatness emphasized by the biblical “flood” used to describe the Atlantic. Written in iambic tetrameter, the first eight lines of the poem’s final two stanzas maintain a safely traditional rhythm, one that emphasizes a common poetic history between the two English-speaking nations. A triple-stressed refrain immediately follows, with the contrast between these lines emphasizing a sense of urgency in the imperative “Hands all round!” Indeed, the frequency of imperatives (“Permit not,” “let thy broadsides roar,” “Oh rise,” “Oh, speak,” “You must not mix our Queen”) gives the poem a hectoring tone: though Tennyson is

willing to ask for transatlantic assistance, the United States must nevertheless obey Britain's commands. This presumed hierarchy stems from the respect owed to the older nation for its tradition of liberty, its long experience as an imperial power, and, above all, its political system. The poem states, "You [Americans] must not, mix our Queen with those / That wish to keep their people fools." This attempt to distinguish between the liberal British and despotic Continental monarchies becomes muddled in the line "Our freedom's foemen are her foes," in which the terms "our" and "her" create a tangled sense of subject, a confusion that is not helped by the line's alliterative pace. The justification for this distinction is that Victoria "comprehends the race she rules," implying, presumably, that Napoleon III does not. In an earlier draft, Tennyson had written, "comprehends the land she rules" (*The Tennyson Archive* Harvard bMS Eng 952.1 (75–78), VIII 207–212). Though it was a term with a broad meaning in the mid-nineteenth century, this change to "race" nevertheless enhances the sense of an essential difference between Britain and France.

Tennyson feels more aligned with Britain's "strong Atlantic sons" than he does with France because Americans are, as the poem puts it, "of British blood." The poem's use of familial and sanguinary figures is significant. According to Ansgar Nünning, the family was the most commonly applied metaphor used by imperialists to describe the British Empire. Kinship metaphors, as Nünning argues, naturalized and simplified complex political dynamics by implying "that the relationship between England and her colonies was based on unity, harmony, and, above all, love" (77). Tennyson's use of mother-child metaphors to describe a former colony suggests the relationship of an experienced and responsible party to a youthful, perhaps naïve one. The United States may be fully independent (or fully-grown) but, the poem implies, it should still learn its place in the imperial pecking order. As I will discuss later, Tennyson's confidence in the relative position of the two nations would change radically by the time of his final poetic output. First, however, I will examine Tennyson's reaction to the War of Secession, an event that was crucial in forming his distinction between the American North and South.

#### TENNYSON AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Stories of the American tourists who plagued Farringford were legendary.<sup>11</sup> As a result of his frequent battles with transatlantic autograph hunters, scholars have tended to conclude that Tennyson disliked Americans.<sup>12</sup> Yet during the American Civil War, he came to develop a fondness for Southerners, while increasing his brusque attitude toward those from the North and East. Though often passed over by embarrassed Tennysonians, there is little doubt which side of the war the Laureate was on. He adopted a similar stance to that of the Southern General Robert E. Lee: while both men opposed slavery in principle, they felt that the rule of law and the right of (white) self-determination were more important. In an 1862 letter to the Duchess

of Argyll, Tennyson asked whether the secession of the Southern States constituted treason against the Union:

If I read rightly what has been truly written of the Constitution of those Southern States—No. Slavery there was recognised when each state was received—a sovereign state abdicating part of its sovereignty and laying it before the throne of the Union with a right to resume it at will. I love not slavery more than Charles Sumner does; but here a cool spectator—not an actor all on fire among these fiery scenes—small praise to me if I love justice more than he. (*Letters 2*: 318)<sup>13</sup>

Like many British Confederate sympathizers, Tennyson believed that slavery would end sooner if the South became independent. A nation's development, according to this conservative view, must occur naturally, rather than being forced by the interference of well-meaning politicians. In 1864, as part of his increasingly partisan involvement with Southerners, he met John Reuben Thompson, a Dixieland poet and propagandist, and Walker Fern, a diplomatic representative of the Confederacy. He liked both men, describing them as possessing "the finest gentlemanship, perfectly simple and noble-mannered" (*Letters 2*: 385). The reference to Thompson and Fern as possessing the qualities of gentlemen encapsulates the distinction that he was beginning to make between North and South. While Northerners were, he felt, largely responsible for robbing him of justly deserved royalties through their pirate publishing activities, Southerners had a more old-fashioned, even Old World belief in simplicity, nobility, and good manners. According to Thompson's account of this meeting, Tennyson "talked much of the American war, which he deplored, and of the Yankees, whom he detested" (1864; Wilson 13). Though given from the perspective of a Confederate, this is nevertheless the first recorded instance of Tennyson distinguishing between North and South. Whereas before the Civil War he had used the term "Yankeeland" to refer to the United States generally (see *Letters 1*: 338), here he uses "Yankee" to mean Northerner. The word "detested" parallels the strength of feeling that Tennyson displayed in his 1862 letter to the Duchess of Argyll, in which he went on to say that he was "disappointed nay disgusted with the Northerners ever yelling and mouthing against their old European mother" (*Letters 2*: 318). His disgust related to the bad feeling that sprang up between the Union and Great Britain during the war, over what Northerners perceived as Britain's friendly relationship with the South. The biggest flashpoint occurred when a Confederate warship, the *Alabama*, was built at Birkenhead in 1862. After leaving port, the ship went on to capture or sink sixty-five merchant ships working for the Union. This caused great bitterness in the American North and a decade-long period

of “Anglophobia,” a phenomenon that was widely reported back in Britain (see Foreman, Rugemer, Tuffnell).<sup>14</sup> Highly sensitive to criticism, whether personal or political, Tennyson felt enormous resentment at Union censure of Great Britain.

Following the end of the conflict, Tennyson referred to the South’s failed war for independence as a “heroic struggle” and expressed a desire to read the memoirs of the Confederate officer Heros Von Borcke, which had been ghostwritten by John Thompson (*Letters* 2: 408). Tennyson’s hostile attitude to Northerners crystallized following the American publication of an unauthorized magazine account of his Farringford home. He declared on 3 June 1866, “I shall admit no more Yankees into my house until they learn to reverence the hearth” (*Letters* 2: 438). This prohibition clearly did not apply to Southerners, though, since Thompson’s diary indicates that he was “cordially received by the poet” later that same month (Wilson 30).<sup>15</sup> This prejudicial attitude continued for at least two decades, as indicated by the account of William Gordon McCabe, Headmaster at the University School in Petersburg, Virginia, and a former Confederate officer. McCabe and Tennyson met in 1884 and got on extremely well, McCabe becoming a regular guest at Farringford and Aldworth, Tennyson’s home in Surrey.<sup>16</sup> During their first meeting, the pair, according to McCabe, “talked of the South” and “of Negro franchise” (memorandum dated 12 September 1884, cited in Gordon 349). McCabe did not record precisely what was said on these topics, but the attitude that both men took to “Negro franchise” can be inferred from Tennyson’s infamous argument with Gladstone about the 1865 Eyre rebellion (“Niggers are tigers, niggers are tigers,” the poet was heard to say) and McCabe’s description of Reconstruction as “dark days” in which the North had sought to impose “humiliations” upon the South (Gordon 53).<sup>17</sup>

Upon another visit by McCabe in 1885, Tennyson repeated the comment about disliking Yankees and confessed to his friend: “I can trust you because you are a Southerner and a gentleman,” terms which he conflated easily (Gordon, 352). His use of “Yankee” to refer to Americans from the North was unusual among his countrymen. According to the OED, in Britain the term had referred to all Americans from the War of Independence onward. It did not acquire a more specific meaning, as in the United States, though even there the term began to lose its regional denotation in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>18</sup> Using “Yankee” in its American, antebellum sense in late nineteenth-century Britain seems politically significant, not to say bloody-minded, on Tennyson’s part. For Tennyson, the “Yankee” figure embodied a corrupted Anglo-Saxon culture, one that had allowed itself to mix with Celtic blood and Celtic values—including Catholicism, as I will discuss in a later section. In 1862, for example, he blamed Northerners’ Anglophobia on “the overproportion of Celtic blood among them” (*Letters* 2: 319). This attitude continued for many years. In 1887, he was strongly critical of the United States’ favourable

attitude to Home Rule, attributing it to the high number of Irish immigrants in the North (*Letters* 3: 354).

By contrast, he felt that the South had maintained a rigid social hierarchy based on Anglo-Saxon superiority, creating a culture that encouraged the rule of law, moderate behaviour, and respect for the individuality of persons. Among many other things, this belief overlooked the question of master-slave sexual relations. Tennyson was both aware of and attracted to ideas of miscegenation, as both “Anacaona” (circa 1830; *Poems* 1: 309–11), an eroticized, unpublished poem about a female chief of Xaragua, and the speaker’s declaration in “Locksley Hall” that he will “take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race” attest (*Poems* 1: 168). Given this, it is surprising that the topic of interracial sex does not emerge from any of the extant material documenting his thoughts about US slavery. This may be a gap in the historical record, or perhaps his Southern friends reassured him that miscegenation did not occur within the Confederacy. Alternatively, most troubling of all, it is possible that Tennyson had heard about the institutionalized rape that was common on Southern plantations but simply did not care. Whatever the truth of the matter, Tennyson’s postbellum poetry, as the following section will demonstrate, shows an increased distrust toward the American “Yankee,” whose victory over the South and overthrow of chattel slavery meant that economic, political, and military conflict with Britain now appeared inevitable.

#### “YANKEE SHARPERS”: POSTBELLUM IMPERIAL RIVALRY

In 1871, the *New York Ledger* offered Tennyson £1000 for a three-stanza poem. The subsequent work, “England and America in 1782” (1872) has received little critical attention, partly because it is a rewritten version of a poem composed in the early 1830s. As I will now argue, the poem’s meaning in 1872 was different from its original unpublished incarnation, not because of textual amendments (of which there are relatively few) but because of the different political context for the later version.<sup>19</sup>

“England and America in 1782” promotes the benefits of self-rule. The poem addresses a personified Britain, the “strong mother of a lion-line” (*Poems* 2: 3). It asks the nation to “Be proud of those strong sons of thine / Who wrench’d their rights from thee!” and suggests that during the War of Independence America had “Retought the lesson thou had’st taught” (4–5). This renders the American Revolution British: another event in the progress of the freedom-loving Anglo-Saxons. Tennyson again mixes racial and cultural forms of Anglo-Saxonism, on the one hand praising common traditions of law and on the other noting that Americans “sprang from English blood.” (10) Ledbetter claims that Tennyson sent this poem to the *Ledger* because he “hoped for better relations between the two countries” after the Civil War (190). This is, I suggest, only partly true, since it overlooks the gibe hidden in the final stanza:

Whatever harmonies of law  
 The growing world assume,  
 Thy work is thine—The single note  
 From that deep chord which Hampden smote  
 Will vibrate to the doom. (16–20)

Christopher Ricks notes that Tennyson was going to use this stanza for the “Ode on the Death of Wellington” (1852, 1853, 1855) but that he removed it from that poem (*Selected Edition*, 320). Being in the “Ode” would, he claims, have confused the sailor/soldier balance of that poem. John Hampden’s connection with ships is indeed a crucial connotation. Ricks argues that “Hampden’s honourable rebellion against royal tyranny is pertinent to the American rebellion” (320). Yet by the time that “England and America” was published, Hampden represented to Tennyson a figure of resistance not only to the tyranny of Charles I, but that of the United States as well.

Killed on the battlefield during the English Civil War, one of Hampden’s most significant contributions to history was his refusal to pay “ship-money.” This was the King’s right to raise ships from maritime towns and cities without Parliament’s consent. Since additional ships were frequently unavailable, money was often paid instead—so that ship-money became a form of taxation without representation. Though there are obvious historical links with the American Revolution here, for Tennyson the contemporary resonance—or vibration, to use the poem’s own language—of ship-money came during the “Alabama Claims.” From 1869 to 1872, the United States sought damages from Great Britain for losses suffered as a result of actions taken by the *Alabama*. Tennyson was incandescent at this legal action, which America eventually won through international arbitration. A month after the publication of “England and America,” he wrote to Gladstone who, as Prime Minister, was involved in the final negotiations. After first wishing him luck, Tennyson advised his friend: “if you let those Yankee sharpers get anything like their way of you in the *Alabama* Claims, I won’t pay my ‘ship-money’ any more than old Hampden” (*Letters* 3: 24).<sup>20</sup> As Matthew Bevis notes, Hampden was, for Tennyson, a law-abiding rebel, a man willing to stand up for the law even when great powers did not (154). Seen in this context, the reference to Hampden in “England and America” was, rather than a call for transatlantic solidarity, actually a critique of “Yankee sharpers” who were attempting, once again, to enrich themselves. It positioned the United States as a modern Charles I, seeking ship-money from innocent Britons who had little power to resist.

The poem’s reference to “Whatever harmonies of law / the growing world assume / Thy work is thine” is ironic, since Tennyson understood the 1871 Treaty of Washington and the 1872 international arbitration in Geneva to be discordant rather than harmonious.<sup>21</sup> “Thy work is thine” suggests that Albion will maintain its tradition of resistance to tyranny no matter what

the rest of the world, apparently now ganging up on the Empire in the arbitration process, might do. Hampden's "deep chord" now takes on a more ominous meaning, enhanced by the change in pace that occurs with the line break after "smote" and the elongated double vowel sound of "doom," which enacts the vibration of the line's beginning. Struck when Britain was the centre of the world, the chord of freedom had vibrated outward to the peripheral parts of the globe, including the Americas. But now, as W. B. Yeats might put it, the centre could not hold. The phrase "to the doom" implies the end of British dominance in the face of a "growing world," particularly the rising power of "Yankee sharpers." This was a challenge to Tennyson's Anglo-Saxonist views because since the Civil War he had understood the American North to be an Anglo-Celtic culture. Troubled by a perceived growing threat to the British Empire, Tennyson's sense of the inevitability of conflict between the two imperial rivals increased as the decade went on.

In the late 1870s, the Laureate was pressed by "certain prominent Americans" to write a poem commemorating "the discovery of America in verse" (Hallam Tennyson 255). The resulting work, "Columbus" (1880), wrote back against Walt Whitman's "Prayer of Columbus" (1874), problematizing the earlier poem's idealism and revelling in the troubled history of continental discovery. Whitman's Columbus claims to have opened up the American continent to the superior productive capacity of private ownership and capitalist agriculture, setting it free to achieve its potential.<sup>22</sup> This was, of course, the ideological justification behind the seizure of land from indigenous peoples in the Americas and elsewhere. Although he cannot see the future clearly, Columbus has a vision at the poem's rapturous conclusion. Adopting the language of Manifest Destiny, the speaker hopes that "the lifeless cross I know—Europe's dead cross—may bud and blossom here" (40), leading to a renewal of the Christian faith.

Unsurprisingly, Tennyson objected to Whitman's optimism, his favourable comparisons of the United States (in its "Yankee" formulation) with Europe, and in particular to his assumption of a superior religious atmosphere in America.<sup>23</sup> "Columbus" links his fears about American morality and the consequences of an American-dominated globe to the discovery of the New World. He follows his acknowledged source, Washington Irving's *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828), in absolving the explorer of personal responsibility for atrocities. Nevertheless, Tennyson's Columbus, unlike Whitman's, is aware of what came after him: "the lust / Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain / Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles," whose inhabitants are "quench'd in blood" (*Poems* 3: 169–72). The poem begins with the word "Chains," a term that is repeated throughout as the speaker describes being brought back from the New World in irons to face accusations of abuse and mismanagement. He has hung the chains by his bed after his release, with the eventual intention of being buried with them. He imagines a future visitor to his grave asking, "what do they mean – the

chains?" (207). For Columbus they are a symbol of his poor treatment and the ingratitude of the Spanish King, but their prominence suggests that the chains may have additional meanings as well. The speaker claims that he "un-chained" the "Atlantic Sea" (210–11), an ironic statement given what was to follow his voyage. The image of chains stretching across the Atlantic is metonymic of transatlantic slavery, which the poem implies is the result not of Columbus himself but of the Catholic state that employed him. Indeed, at the start of the poem the speaker positions himself as straining against limitations imposed by the Roman Catholic Church, whose theologians use archaic arguments out of Lactantius and St. Augustine to prevent him from making his journey. Marion Sherwood rightly connects the poem's anti-Catholic message to Tennyson's fears about Irish Home Rule, but there is also a critique of "Yankee" America in this anti-Catholic sentiment (168). The corrupted Celtic-Catholic culture that led Columbus's followers to enslave the native populations of the Americas (and the subsequent African slave trade) is the same culture that Tennyson saw as being instrumental in the United States' aggressive foreign policy toward Britain during his own day.

Yet Tennyson's realization of America's rise would lead him to a stunning *volte-face*, one that meant he would come to idealize American political structures and even, in his final published poem, to imply once again that Britain and the United States were indeed a single, Anglo-Saxon culture. What united them was not race, however, but Protestant Christianity.

#### TENNYSON, FEDERALISM, AND THE NEW AMERICAN EMPIRE

For Tennyson, America's growing power, as well as that of Germany and Russia, was occurring in inverse proportion to the decline of the British Empire.<sup>24</sup> Pessimism pervades his late imperial poetry, including the Laureate Ode "On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria" (1887). Despite public exhortations from Gladstone to keep the Ode upbeat, "On the Jubilee" begins with the image of a rose blooming and dying fifty times, implying that all things undergo a Gibbonesque "Decline and Fall." It ends with foreboding questions for the Empire: "Are there thunders moaning in the darkness? / Are there spectres moving in the darkness?" (*Poems* 3: 66–67). Similarly, according to Aidan Day, "the impending fall of Britain and its Empire" is both the "nightmare and the intended warning" of the *Idylls* (Day 192).<sup>25</sup>

The only chance to prevent decline, for Tennyson, was to refashion the Empire into a federation: a unified state spanning several continents, with an imperial parliament in which all members had an equal voice. What was needed, in other words, was a United States of Great Britain. In 1884, he and his son Hallam joined the Imperial Federation League, a group created with the aim of advancing the cause of "Greater Britain."<sup>26</sup> Robert Inglesfield, Marion Sherwood, and Cornelia Pearsall have analyzed Tennyson's commitment to federation, though each has tended to underplay the importance

of America in the poet's vision of global unity. The United States, as Duncan Bell notes, was "the archetypal federal state," which served as "a constructive template for the future" of the British Empire (100, 208).<sup>27</sup> While some Britons saw the Civil War as evidence of disunity, federalists such as Tennyson understood it to demonstrate the strength of America's political system.<sup>28</sup> The conflict had been a great test, one that the United States—and particularly the principle of federation—had passed convincingly. Late in life, Tennyson spoke in glowing terms about the American Constitution, which, following the 1867 Reform Act in Britain, he had come to see as a bulwark against excessive democracy.<sup>29</sup>

The poem "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen" (1886) shows Tennyson's anxiety for the future of Britain's overseas domains if imperial federation ("One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne") is not adopted (*Poems* 3: 39). As Sherwood notes, the imagery of "Sons, be welded each and all / Into one imperial whole" (Tennyson 36–37) implies the violence that may be necessary to bring about such a unified structure (Sherwood 167). This is also an image of modern industry, which can make use of the "Produce of your field and flood / Mount and mine, and primal wood / Works of subtle brain and hand" (5–6) to create a new global polity. Technology, in particular steamships and the telegraph, now made a state spanning several continents a practical possibility. The poem's call for unity is set against its anxious "Brothers, must we part at last?" (32), a question that stems from the loss of the American colonies:

Britain fought her sons of yore –  
 Britain fail'd; and never more,  
 Careless of our growing kin,  
 Shall we sin our father's sin,  
 Men that in a narrower day –  
 Unprophetic rulers they –  
 Drove from out the mother's nest  
 That young eagle of the West  
 To forage for herself alone;  
 Britons, hold your own! (21–30)

The eighteenth-century was a "narrower day" not only because British rulers were complacent about American political demands, but also because the material conditions of the era meant that communication across a great divide was much more difficult. Now that barriers of time and space had been overcome by "Works of subtle brain and hand," all that was needed was sufficient political will. Britain's political leaders had therefore to learn from the "Unprophetic" rulers of the past, observe the direction in which history was moving, and help to bring about a new global order. The poem's call for imperial unity may even include bringing the United States back

home, since the language of “sons” used to describe British colonial nations is the same as the “sons of yore” used to describe the former colonists. Indeed, as in “Hands all Round,” the text’s confusing melange of subjects—“Britain,” “Sons and brothers,” “our,” “we,” “her sons,” “the mother’s nest,” “our father’s sin”—points to an identity crisis of which the poem is aware but which it cannot resolve. Just who, or what, is Greater Britain? Is it a racial polity, or one that accommodates India, South Africa, and the West Indies? And what of the United States, which remained a stubbornly independent nation? The poem does not answer these questions. In order to see how Tennyson dealt with them, I turn to “Kapiolani,” one of his final and most politically enigmatic works.

Posthumously published in 1892, “Kapiolani” concerns the legendary actions of its eponymous heroine, a native Hawaiian chief who converted to Christianity in 1824. According to contemporary accounts, Kapi’olani braved the wrath of the native god Pele by daring to pray beside the crater of the active volcano Kīlauea, in which the spirit of Pele was believed to reside. Emerging unharmed from this journey, Kapi’olani scored a valuable propaganda victory for the islands’ protestant missionaries, who had arrived in Hawai’i only five years before. Tennyson portrays this as a victory of the Christian God over “a Spirit of Evil”: a “demon” that had set itself up as a Deity (*Works* 3, 57). The fact that Tennyson pays no attention either to the politics of Kapi’olani’s own day or to Hawai’i’s contemporary status as a de facto American outpost will seem unsurprising. He does not overlook these issues out of mere ignorance, however, but rather to avoid admitting the United States’ victory in a century-long imperial struggle. America’s awkward absence is, I contend, an implicit admission that the future of world imperialism belongs to that nation. While Sally Engle Merry argues that the poem portrays Kapi’olani as a “model of British heroism” and a woman who defines “the essence of Britain,” I claim that it in fact attempts to unite Britain with America in response to a perceived decline in the former’s global reach (56).

Tennyson was reasonably familiar with Hawai’i’s internal and external politics, his knowledge coming from personal contacts and his own reading. In late 1865, he and Emily had hosted the Hawaiian Queen Emma and her entourage at Farringford for several days. They gave the Queen an ilex-wood throne to use for the duration of her visit, an artefact which remains at the Tennyson Research Centre.<sup>30</sup> “Kapiolani” indicates that Tennyson paid attention to Hawaiian pronunciation during Queen Emma’s visit, especially in its repetition of the phonetic epistrophe “Hawa-i-ee” (15, 33, 57–58). The double vowel sound operates as a performative sign of Otherness, one that enacts Hawai’i’s exotic strangeness in a similar way to Tennyson’s Lincolnshire dialect poems. The visit also provided Tennyson with a long-term interest in the Hawaiian Islands, and he continued to read about them during later years.<sup>31</sup> Given that he had a fair degree of knowledge about the islands and

was sensitive to matters of imperial power, Tennyson was unlikely to be ignorant about Hawai'i's tentative political position, perched as it was on the brink of annexation by the United States.<sup>32</sup>

References to political actors are absent from Tennyson's poem. Instead, "Kapiolani" presents the actions of its eponymous protagonist as part of a global Manifest Destiny, in which savage customs and religions are beaten down by Christian progress. The poem also underplays the internal political changes that occurred in Hawai'i just prior to the missionaries' arrival, changes which made the job of conversion significantly easier.<sup>33</sup> Having been united as a single state under King Kamehameha I in 1810, the islands of Hawai'i faced the prospect of falling back into separate nations upon his death in 1819. The arrival of Protestant missionaries was in one sense fortuitous for the ruling ali'i, a group to which Kapi'olani belonged, because Christianity provided a new ideology that could consolidate Kamehameha I's recent conquests. Summarizing this history, Tennyson's poem asserts: "One from the Sunrise / Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before him / Vanish'd shadow-like / Gods and Goddesses / None but the terrible Peelè remaining" (43-48). The imagery of pagan gods vanishing like shadows before the sun implies that the islanders' conversion was a natural, even automatic, process, though this is contradicted by the reference to "One," presumably Christ via his missionaries, arriving "from the sunrise." The poem displays an internal tension, then, about the extent to which Hawai'i's religious and social changes were driven by human or divine intervention. Either way, the poem serves to justify past interventions while also anticipating America's 1898 annexation.

In its varied line length, trochaic rhythm, and sparing use of rhyme, "Kapiolani" demonstrates the development of Tennyson's late style. It imitates, according to Charles Tennyson, the Hawaiian songs that the poet had heard during Queen Emma's visit (523). Commenting on its flexible and irregular lines, Jason Nabi writes that "'Kapiolani' is one of the last poems Tennyson ever wrote, and it is as close to the poetic future, and as close to finished free verse, as he gets" (195). The poem's looser structure edges toward a federalism of verse: a form in which the relationship of the parts to the whole is decentralized. This structure, which Nabi neatly characterizes as Tennyson's "freer" verse, has consciously Whitmanesque overtones (177).<sup>34</sup> It represents an acknowledgement of Whitman's increasing cultural power and, through him, that of the United States itself. Given the United States' increasing influence in Hawaiian affairs, it is unsurprising that "Kapiolani" is Tennyson's most "American" poem.

Thanks to its unspoken transatlantic ideology, "Kapiolani" breaks from the pessimism that marks "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition" and "On the Jubilee." Genuinely jubilant this time, "Kapiolani's" tone suggests that the removal of Hawai'i's old gods laid the groundwork for a better future. Though it alludes to the work of American missionaries, they are not

identified by nationality. By suggesting that the missionaries' nationality is less important than their Protestant religion, the poem sidesteps the likely decline of the British Empire, uniting (or reuniting) Britain and America. It is important to note that Tennyson sets Kapi'olani's individualistic rebellion against a corrupt and decadent "Priesthood" (34, 50), the latter being a recognizable stereotype of Catholicism. By making Kapi'olani into a native version of Martin Luther, then, the poem aligns itself with cultural rather than racial Anglo-Saxonism: even a Hawaiian chief can be an Anglo-Saxon. Indeed, Tennyson equates Kapi'olani's defiance of Pele to "the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol, a valorous weapon in olden England!" (7-9). This comparison aligns Saxon England with pre-Christian Hawai'i in order to suggest that divine providence was at play in Christianizing both societies. In other words, the poem presents a vision of Manifest Destiny in which a transnational Protestant civilization, the Anglo-Saxons understood as a cultural rather than a racial force, must spread inevitably Westward.

#### CONCLUSION

As this article has shown, Tennyson's relationship to the United States was complex and mutable, influenced by different strands of Anglo-Saxonist thinking while also reacting to important political events. In his early career, the poet was angered by unauthorized American printings of his work, but he also responded to the call for racial solidarity implicit in Anglo-Saxonist ideology. These two factors pulled him in opposite directions, leading to contradictory statements and attitudes. After the Civil War, he differentiated between the North and South, developing a particular fondness for Southerners. This allowed him to vent his spleen at "Yankee sharpers," a mixed group of Anglo-Celts who were willing to sacrifice everything to what Washington Irving called "the almighty dollar." It also led him to idealize the South as a land of honest gentlemen, the New World's final bastion of Anglo-Saxon values. Utterly lost in this analysis, of course, were America's non-white peoples. Indeed, in "Columbus," in which Tennyson makes a rare acknowledgement of slavery, he puts the blame for the slave trade on Catholicism in order to preserve his Anglo-Saxonist principles.

Tennyson came to respect the American political system, particularly federation. His poem "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition" argues that the Empire must adopt a federal system of government or else collapse. In advocating for this system, Tennyson opened the door to British-American reunification. In "Kapiolani," America's invisible presence speaks volumes, signifying Tennyson's concern that the United States would soon surpass Britain as the world's dominant power. The poem's solution is to present Protestant Christianity as the driving force of history, bringing Britons and Americans together under the same religious culture.

Tennyson's poetry was popular in part because it serviced the cause of Empire; its didacticism served as effective schoolroom propaganda in

Britain, the United States, and elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> Notably, many writers who took a different view of imperialism or colonialism felt the need to tackle the ideology of Anglo-Saxonism imbedded in Tennyson's work.<sup>36</sup> Mark Twain, for example, parodied the British Poet Laureate as the reactionary figure of Merlin in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), a text in which the time-travelling Hank Morgan's belief in his superiority over the Arthurians is based not upon race, but on his possession of nineteenth-century scientific knowledge. As this article has indicated, scholars have overlooked cultural Anglo-Saxonism, which has been left in the shadow of its racial counterpart. Future research might analyze this complex body of thought in the work of other "long nineteenth-century" writers. This would better our understanding of the waves and ripples of transatlantic literary relations and provide new ways to think about what it meant to create a "national" literature in the context of Anglo-Saxonist empire.

#### Notes

My thanks to Alice Crossley and Jim Cheshire for their supportive feedback on this article, and also to Jim for allowing me to read part of his (at the time) forthcoming monograph on Tennyson and publishing. I am also grateful to Grace Timmins, the (sadly now former) curator of the Tennyson Research Centre (TRC), for all of her wonderful assistance. At the time of writing, the TRC has been moved from its longstanding location above Lincoln Library and placed at a temporary site, following the UK Conservative Government's cuts to local council funding. A longer-term solution must be found to this situation, which threatens the integrity of the world's primary collection of material on Tennyson. TRC item numbers are taken from Nancie Campbell's 2 volume *Tennyson in Lincoln, A Catalogue of the Collections of the Research Centre* (1971).

- 1 Tennyson was still angry in 1892, when, reflecting on his treatment by Wheeler over half a century earlier, he wrote (but never published) the lines: "I weeded my garden for hours and hours / To make it a pleasure for women and men; / But a Yankee planted the weeds again, / Little he cared for the flowers" (*Poems* 3: 244).
- 2 This is despite the fact that Tennyson was well treated by Ticknor and Fields, his Boston-based publishers, who paid him royalties during the 1850s and 60s even though they were under no legal obligation to do so. This practice was known as the "courtesy of the trade" (see Cheshire).
- 3 See Brantlinger, Ebbatson, Hughes, O'Brien, Reynolds, Riede, Rowlinson, Shaw, and Shatto.
- 4 See England, Finnerty, Grivil, Hood, and Joseph.
- 5 The tipping point was 1856, the year in which Tennyson's new edition of *Poems* sold more copies in America than it did in Britain. My thanks to Jim Cheshire for this information.
- 6 The latter was an accusation that was put to Tennyson during his lifetime. The widely reported idea "that I dislike Americans," he wrote to Henry Van Dyke on 19 August 1889, "is wholly without foundation" (*Letters* 3: 403).

- 7 From pencil marks alongside the text, seemingly made by Alfred Tennyson or by his son Hallam (who often assisted his father), volume 2 of Edward Augustus Freeman's *History of the Norman Conquest* (TRC item 956) appears to have been consulted for Tennyson's research into *Harold*.
- 8 Strong argues that Tennyson's "A Welcome to Alexandra" is insufficiently inclusive, having apparently failed to spot the reference to Celts at the end of the poem.
- 9 In "Locksley Hall – Sixty Years After" (1886), Tennyson describes the French Revolution as the result of "Celtic Demos," which "rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood" (*Poems* 3: 90).
- 10 This was a common position. In 1839, Thomas Carlyle described the Normans as "Saxons who had learned to speak French" (247) while in *Hereward the Wake* (1866) Charles Kingsley's narrator asserts that Duke William is "the descendent of Rollo the heathen Viking" (323).
- 11 So much so that they later found their way into Virginia Woolf's drawing-room comedy *Freshwater* (1935), in which the character of Tennyson states that "six American professors are in the summer house" while "the bathroom is occupied by the Ladies drawing room Circle from Ohio" (1.8).
- 12 See Clark 1; Eidson 124–25; and Martin 319, 469, 565.
- 13 The legality of unilateral secession was much disputed. It was only explicitly outlawed by the United States Supreme Court in 1869 (*Texas v. White*), four years after the war's conclusion. For more on the legal background to secession, see Stamp.
- 14 The most infamous incident of antebellum Anglophobia was the Mayor of Chicago's refusal, following the 1871 Chicago Fire, to accept a gift of books sent by Queen Victoria for a new city library.
- 15 An enlightening example of the distinction that Tennyson drew between North and South is his reaction to receiving gifts of tobacco and smoking pipes. That the Laureate was a heavy smoker was well known, and he was inundated with tobacco from admirers. His American donors included Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who, in 1866, perhaps as a gesture of goodwill during the period of "Anglophobia," sent Tennyson a Calumet, commonly (and inaccurately) referred to as a peace pipe. Rather than being grateful for this gift (which remains in pristine, seemingly unused condition in the TRC), Tennyson complained: "It is odd that the Americans always send me pipes and tobacco, as if I cared for nothing else in the world; and their tobacco is not my tobacco, nor their pipes my pipes" (*Letters* 2: 445). Later, he apologized to Longfellow for having neither acknowledged nor indeed used the pipe (*Letters* 2: 448). In contrast, he prized tobacco from Southerners highly. In 1884, for example, he thanked the Southern writer and editor Paul Hamilton Payne for his gift of "North Carolina tobacco," which he called "very good" (*Letters* 3: 307). He was similarly grateful to his good friend McCabe, who sent him Durham and Lone Jack tobacco on different occasions: "whenever the smoke of your Durham ascends to Heaven from my pipe, I shall remember the giver and wish him health and happiness" (*Letters* 3: 365). Tennyson apparently not only received Southern tobacco, but he inhaled it as well.
- 16 Obsessed with militaristic poetry, McCabe had previously published Tennyson's "The Revenge: A Ballad of the Fleet" in his collection *Ballads of Battle and Bravery* (1879).
- 17 For more on Tennyson's argument with Gladstone, see John Addington Symonds's account (dated 8 December 1865) in *Letters* (2: 415–21). As he had done with Thompson in 1864, Tennyson told McCabe that "He disliked the Yankees extremely" said he had "refused to see them" in recent times (Gordon 350).

In 1887, McCabe became the Commander or “Colonel” of the “A. P. Hill Camp” for Southern war veterans, which consisted of those who “refused to admit for one moment the unrighteousness” of the “principle” of Secession or their “patriotism” toward the Confederate States of America (Gordon 53).

- 18 See “Yankee.”
- 19 As far as I am aware, the fact that the poem was originally a poetic response to Edward Wakefield’s *England and America: a Comparison of the Social and Political State of Both Nations* (1833) has escaped critical attention. Wakefield’s book, operating on the principle that “the Americans and the English have a common interest in understanding the art of colonization” aimed to increase each nation’s understanding of the political conditions of the other (vi). The American War of Independence, Wakefield claimed, had demonstrated that ruling a colony over a great distance was impossible and that local self-government was therefore inevitable for all Anglo-Saxon peoples. Britain could, however, be satisfied with its status as the originator of this lineage.
- 20 Given that America’s original claim for damages was \$2,000,000,000 and was centred upon a baseless suggestion that the actions of the *Alabama* extended the war by two years, Tennyson’s anger is understandable. The final settlement was \$15,500,000. See Foreman 812.
- 21 Tennyson owned *Consequential Damages* (1872), attributed to the pseudonymous “Saxe Brit,” which stated its contempt for the legal process by which the *Alabama* Claims were decided. Denying the existence of a mandate for any form of International Law, Brit argued that the *Alabama* Claims were “a case, not of law, but of courtesy” (9) and that America was not being gentlemanly in its pursuit of reparations. Tennyson’s possession of this volume, along with his letter to Gladstone, is an indication that he agreed with this assessment. See Tennyson’s copy at the TRC (item 609).
- 22 This echoes William Foster Lloyd’s 1833 argument about common land, famously reformulated in 1968 by Garrett Hardin as “The Tragedy of the Commons.”
- 23 He had already stated as much in an 1872 letter to Whitman, which he wrote shortly after the United States was awarded damages over the *Alabama* dispute. After first praising his interlocutor for his “large faith in the future of the world and your own country,” Tennyson commented that “there is a chance that your country may turn out the most immoral the world has ever seen” (*Letters* 3: 36).
- 24 Tennyson feared that the US would annex Canada and that Britain had neither the sufficient military resources nor political will to defend its far-flung territories. In 1884, he told McCabe that “England . . . had reached her zenith, and was going down hill” (Gordon 350).
- 25 Several critics have noted Tennyson’s contradictory use and denial of Epic over the half-century construction of the *Idylls* (see Graham, Day, Dentith, Tucker)—an ambiguous, even apologetic relationship with the poetic genre most associated with nation building and imperialism, which is reflective, among other things, of a loss of confidence in the project of empire. Tennyson’s other major concern was generic: a fear that writing Epic in the nineteenth-century was anachronistic.
- 26 The term came from Charles Dilke’s popular *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel of English Speaking Countries, During 1866 and 1867* (1890), which was later reused for his two-volume *Problems of Greater Britain* (1890). Tennyson’s library contains a copy of the later (TRC item 861) but not the earlier work.
- 27 In his popular *The Expansion of England* (1883), a copy of which Tennyson owned (TRC item 1985), John Seeley wrote that “The United States is a great example of a system under which an indefinite number of provinces is firmly held together” (160). There are numerous pencil marks in Tennyson’s copy of this book,

- including alongside the lines just quoted. This suggests a thorough engagement with the text, but whether these marks are by Alfred Tennyson, Hallam, or someone else is unclear. Tennyson admired *Expansion of England* enough to send it to Gladstone, though the book did not change the latter's anti-federalist principles (Hallam Tennyson 301).
- 28 Tennyson's views on federalism date from the end of the American Civil War. In 1865, he told William Allingham that "England ought to keep her colonies and draw them closer. She ought to have their representatives sitting in London, either in or in connection with the Imperial Parliament" (William Allingham's diary, 29 July 1865; *Letters* 2: 404). There are references to federation in "The Day Dream" (1842) and, most famously, "Locksley Hall" (1842), though neither of these poems indicates an explicit political agenda regarding federalism in Tennyson's early career.
- 29 See his letter to Walt Whitman, 15 November 1887, in *Letters* 3: 359. This letter was published in *The Times* on 22 November 1887, with Tennyson's permission.
- 30 Since the visit consisted mostly of tea and polite conversation, interspersed with the performance of Hawaiian songs and poetry, it has been dismissed by Tennyson biographer John Batchelor as "utterly pointless" (279). This was not a view held by Emma, however. Partly English herself, she wanted Hawai'i to seek an alliance with Britain rather than America. In 1874, she would unsuccessfully contest the Hawaiian throne against Kalākaua, who at that time was supportive of American influence. Queen Emma's visit to Britain was aimed at securing the Empire's good will, and her visit to see the Poet Laureate should be seen in this context.
- 31 In 1871, Tennyson wrote to Manley Hopkins, British Consul General in Hawai'i (and father of the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins), to accept a position on a Committee responsible for building a new church in Honolulu. Confirming his yearly subscription, Tennyson claimed that "neither my wife nor myself has lost the interest in Queen Emma and that which concerns her" (*Letters* 3: 21). His library contains numerous books on Hawai'i, including *Oceana; Or, England and Her Colonies* (1886; TRC item 964), a popular work by the federalist James Anthony Froude. In this book, Froude wrote that "The whole Sandwich group is under the protection of the Americans. Guarded by the stars and stripes, a phantom royalty maintains itself at Honolulu" (300). The TRC also holds William Ellis's two-volume *Polynesian Researches during a Residence of Nearly Six Years in the South Sea Islands* (1829; item 904), James Jackson Jarves's *History of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands* (1843; item 1252), Edward Clifford's *Father Damien: A Journey from Cashmere to His Home in Hawaii* (1889; item 764), and Manley Hopkins's *Hawaii: The Past, Present and Future of Its Island Kingdom* (1862; item 3226).
- 32 Given the name "The Sandwich Islands" by Captain James Cook, Hawai'i was indeed sandwiched between a number of powers. It was a site of contention for rival imperialisms, including Britain, America, Japan, China, and even between the Hawaiian Islands themselves. "Discovered" by Cook in 1788, in the course of a century the islands had been threatened with invasion by Russia and France, briefly annexed by Britain in 1843, abortively declared an American protectorate in 1851, subject to significant waves of Asian immigrants, and largely Christianized by American missionaries whose descendants would dominate Hawai'i's economy by mid-century. In the 1880s, fearing a growing American hegemony, King Kalākaua attempted to forge an alliance of Asian countries, to construct a submarine telegraph cable to Japan, and to annex the Micronesian states of New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands. He also considered bringing in Indian immigrants to work Hawaiian sugar plantations, thereby increasing British influence over the islands. These geopolitical moves led American businessmen

- to stage an armed revolt in 1887, during which Kalākaua was forced to sign a new Constitution, widely known as the “Bayonet Constitution.” This turned him into a figurehead and reduced the voting rights of native Hawaiians and, especially, Asian immigrants.
- 33 The breaking of *āikapu* (sacred eating) restrictions, the destruction of traditional religious idols and temples, and the adoption of a legal framework based on Christianity were pragmatic political moves on the part of Hawai‘i’s native ruling elite, the *ali‘i*, in particular by Kamehameha I’s widow Ka‘ahumanu, who became an unofficial joint ruler with her son Liholiho (Kamehameha II). Ka‘ahumanu consolidated power by overthrowing the tradition of dividing a dead ruler’s lands among his chiefs. Her attempts, often resisted, to impose “Christian morality on the islands was,” as Kamanamaikalani Beamer notes, “a means of advancing her own political agenda” (114).
  - 34 Tennyson’s remarks about Whitman’s poetry varied from the ambiguous to the derogatory. During the last few months of his life, he told Hallam that “Walt neglects form altogether, but there is a fine spirit breathing through his writings. Some of them are quite unreadable from nakedness of expression” (Hallam Tennyson 424). This letter suggests that Whitman’s seemingly wild free-verse style (his famous “barbaric yawp”) was on Tennyson’s mind during the period that he composed “Kapiolani.”
  - 35 See Daniel Hack 184. The self-taught writer Jack London frequently referred to Tennyson in his fiction and non-fiction, which suggests that the British Laureate was influential outside of the American classroom as well as inside of it.
  - 36 For James Joyce, the best weapon was not direct attack, but general ridicule—hence his reference to “Lawn Tennyson, gentleman poet” in *Ulysses* (50, 193). Joyce did not coin this phrase, which first appeared in *Judy* in 1877 (see “Lawn Tennis”) and was repeated in numerous publications thereafter.

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