Poetry of John Tyndall
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John Tyndall
The poems
1 Acrostic (Maria)\(^1\) 1840

M–ay heaven its choicest holiest blessings strew
A–nd beam its purest, brightest rays on you
R–est sweet one rest devoid of care or dread
I–ncense the balmiest on thy path be shed
A–nd seraphs watch around thy peaceful bed

RI MS JT/3/42/15\(^2\)

1 Possibly Maria Payne, his cousin, who wrote quite intimately to Tyndall.
2 There is a second version at RI MS JT/8/2/1/11, dated Youghal 1840.
Let fame her golden trumpet sound
Let Erin3 join the theme
And Barrow’s beauteous banks4 resound
In praise of Bruen’s name.
You deem me an enthusiast, but
‘Breathes there a man with a soul so dead
That never to himself hath said
This is my own native land’.5

1 This is written in a letter to his father (see n. 6), following the victory of the Conservative candidates Colonel Henry Bruen and Thomas Bunbury in the 1841 General Election for County Carlow. See also ‘The testimonial’ (poem 5). Bruen (1789–1852) resided on the family’s Oak Park Estate on the northern outskirts of Carlow and was the colonel of the Carlow Regiment of Militia. A wealthy Protestant, Tory landowner and man of influence, he represented Carlow County in Parliament from 1812 until 1831 and then stood again in 1835, but the result was contested. He returned to Parliament later that year after a contested by-election but was defeated in the General Election of 1837. He won a by-election in December 1840, following the death of the standing Liberal MP, and was re-elected at the General Election in July 1841.
2 Tyndall was in Kinsale, working for the Irish Ordnance Survey.
3 Erin: romantic name for Ireland.
4 Barrow’s beauteous banks: the River Barrow, which flows through Carlow.
5 Breathes there … native land: Walter Scott, The Last Lay of the Minstrel (1805), VI.i.1–3.
6 See also John Tyndall to his father, 22 July 1841 (letter 0080, TC1). Annotations to this poem are derived from this letter.
What sounds are these which strong and clear
Strike full upon my ravished ear?
'Tis freedom—bursting from the night
Of ages, sheds her glorious light
O'er Erin's undulating plains
Her cloud-capped hills and mouldering fanes!
List! Carlow list! while young O'Neill
Vociferated—Repeal!—Repeal!
Hark! rising to the shrilling cry,
The voice of Leighlin answers nigh.
See! as the swelling notes ascend
The poplars on the Bawnague bend!
And echo wafts it far and wide;
Along the Barrow's placid tide.
And hark! along the eastern line,
The 'Captain's' geese in cackle join
In council sworn—every one
To help their brother of the Swan
With tail erect in wild amaze,
Each hungry ass in concert brays!
And had they Baalam's gift you'd hear
Them give their fellow ass a cheer
Oh! who can con the glorious theme
Nor glow with all a patriot's flame?
Strike! Erin Strike! the happy lyre,
Your Sons have caught the gen'rous fire;
And Tory Bruen waxes pale
Before the doughty young O'Neill;
And Tory tyrants now confess
This youth the lustre of the press.—
And Tim honoured in modern Story,
(Sure youthful hearts will pant for glory)
From young ambition's gleaming pyre
Has snatched the title of 'Esquire'!
A man of stalwart consequence,
Though some assert a lackbrained fool,
The deadly foe of common sense
The wise man's scoff—the villain's tool
A bubble-full of empty pride,
The filth of agitation’s foam,
That drops into oblivion’s tide
‘Unwept – unhonoured – and unknown’.
Oh! is it then such [pulling] things
That Erin’s dignity maintains?
Ah no!—each apish essay flings
A deeper tint upon her stains
Presumptions Jackanapes!—resign
Your tiny pens to other hands
Fulfill your destiny’s design
Go mete the tape and measure drams!
Nor once again vain fools aspire
Beyond the counters genial noise,
In scorn my glowing thoughts expire
Goodbye ye patriotic boys!—

*the Swan hotel

RI MS JT 8/2/1/1–2
Typewritten transcript only
1 Written under the pseudonym W. S. (Walter Snooks). DeArce, McGing and McMillan (2013–14) suggest that this is a reference to the nationalist romanticism of Sir Walter Scott as an inspiration.
2 Tyndall was in Kinsale, working for the Irish Ordnance Survey. The poem was published in The Carlow Sentinel, 16 October 1841, [3]. The published version has different punctuation in places.
3 Erin’s: romantic name for Ireland.
4 List!: listen.
5 young O'Neill: the son of Terence O’Neill, of the Swan Inn hotel, Leighlinbridge, who had written two letters about the Repeal of the Union (see letter 0098, TC1).
6 Repeal!: referring to the movement led by Daniel O’Connell (1775–1847) to repeal the Act of Union of 1800 between Great Britain and Ireland.
7 Bawnague: probably Bawnogue or Bownoge, near Baltinglass, about 12 miles north-west of Carlow.
8 Barrow’s: the River Barrow, which flows through Leighlinbridge.
9 ‘Captain’s’: probably Captain Thomas Woodcock (see letters 0066 and 0090, TC1).
10 Baalam’s gift: the gift of prophecy (Numbers 22: 1–3).
11 Bruen: see poem 2, n. 1.
12 Tim: either Timothy Hennessy or Terence O’Neill’s son, both mentioned earlier in the letter 0101, TC1.
13 ‘Unwept – unhonoured – and unknown’: misquotation of ‘Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung’ in Walter Scott, The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805), VI.i.16.
14 See also John Tyndall to Editor of The Carlow Sentinel, 12 October 1841 (letter 0101, TC1). Annotations to this poem are derived from this letter.
4 Carlow\(^1\)  26 October 1841\(^2\)

Sweet spot! where first th'imperfect accent hung
In lingering lisings on my infant tongue
Where young imagination first took flight
And roam’d unshackled thro’ the realms of light,
When bright and happy life’s perspective shone
And golden vistas opened farther on
Each dancing stream that woos the Sun’s bright rays
Each wee wild flower that blossoms on thy braes
Each shrub that sheds its fragrance in the dell
Around my soul has cast a hallowed spell—
Sweet blissful spot! where Barrow fair and free
Rolls liquid chrystal to the distant sea\(^3\)
Fall oft when morning tinged the orient sky
And heav’n’s calm azure spread itself on high
I’ve trod thy banks in summer beauty drest
T’inhale the breeze that freshened o’er thy breath
And when from Zenith fall the scorching ray
In reckless frolic gambolled with thy spray
Ere sanguine strife thy hollows had bestained
Or friendships mourned her Sacred Courts profaned
Her glimmering incense cheered each passing gloom
The heart its altar—union its perfume
Oh then approving heavens smiled to see
Congenial bosoms throb in sympathy
Alas how changed, these Halcyon days are o’er
And drooping Carlow must their loss deplore
Now agitation whelms her like a flood
And noisome vermin\(^*\) gloat upon her blood
Where peace sat smilingly gloomy terror reigns
And Ate\(^4\) revels o’er thy lovely plains
Discords black banner now each Zephyr fills
And darkly hovering o’er thy sunny hills
Each cloudlet big with desolation hangs
While reeking ’neath O’Connell’s\(^5\) vampyre fangs
Prostrate you lie—each burning tear that’s shed
Calls down damnation on his guilty head
What tho’ the fiat linger on the tongue
of Justice—tho’ the hair-held sword has hung
So long above thee waiting the decree
of slumbering vengeance to descend on thee
Tho’ Titan-like you raise your impious hand
And brandish in high heav’ns face your brand
Thy day arrives—the widow’s withering ban⁶
Shall burst in thunders o’er thee—bloody man.
Nor lost to fame in ages yet to come
Fell infamy still brood upon thy tongue
And execution grim shall mark the spot
Where low you lie—detested not forgot

*Bugs &c.

1 Written under the pseudonym W. S. (Walter Snooks).
2 Tyndall was in Kinsale, working for the Irish Ordnance Survey. The poem was published in *The Carlow Sentinel*, 30 October 1841, [3]. The published version has different punctuation in places.
3 *Barrow fair and free | Rolls liquid chrystal to the distant sea*: the River Barrow flows through Carlow to Waterford Bay.
4 *Ate*: Atē, in Greek mythology, is the goddess of mischief, delusion, ruin and folly.
5 *O’Connell’s*: Daniel O’Connell, see poem 3, n. 6.
6 *the widow’s withering ban*: in 1815 Daniel O’Connell had killed John D’Esterre, a member of the Dublin Corporation, in a duel. His widow Jane Lucretia D’Esterre (1797–1868) angrily refused O’Connell’s remorseful offer to share his income with her, although she did accept an annuity to support her daughter. A ban is an imprecation of a curse, an execration or malediction expressing anger (*OED*).
7 See also John Tyndall to Editor of *The Carlow Sentinel*, 26 October 1841 (letter 0106, TC1). Annotations to this poem are derived from this letter.
5 The testimonial\textsuperscript{1} 8 November 1841\textsuperscript{2}

Hark the voice of empire calls
Forward to the Shrine of fame
on its cloud crown’d capitals
Emblazon Bruen’s\textsuperscript{3} name
---
Lo the answering signal brand
Flashes on Mononia’s\textsuperscript{4} rills
Gleaming bright from strand to strand
Sheds its light on Ullin’s hills\textsuperscript{5}
---
As turns the Moslem to the shrine
When the last tinges of the sun
In all their golden glory shine
Above the distant horizon
Each grateful eye is burned on thee*  
Hibernia’s new Thermopylae\textsuperscript{6}
---
The soaring condor plumes his wing
on Chimborazo’s lofty peak\textsuperscript{7}
And hears the mountain echoes ring
In dread explosion far beneath
Amid the elemental war
The Spirit of the tempest rides
And flashing from his cloudy car
Red lightnings hiss along the mountain’s sides
Unmoved—unruffled and serene
The tenant of the crag looks down upon the scene
---
So stood brave Bruen undisturb’d he viewed
The scowling cloud of agitation lour
With steady eye—his lofty brow unmoved
He calmly waited the impending shower
And when at length the demon of the storm
Let loose the thunders from his red right hand
The dauntless chief on freedom’s pinions borne
Unfurled her flag and drew her flaming brand
And mantling on his cheek the patriots glow
He hurled defiance at his gorgon\textsuperscript{8} foe
---
And oft to battle for the right
He led his trusty men
And oft was worsted in the fight
Yet Brucelike⁹ fought again
---
And conquered too—the wild hurrah
Has reached the distant sky
And echo from her mountain hold
Has answered cry for cry
---
Tho’ rent by many an adverse breeze
Upon the battle plain
His glorious banner freely waves
Unsullied by a stain
---
While surpliced fiends¹⁰—Hell’s viper spawn
Before the standard bow
Lerne¹¹ twines the laurel wreath
To bind the champions brow.
---
Now the voice of empire calls
Forward to the shrine of flame
On its cloud crowned capital
Emblazon Bruen’s name

*Carlow

1 Written under the pseudonym W. S. (Walter Snooks).
2 Tyndall was in Kinsale, working for the Irish Ordnance Survey. The poem was published in The Carlow Sentinel, 13 November 1841, [3]. The published version has different punctuation in places.
3 Bruen’s: see poem 2, n. 1.
4 Mononia’s: Mononia is the Province of Munster, comprising Counties Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. The principal source for ‘Mononia’ was the poem ‘Remember the Glories of Brien the Brave’ in Thomas Moore’s Irish Melodies (1821).
5 Ullin’s hills: ‘And Ullin’s hills be silent as the grave’ (G. Harvey, trans., Ossian’s Fingal: A Ancient Epic Poem (London: Valpy, 1814), II.xv.8).
Hibernia’s new Thermopylae: Colonel Henry Bruen’s electoral success at Carlow in 1841 is here compared with the famous battle at Thermopylae in 480 BCE, when the Greek forces repelled a far larger army of Persian soldiers. Hibernia is the Classical Latin name for Ireland.

Chimborazo’s lofty peak: one of the highest mountains in the Andes in South America and the highest mountain in Ecuador at 6,263 m (20,549 ft).

gorgon: in Greek mythology the Gorgons were three sisters whose hair was made from venomous snakes and who turned those who looked at them into stone.

Brucelike: The Scottish warrior king, Robert the Bruce (1274–1329), defeated a far larger English army at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. He later invaded Ireland to assist the Irish struggle against England.

surpliced fiends: wearing the loose vestment of white linen worn over a cassock by Roman Catholic priests.

Lerne: possibly the Lernaean Hydra that, in Greek mythology, was a many-headed serpent.

See also John Tyndall to Editor of The Carlow Sentinel (letter 0110, TC1). Annotations to this poem are derived from this letter.
The battle of the constitution is to be fought at the registry
27 November 1841

Child of the North!—the fairest scene for thee
The native mountains’ wild sublimity
Which proudly from their kindred clouds look down,
White snows eternal form their dazzling crown,
Thou lov’st to see the foaming Geyser rise,
Bounding from earth in mingle with the skies;
And tho’ the truant feet may widely roam,
The fondest thoughts still linger round thy home.
Thus, Carlow, thus—where’er my lot may be,
Fond mem’ry clings tenaciously to thee!

Hail! thou theme of wide-spread story,
Well and bravely hast thou done;
Snatched the mead of dreadful glory.
“IRELAND’S BATTLE” fought and won!

Shall the harp of Erin slumber
On the Oak—a silent thing?
Wake, Oh wake! the tuneful number,
Strike! Oh strike! the golden string!

When carpet lords ignobly hung
On ladies eyes from day to day,
Thy gallant son—the fearless “ONE”
Pronounced the fiat—“Serfs away!”

The icy shackles of the tomb
Of ten years growth are burst, and now;
A ray from heav’n dispels the gloom
Which darkened o’er the nation’s brow.

Old Scoted gazed, and shrill and clear
Her thrilling pibroch then did blaw,
And hoary Lomond stooped to hear
The joyous notes of Whigs awa’!

When once the conquering eagle rose,
With purple wing above the slain,
As havock sheathed his reeking sword,
Upon Pharsalia’s bloody plain.10

Did Caesar linger? Shadowy bands
Of crimson Munda,11 is it so?
Resounding o’er her arid lands,
The voice of Sybia12 answers; ‘No.’

Men of Carlow! Now’s the time;
Rush to the embattled walls,
Writhing in his filthy slime
Crush the Hydra13 as she sprawls!

Onward! spirits of the free
Join the glorious Spartan14 band;
Let your thrilling watchword be;
‘BRUEN and our native land!’

*O’Connell gives him this honour.
“Look on this picture—and on this.”

Nature had burst night’s trammels, and the sun—
From the rich glowing portals of the East—
Had shed a flood of radiance o’er the plains.
The occident had sent it’s zephyr forth
To pour the perfume of the mountain flower
In sweet libation to the infant day.
From every blushing petal trembling hung
A diamond dew-drop—like the glistening tear
That lingers in bright beauty’s brilliant eye,
While her fair cheek is dimpled by a smile,
The earliest ray had woo’d me from my couch
To watch the rosy wing of morning flap
The murky shades in gaity away;
I stood upon a verdant hill, and gazed
On nature’s chessboard which before me lay,
In varying beauty spread—the infant ear
Had burst its emerald shroud, and timidly
Shrank from the balmy breeze’s bland caress.
The meadow spread its carpet to the sun,
On which the brightest gems in Flora’s crown,
Like topas blushed—on the horizon’s verge,
In far perspective azure mountains rose,
Bathing their peaks in ether—’rapt I stood,
And viewed the lovely scene—th’ immortal mind
Expanded, and sought converse with the skies.
Acknowledging the goodness infinite,
I bowed before creation’s GOD, and mine!

A hoary occupier of the soil
Approached the flower-crown’d hillock where I stood;
I marked his placid eye—the impetuous fire
Which burned there once was dimmed—and in its place
A calm and holy glow lit up its cheek.
Full seventy winter on his furrowed brow
Had spent their vehemence—yet smiling sat
Contentment there as lingers day's last beam,
In peaceful radiance on the rugged cliff.
His path lay near my stranding place—I turned,
And in my kindest accents bade—“good morning”—
The customary salutation passed—
The weather was our theme, from that anon
The smiling scene which lay before our eyes.
“See,” said the patriarch, “where yon distant wreath
“Of sapphire smoke, upon the mountain air,
“Is borne sunward—where the sheltering trees
“Preclude alike the sunbeam and the blast.
“There is my home—within the selfsame shade
“The boyhood of my father’s father passed;
“Beneath a towering lime which widely throws
“Its leaf-clad arms round, the good old man
“Resigned his breath—his son has also trod,
“Full twenty years ago, the darksome vale.
“The hoary scion of this mouldered stock,
“I, till the spot, where once its foliage bloomed;
“My daughters portioned off, a hardy son
“remains with me—the incense of whose prayer
“Ascends with mine to heaven’s high throne, and calls
“Its richest blessings down upon the man
“Who gave us all—when upas blight fell,
“When whirlwinds premature have wildly swept
“Across earth’s bosom, laying waste our fields
“With desolating power—meagre and chill
“Gaunt poverty has scowled upon our hearth;
“His smile benignant ever has dispelled
“The sable shades which gathered round my soul!
“When from life’s tendril, like the blighted leaf,
“I trembling hang—in prayer my dying tongue
“Shall falter feebly forth ‘God bless my Landlord.’”

II
The parting ray of the autumnal sun
Was slumbering on each “ivy-mantled” pile,
Which crowned in hoary grandeur every hill.
I neared my home—anticipation cast
The shroud of time aside—each playmate dear
Before me smiling stood, and breathed a welcome;
How sweet the thought—the kind, the warm embrace
Absorbed reflection—happy, happy youth!
Ideal time, when on utopian wing
Sweet fancy gaily soars on air ambrosial;
Alas! that stern reality should crush
Thy visionary towers.—I reached my home,
And eyes that once beamed kindly passed me by
Unheedingly—dark strife had raised her flag
Where kindred hearts had throbbed in unison.

One smiling morn, by inclination led,
I wandered forth reflecting as I went
On bygone days.—There is a peaceful spot
(Thought I,) where discord has not raised his brand;
I’ll to’t, and view fair happiness once more.
I climbed a hill, and from its mossy peak
I viewed the scene around—no smoky curl
Danced on the eddies of the atmosphere.
Onward I went towards the happy spot—
For so I deemed it still—no sound arose
To wake the sleeping echoes of the shade;
Each tree appeared to weep, as from the bough,
the leaflets seared and severed dropped to earth;
A sad foreboding filled my anxious mind,
When what I sought now burst upon my view!
Black, desolate and dreary—roofless walls
Upreared themselves, on which each passing breeze
Lavished a sigh—fixed to the spot I stood,
And traced the work of ruin’s ruthless hand.

Upon a rugged stile a being sat;
He seemed inanimate—as if his mind
Abstracted from the earth, had wandered from
Its tenement, which waited its return.
His forehead pale was by a grisly hand
Intensely pressed.—I, wondering, asked the cause
Of all I saw.—He started at my voice,
And, like a reckless maniac answered—“THERE!”
“The darkest shroud is cast o’er all my hopes;
“THERE have I lived in happiness—and THERE
“My aged father heaved his dying sigh;
“I see his angry ghost indignant frown
“Upon his guilty son.—Oh! here I might
“Have spent a happy life, wer’t not for ONE!
“Damn him, ye furies!—on the guilty thing
“Heap burning coals, and oh, ye vengeful skies
“Rain black perdition on his lonely grave!
“Oh! I could the darksome thoughts which now revolve
“Within my tortured mind, be quick enrobed
“In hottest flame!—and were my burning breast
“A thunder-cloud to roll the lightning on—
“In dire explosion, on the miscreant’s head,
“I’d shower the vengeance of a ruined man!
“Curst be the hour he came with silver tongue,
“And Syren sounds⁵ to woo me to my doom!
“To suit my taste a bauble first he dressed,
“And called it “Freedom”—God! I’ve found it false!
“False as the fruit that blooms in hell’s abyss!
“He talked of pampered tyranny—he said
“I was a slave—and I, poor fool, believed.
“Mis’ries, ’till then unknown, sprung up before
“My jaundiced view—imaginary wrongs
“Lent fuel to the furnace of my brain,
“And viper-like, I turned and madly stung
“(Oh! base ingratitude,) the man that fed me.
“T’was done!—He cast the reptile from his breast—
“Deserted by the fiend who worked my woe—
“Dark desolation scowling o’er my fate,
“A wretched houseless wanderer I roam.”

Carlow Sentinel, 11 and 18 November 1841, [3]⁶
Typewritten transcript only

1 Landlord and Tenant: in his journal, Tyndall made several references to relationships between landlords and tenants in Ireland, particularly during the time of the emerging Great Famine, after the failure of the potato crop. Though he saw many of the (implicitly Catholic) tenants as dirty and indolent, he believed that the absentee landlords should shoulder their share of the load in relieving poverty and helping their tenants to work and survive. By implication, the happy tenant in this poem is Protestant and the wretched one Catholic.

2 Written under the pseudonym W. S. (Walter Snooks).

3 Tyndall was in Kinsale, working for the Irish Ordnance Survey.

4 Flora’s: the Roman goddess of flowers and the Spring.

5 Syren sounds: the Sirens were creatures of Greek mythology who lured sailors to shipwreck.

6 For a commentary on this poem, see DeArce, McGing and McMillan (2013–14) ‘Two Forgotten Poems by John Tyndall’, though it has many transcription errors.
8 Lines sent with a forget me not\textsuperscript{1} \textit{early 1840s}

Fond memory’s flower of azure dye
I send my fairest now to thee
Oh let it on thy bosom lie
An emblem of my love for thee

And if a glance should downward bend
And rest perchance upon that spot
That glance will prove affection’s friend
Twill bring to mind “Forget me not”

RI MS JT/3/42/26

\textsuperscript{1} This poem is derived from an original by Mrs Opie, *The Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature*, London: Richardson, 3 (1824): 539:

To the flower called, Forget Me Not!
Fond memory’s flower of azure dye
Permit thy bard one boon to crave
When in death’s narrow bed I lie,
Oh! bloom around my humble grave.

And if some tender faithful friend
Should, led by love, approach the spot,
And o’er thy flowers admiring bend,
Then say for me, Forget Me Not!
9 Acrostic (Christina Tidmarsh)\(^{1}\)  early August 1842\(^{2}\)

Acrostic Cork Aug/42\(^{3}\)

C an the storm tost seaman roam
H eedless thoughtless of his home
R ays from memory’s brilliant star
I lumine his pathway from afar
S o dear girl I’ll think of thee
T ost on life’s tempestuous sea
I n my souls deep essence fraught
N ever canst thou be forgot
A s o’er thy cheek in bland caress
T rembling hangs each raven tress
I n thine eyes translucent light
D eeply, darkly, purely, bright
M id the halo of thy smile
A ll my cares I could beguile
R est fond thought,—for ever dwell
S tranded in thy silent cell
H ence I roam—sweet girl farewell

\(^{1}\) Christina Tidmarsh was the sister of one of Tyndall’s surveying colleagues, John Francis (Jack) Tidmarsh (1824–1906), and Tyndall seems to have had a soft spot for her.

\(^{2}\) Tyndall was in Cork working for the Irish Ordnance Survey. He sailed to Liverpool on 5 August.

\(^{3}\) This poem was written just as Tyndall sailed to England for the first time, to work on the English Survey, leaving Christina behind in Ireland.
10 To Ginty

To Ginty

October 1842

Tho’ grim disappointment his shadows may fling
Oer the thoughts which like sunbeams once brightened my breast
As the angel of night with his ebony wing
Sweeps the bright tints of eve from the beautiful west

Yet hope thro’ the vista of time like a star
To gild my existence lends many a beam
Its soul cleansing radiance it flings from afar
To wake each gay ripple that laughs on life’s stream

Then tune thy wild harp Bill to sadness no more
Tho’ sweet be the numbers & tender the strain
Let us hope for the hour when with ardent “encore”
We’ll revive our “discussions” in glory again

But fling (for thou canst) oer the musical string
That hand which can waken its loveliest tone
May hope cosy hope round thy bosom still cling
And happiness make every fibre its own

1 William (Bill) Ginty (c.1820–66) worked with Tyndall on the Irish Ordnance Survey and later in England. Ginty shared lodgings with Tyndall until he was transferred to England on 20 May 1842.

2 In October 1842 Tyndall was based in Preston while Ginty was working elsewhere in northern England, particularly around Kirkby Lonsdale in Westmorland.
11 To Chadwick 1 November 1842

Dear Chadwick now the shaken sea
Uplifts its waves twixt you and me.
But say can such brief absence blight
The soul’s affection once so bright.
Has dark oblivion swept thy breast,
As night the amber from the west
Must I believe I have no part
And fill no space in Chadwick’s heart?
Is this the case? if so farewell
One dream on which I loved to dwell
One thought which o’er my senses stole
And wound its fibres round my soul—
Cherished alike on land and sea
That I possessed a friend in thee.

For other themes I must address
The muse, and now about our mess.
Among the things I mean to mention
It fairly claims the first attention.
Divide by 5 an even score
The quotient surely must be four.
This fits our numbers to a man
For Evans 3 lately joined the clan
Who thrice a day with nimble feet
Do wend their way to Butler Street. 4
A cap they say in days of yore
The Lord of Moslem Turkey wore
Whose magic power could fulfil
Each wish the Sultan chose at will.
Oh that I had it! Chadwick dear
In thirty seconds you’d be here
Borne swifter than the rushing wind
Your wife and Lizzy 5 left behind.
Then might you at your leisure trace
The workings of each messman’s face
As circling round the groaning table
They eat while ever they are able.
But as such caps are rather rare
(‘Thank god!’ be Mrs Chadwick’s prayer)
In words I must the life convey
Which quivers here from day to day
Behold us then each misty morn
Smitten at times by rain and storm
See us I say at half past six
As with our pale compeers we mix
The cheek all blue, the nose all red,
The thoughts all centred in the bed.
Whereas each stiff hand wields the pen
Its owner yearns to be again.
But time flows on—and hark the cry,
And mark the sparkle of each eye,
Which welcome loud & still the chime
That tinkles forth “tis breakfast time”.
Mid rumble of confusions sweet
Each hungry draftsman seeks the street
Left face! and quick as you are able
Dash forward to our breakfast table.
Bill, George, & Phil on coffee feast
While I, dissenting from their taste
Despise their fare and mix agog
My gentle cocoa in a mug.
It cheers my spirits, makes me fatter
Though my companions doubt the latter
And one there is who sweareth solus
We’d sooner breakfast on a bolus.
At dinner now behold the group
Breathing the fumes of gravy soup
Oh! for an angel’s pen to trace
The varied twists of George’s face
High in the air his mighty nose
Its pleasure rests in sundry blows.
Their ponderous jaws the others ply
A dog’s delight in every eye.
Till stuffed with flesh or tired of bone
They yield the fight and dinner’s done.
At dinner tis my lot to serve
My office is to cut and carve
The sweat drops on his dewy brow
Attest what Tyndall suffers now.
‘A small bit John’ says George & Bill
“The merest morsel” echoes Phil.
Thus do I waste my precious life
Oh! happy thou who hast a wife!
Is there no maiden in the land
To snatch me from this glutton band.
To loose those feelings packed and pent
Like clouds within my firmament
To chase the fog with radiant eyes
And bid the sun in glory rise.

1 John Chadwick, a surveying colleague of Tyndall, left the Irish Survey on 26 February 1842, probably because of the birth of his daughter, and settled in the town of Kinsale in County Cork, where he worked as a private surveyor.
2 Tyndall was in Preston, working for the English Ordnance Survey.
3 Evans: Phillip Deighton (Jim) Evans (c.1822–1906), a close surveying colleague of Tyndall.
4 Butler Street: Tyndall and others lodged at some time at 11 Butler Street, close to the railway and North Union Station in central Preston.
5 Your wife and Lizzy: Lizzy appears to be his daughter.
6 Bill, George, & Phil: Bill is possibly William Marquis (1820/1–95), and George and Phil probably George Latimer and Phillip Evans, all surveying colleagues based in Preston.
7 mighty nose: George Latimer’s nose was an object of fun to Tyndall. See also poem 39.
Hushed is the clangour of the vesper bell—
It's dying chime the breeze has borne away;
Around me now, no buzzing murmurs swell
While led by curiosity, I stray
Thro’ Wilfred’s holy fane—in white array
The fathers of the prostrate people stand,
Who deem the beamings of supernal day,
Or shades of Hades spread at their command
In glory or in gloom throughout the subject land!

And here bend youth and age, and here the tears
of pearly pureness, fill the dark fringed eyes
Of lovely penitents, while ghostly fears
Sweep from their downy cheeks the vermeil dyes—
The roseate tints which slumbered there—and sighs
From iron hearts are sent, as haply lours
The frown of Rome—like barbs and bolts it flies,
Piercing the soul, and crushing all its powers—
Before her mystic shrines th’ immortal essence cowers!

See yonder time-worn soldier where he kneels,
With tattooed brow—with bosom scorched and scarred!
Can fearless spirits feel as how he feels?
Can this be he who erst the battle dared;
When sanguinary files tumultuous jarred,
With life compressed and challenge-flashing eye,
He sought the cloud of conflict helmet-starred,
He sunk—yet rose above the din his cry—
Untrammelled—unsubdued—presage of victory!

He quails!—anon an Orphean spell combined
With all the shadowy grandeurs that arise
From canvass and from candles, grasp his mind—
Lifting imagination to the skies—
They generate a feeling which defies
The manacles of reason, as it soars
Beyond the world, in speechless extacies,
To realms where Francis and Stylites pour
The ceaseless tide of praise and Heaven’s bright Queen adores!

Oh! there’s a witchery in that thrilling peal—
That requiem of common sense—which turns
The soul to high-wrought phrenzy—even I feel
Its mighty influence—tho’ my spirit spurns
Rome’s scarlet draperies,—her unctions,—wens
Cowls,—curses,—, and chimeras—dark and dire
That dense azotic cloud within which burns,
In lurid vigour superstitious fire;
But where alas! the beams of intellect expire!

Wat Ripton Snooks

Preston Lancashire

RIMS JT/8/2/1/16–17

1 St Wilfred’s is a Catholic Church in Chapel Street, Preston, close to the railway station and to Fishergate. During his time in Preston, Tyndall attended churches and chapels of several denominations, including Anglican and Methodist. For a discussion of Tyndall’s early religious development see Cantor 2015.

2 Written under the pseudonym Wat Ripton Snooks.

3 Tyndall once recalled in his journal hearing Mass in this church on 25 December 1842 (25 December 1843, RIMS JT/2/13a/9). This poem may have been written shortly afterwards, when Tyndall was in Preston.

4 The original first verse reads as follows:

The bells had ceased and solemnly subdued
Was all the bustle of the noisy throng,
When in Saint Wilfred’s fane I stood and viewed
The prostrate ranks which stretched the aisles along,
And heard the bosom thrilling choral song
Which bathed in floods of melody the span
Of the high dome—as swelled aloft among
The towering columns—glowing as it ran
From soul to kindred soul the rapturous paean!
13 On leaving Westmorland\textsuperscript{1} January 1843\textsuperscript{2}

Farewell to the land of the crag and the cloud,
Which mantles each mountain, where fearfully loud,
The wild tempest revels, and branchless and bare,
Lays the prince of the hills, erst majestic and fair.
Farewell to the fells where the faint bleating notes
Are oft flung to the breeze by the perishing goats.
The tear-drops fall quickly while from you I fly;
Ye crags, and ye thunder-rent caverns, good bye!

Farewell ye dark summits, where fancy has wrought
Her loveliest visions—ye temples of thought,
Where my bosom untramelled has swelled with delight,
As the Windermere\textsuperscript{3} beauties have burst on my sight;
Where my soul in her essence exultingly soared,
Or the God of creation in meekness adored.
But the visions have faded and melted the spell,
Ye haunts of sublimity’s genius, farewell!

By Heaven! I love you—the feelings which bind
Us are strong as o’er bound things material with mind;
But my heart!—shall I utter the working that’s there?
Shall my stanza be marred by the clink of despair?
As autumn complains of the blight of the spring,
Of the mildews which summer has shook from her wing;
Thus, thus, will I warble my woe-begone tale,
Till the chimneys of Liverpool\textsuperscript{4} echo my wail.

Oh! why has just heaven permitted the snare?
Or why wert thou made so surpassingly fair?
Were the soft downy cheek and the roseate smile
Bestowed thee to strengthen each hope-crushing wile?
Can I ever forget the perfection of bliss,
Which pervaded my soul when my first burning kiss
Was with ardour impressed on thy beautiful cheek,
And my eyes volumed forth what my tongue could not speak.

Has the ruby a glow?—round thy sweet lips it shone:
Has a Nainde a grace?—it was surely thine own:
Has the rosebud a fragrance?—the tulip a hue?
Has an angel a glory?—it beamed around you:
When it twinkles in beauty o'er Italy's skies,
Has the eve-star a ray?—oh! it dwelt in thine eyes.
With a Persian's high favour, when called to adore,
I gazed on thee—loved thee—what could I do more?

Oh! talk to me not of the gay vernal bloom,
Of the jessamine's dyes, or the lily's perfume;
Can the joyance of spring to the mouldering heart,
Hope's promises bring, or hope's sootheings impart?
Ah! no—in the depths of Cimmerian night,
Lie buried my prospects, erst gloriously bright:
My Mary is false! oh! the thought is a hell;
Ye records of trampled affection—FAREWELL.

Preston Chronicle, 28 January 1843, [4]
Typewritten transcript only

1 Signed ‘W. Ginty’, this poem is a prank by Tyndall, narrating Ginty's discovery of his 'false' Mary. He even sent a copy anonymously to her, following which there was a scene amid some concern that her family might see it (James Sinnett to John Tyndall, 2 February 1843, RI MS JT/1/TYP/11/3863, letter 0184 in TC1), especially since Mary's engagement to someone else had just been announced (William Ginty to John Tyndall, 31 January 1843, RI MS JT/1/TYP/11/3591, letter 183 in TC1). Ginty found the affair highly amusing. Mary Edwards (b. c.1822) lived with her uncle and aunt in Kirkby Lonsdale and, despite having a putative romance with William Ginty, married William Henry Owen, an Irish solicitor, in June 1843.

2 Tyndall was in Preston, working for the English Ordnance Survey.


4 At this date Ginty (but not Tyndall) was living in Liverpool.

5 Cimmerian night: in Greek mythology, the Cimmerians lived in perpetual mist and darkness near the land of the dead.
14 An Hibernian’s Song. To—.\(^1,\!^2\) 20 May 1843\(^3\)

Oh! my beautiful queen its yourself that is neat,
As fair as the flower that blooms in the grove,
When your beautiful form you bend o’er the street,
By the holy Saint Hospice\(^4\)—I’m smothered in love!

Now listen, my dear, if you treat with disdain,
The tears of affection which stand in my eye,
Or carelessly laugh at my soul-sinking pain,
By the holy Saint Hospice—my angel I’ll die!

My heart how it flutters—oh! could I but tell
How I think of you, dearest, by day and by night,
When the snores of the million in melody swell
I dream that I clasp you in furious delight!

From the mountains of Erin\(^5\) I’ve brought you a heart
As big as a steam coach!—I solemnly swear!
Oh! my admirable jewel—my princess impart
A beautiful kiss for to cheer its despair!

Oh! had I the gifts which for sartin belong
To the great Dan O’Connell,\(^6\) with blarney galore,
Like a hero I’d swear at the end of my song,
By the pow-dhers of turf!\(^7\)—its yourself I adore!

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\(\footnote{Preston Chronicle, 20 May 1843, [4]}\)
\(\footnote{Typewritten transcript only}\)

1. The object of Tyndall’s affection (Tyndall being the ‘Hibernian’, or Irishman) in this poem is not clear.
2. Signed Wat Ripton: one of Tyndall’s nom de plumes.
3. Tyndall was in Preston, working for the English Ordnance Survey.
4. Saint Hospice: possibly a reference to the reclusive French saint of the sixth century.
5. Erin: romantic name for Ireland.
7. By the pow-dhers of turf: an Irish imprecation.
15 Pour mon cher Jack\textsuperscript{1} 1 July 1843\textsuperscript{2}

Dear Jack, ere the pennant above thee is streaming,
A meteor tracing its path thro the sky—
While Remembrance o'er pleasures departing is dreaming,
I raise my blunt steel-nib to wish thee Good Bye!\textsuperscript{3}
And shall I appeal to the empty illusion,
That floats o'er Parnassus, and raise with the throng,
The incense of prayer for the fancied infusion
Of light from the muse to embellish my song?
Away with the mock'ry—the language of feeling
Is fairest disrobed of the tinsel of art;
Its musical tomes a deep pathos revealing
Bear on them the fair, sunny stamp of the heart!
Oh! peaceful and soft my dear Jack be thy pillow,
Encircled by thoughts of the fair native shore;
As riding secure o'er the foam crested billow,
Thou dreamest of Friendship and Tyndall once more!
How I think on the nights we have nestled together!
When the voice of 'discussion' waxed warm and shrill—
They are vanished and flown like a wind-borne feather,
Yet deeply doe Memory cherish them still!
And oh! when he roams by the brink of the ocean
Which laves that far shore with its wavelets of blue—
When his heart is alive to each tender emotion,
I feel that my Tidmarsh will think of them too!
And with them remember the green sunny mountains
Of Erin,\textsuperscript{4} which lift their proud summits on high;
Forget not her vales, nor her flowers, nor her fountains
Where the bright smile of Boyhood first gleamed in thine eye!
There are bosoms which love thee, whose full tide of sorrow
Is fanned as it flows by a thousand fond fears;
There are bright eyes and lovely which scarcely can borrow
From Hope a glad sunbeam to dry up their tears!
Yet, onward my Boy! may the balm-wafting pinion
Of unalloyed happiness wave o'er thy breast;
When far, far away from the Sappers\textsuperscript{5} dominion
Your thoughts wander back to 'your own darling West'!\textsuperscript{6}
May the God of your fathers protect you in danger
While your course o'er the dark-rolling surges you steer
Till you press the bright strand of the Ishmaelite stranger,
And the warm tones of welcome strike sweet on thine ear!
And now ere the pennant above thee is streaming,
A meteor tracing its path thro’ the sky—
While Remembrance o’er pleasures departed is dreaming
Last chime of my song, Jack—God Bless you—Good Bye!

RI MS JT/1/11/3873

1 This poem was sent in a letter to John (Jack) Tidmarsh. See also poem 9, n. 1.
2 On this date, Tyndall, based in Preston, was about to leave on a break of a fortnight to the nearby village of Goosnargh, where he arrived on 3 July.
3 It appears from the poem that Tidmarsh was returning to Ireland, perhaps to see his family.
4 *Erin*: romantic name for Ireland.
5 *Sappers*: a reference to working under the Royal Engineers on the Ordnance Survey.
6 ‘*your own darling West*’: Tidmarsh was brought up in Cork, in the south-west of Ireland.
7 See also John Tyndall to John Tidmarsh, 1 July 1843 (letter 214, TC1).
16 [Such bliss] 4 July 1843

Such bliss for which my spirit sighs
Thou\textsuperscript{2} canst give, for Oh! it lies
Hid within thy lovely eyes.
Breathes a stranger now his vow
As thy glance is round him dancing
Rife with rapture—by that brow
Too divine and too enchanting
Oft I’ve sworn since I met thee
Never, never to forget thee
Eastern breezes softly sighing
Lingering o’er the sunny lees
Zephyrs whispering thro’ the trees
All is music to mine ear
But thy voice is far more dear.

RI MS JT/2/13a/v
Typewritten transcript only

\textsuperscript{1} Written at Goosnargh, a village close to Preston, where Tyndall had arrived on 3 July.

\textsuperscript{2} Thou: while in Goosnargh, Tyndall generated a passion for Elizabeth (Lizzy) Barton, youngest daughter of the landlord of the General Elliott pub. However, this poem may refer to an unknown young lady in Preston, as Tyndall had only arrived in Goosnargh the previous day.
The day is gone, no golden beam
Now smiles upon the fair hill side,
And cheerless flows the darkling stream
By weeping flowers which fringe its side.
The day is gone, and darkness flings
Her mantle over crag and dell
Its caroll now no warbler sings,
Amid the brakes of Berkenfell:\nBut higher notes convulsive rise,
The booming of the angry sea,
The thrilling war songs of the skies
Now dwells in wildering melody.
There’s something lofty in the feeling,
That swathes my soul with burning glow,
Too grand, too glorious for revealing,
Too high to grovel here below:
When fancy spreads her daring plume,
And curbless wings amid the gloom,
Her welkin sweeping flight to rise,
And mingle with her native skies!
Past hours into existence start,
And scenes long lived round my heart:
yes, burning thro’ the gloom afar
Is seen the golden glowing star
of memory, whose brilliant rays
sheds glory over bygone days.
The days when boyhoods reckless joy
Rung forth unmingled with alloy;
When generosity and truth
Shone frontlets on the brow of youth;
When with a swimmers dauntless pride,
I skimmed the barrows placed tide.
Oh! these give memory a zest,
And sheds a halo round my breast.
The ‘decent church’ still topples there,\nWhere first my childhood lisped a prayer;
While round are strewn the graven stones,
Chill records of the mouldering bones
Which lie beneath, as sadly waves
The rank grass o’er the lonely graves.
Ah! how I loved when smiling even
Blushed beautious in the western heaven;
As rose the merle’s farewell note,
To clamber up the lofty mote,
And from the fairy legioned mound,
To view the lovely scene around.
The ripple of the brooklet near
Struck sweetly soothing on mine ear;
And rich in beauties varied dies,
The groves of Burgage blessed my eyes.
Beyond, amid the stately trees,
Where softly crept the evening breeze,
Which as it sighed o’er lawn and bower,
Kissed perfume from each drooping flower,
“The Lodges” appeared—beneath me rolled
The gentle barrow tinged with gold
How calmly would the sunbeams smile
Upon the castle’s hory pile:
Not always thus—the sabres flash
Glanced lightning there—the commons crash
Rung thunder o’er the startled flood,
And stained its chrystal waves with blood!
But peaceful is his war seared brow
And silent are his thunders now:
The pall of centuries is spread
In gloom o’er many crested head,
Where proudly waved the nodding plume,
Amid the battles deepest gloom:
They’re gone—and now the ivy clings,
And many a songster safely sings,
Where erst the clarion blasted far
The thrilling notes of blood and war!
Oh! how would thoughts like these unbind
The trammels from my embryo mind:
Aroused as by a glowing beam,
The young chrysalis ceased to dream
Assumed the wing and stretched its flight
Thro’ scenes by fancy rendered bright.
’Twas then I ventured first to fling
My hand across the trembling string;
Tho’ wild and broken was its tone,
I loved it, for it was my own,
Oft would my straggling bosom long
To wreak its thoughts on nobler song.

Hail! happy hours e’en now ye shine,
The brightest gems in memorys chime
Hail! blissful scenes, between us swell
The crested wave and towering fell
And now perchance the surging gale
Sweeps oer you wild with frenzied wail.
Hark how it sobs—its murderous breath
Now haply strews the shore with death.
The embers of the wasted fire,
Now quickly one by one expire,
A waning lamp in
Flings oer my page its dying blaze;
Admonished by the midnight chime
My wary pen I now resign
My couch to seek while wild and high,
The tempest sings my lullaby
(finis)
church’ is presumably a Protestant one, and may relate to directives on ecclesiastical furniture in the English Church Canons such as ‘A decent Communion-table in every Church’ (Canon LXXXII) (letter 0217, n. 9, TC1).

5 merle: a blackbird.

6 lofty mote: the Moat of Ballyknockan, the only remaining part of the Dinn Righ, the ancient seat of the Kings of Carlow, south of Leighlinbridge near the west bank of the River Barrow (letter 0146, n. 17, TC1).

7 the brooklet near: presumably Maudlin stream, a tributary of the Barrow (letter 0146, n. 18, TC1).

8 Burgage: a parish in County Carlow.


10 the castle’s hory pile: the remains of Carlow Castle, a Norman structure built between 1207 and 1213 (letter 0217, n. 17, TC1).

11 Not always thus: Carlow Castle was besieged in 1495 amid the repercussions of a plot to seize the English crown, and again during the Confederate Wars of 1641–2, when more than 400 Anglo-Irish Protestants were trapped by Catholic Confederate forces and starved for three months. It was also besieged by Oliver Cromwell’s New Model Army in 1650 (letter 0217, n. 18, TC1).

12 See also John Tyndall to Editor of The Carlow Sentinel, 12 July 1843 (letter 217, TC1). The letter was not published. Annotations to this poem are derived from this letter.
The aerial phantasy of youth
Robed in their own bright loveliness—
The visions clothed with seeming truth
Now melted into nothingness!—
Aye, all are vanished—yet not so
Behind the evanescent throng
There linger still a holy glow—
A beam which ‘gilds thy song’!
Whence comes it?—does the scented gale
From distant Kirkby bear the prize?
Or does the heav’nly brightness dwell
In ‘lovely Mary’s’ diamond eyes?—
Ah! no—it shines upon the breast
Of every billow wild and high
Which rears aloft its foamy crest,
Rebellious to the darkened sky—
It smiles, where ripples gently lave
Each barque that spreads her snowy sail
On every rock—on every wave
Between ‘New Babel’ and Kinsale!
Yes—there its nucleus dwells, to bless
Thy morning thought—thy midnight sigh
There clusters too ‘the raven tress’
There radiates the lustrous eye—
The clouds of care may gloom and lour
In darkling masses round thy breast,
There is a ray of magic power—
As glorious sunbeam from the West!
Which calls to life thy buried love—
The ‘cup of sweets’ without alloy
And like a spirit from above
Gives vigour to the pulse of joy!—
*Oh! there are ideas which dart—
Like meteors thro’ the midnight air
A gleam of glory thro’ the heart
Where waved the banner of despair!
Visions of bliss untasted roll
Before the visionary ken—
Destroy the canker of the soul
And bid the mourner smile again.
I know I touch a speaking string—
A string which quivers in thy core
And sounds responsive while I sing
Of days which shall return no more—
of whom? oh! God of poesy
My log should smoke and blaze and flame
And consecrations from on high
should sparkle round her sacred name!
of whom?—of Ellen—oh! I find
My swelling bosom’s deep devotion
Unutterable—while my mind
Is crushed by mountains of emotion!
Not so with you—you grasp the lyre
And shake from it the dust of slumber
From her you catch the heavenly fire
And unholy wake the burning number!
I love to con the glowing line
Where Ginty’s restless spirit revels
And flings with fervours quite sublime
The fury of a dozen devils!—
I love to ponder o’er the lay
Where Ginty’s muse does gentler duty
To wing his spirit quite away
Before the shrine of ‘Mary’s’ beauty
But oh! a deeper—holier spell
Like music thro’ the moonbeams streaming
Is riven thro’ the fervid swell
And from the leader one is gleaming
When thoughts of lovely Ellen raise
The murmurs of this melting stream
And all ‘the lights of other days’
Around thy stanza smiles again!
Farewell thou bright ideal ray—
Which lent to life its happiest hue—
Thou gleam of heaven’s own halcyon day
Angelic hope—adieu!—adieu!—
oh give to him thy sunny smile—
I claim it not—that thought is flown
Upon my harp I lean the while
Its last sad twinkle dies—tis gone!!
*oh! there are looks & tones which dart
An instant sunshine thro the heart

Byron⁶
19 Acrostic (Elizabeth Barton)\(^1\) 12 July 1843\(^2\)

Acrostic

E astern breezes softly sighing,
L ingering oer the sunny seas,
I n their own free transport flying,
Z eephyrs whispering thro' the trees—
A ll is music to mine ear,
B ut thy voice is doubly dear,
E very blessing that I prize,
T hou canst give, for oh! it lies
H id within thy lovely eyes!

B end thine ear to this my vow
A s thy glance is round me dancing,
R ife with rapture—by that brow
T oo divine, and too enchanting!
O h! by yon bright heaven above me,
N ever can I cease to love thee!

JTyndall

Written at Goosnargh
July 12\(^{th}\) 1843 {Alas poor Goosnagh!}

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\(^1\) Elizabe th (Lizzy) Barton was the youngest daughter of the landlord of the General Elliot pub in Goosnargh, for whom Tyndall had an attraction, in competition with Billy Marquis.

\(^2\) This is one of three poems Tyndall wrote on the same day in Goosnargh. See also poems 17 and 18.
20 Acrostic (Miss Hebdon)\textsuperscript{1} July 1843\textsuperscript{2}

M  orn smiles in loveliness on many a flower,
I  n whose bright petals live the rainbows dyes,
S  preading its perfume round the dew-dropped bower,
S  weet tribute to the zephyr as it sighs.

H  ow passing pure is evenings radiant star,
E  ther its azure bed and tranquil home;
B  right, beautiful, it beams from heaven afar,
D  implying with lustre the cerulean dome.
O  h! both are fair—but in thee both combine,
N  ow grace that cheek, and light those eyes of thine.

\textsuperscript{1} Miss Hebdon: not identified. The Hebdon family lived in Preston. See John Hebdon to Tyndall, 15 December 1843, letter 0279, TC2. This is possibly John Henry Hebdon (1822–?) who appeared on the 1851 census of Preston along with his wife Alice Hebdon (1824–83); his occupation was listed as ‘Banker’s clerk’.

\textsuperscript{2} Tyndall was in Preston, working for the English Ordnance Survey.
21 To N—T¹ July 1843²

From the green hills of Erin³ I’ve plucked the wild rose,
  So fresh and so fragrant as washed by the dew,
Like a gem on the landscape each blossom arose,
  And gave to the sunbeam its odour and hue!

Like the rose of my country, sweet girl thou art fair,
  I think of its beauty while gazing on thee;
Could I cull the first floweret of Englands parterre
  To place on my bosom—there, there, shouldst thou be!

JTyndall

For Miss H’s album⁴
July 1843

¹ N—T: not identified.
² Tyndall was in Preston, working for the English Ordnance Survey.
³ Erin: romantic name for Ireland.
⁴ Miss H’s album: this acrostic is written below poem 20, to Miss Hebdon.
22  [Acrostic (Jane)]

J. oyous and bright is the glance of the morn
A. s it flings its deep radiance o’er eastern skies
N. or dimmer the hues which thy fair cheek adorn
E. ach dark beaming lay of thy beautiful eyes

W. aft her ye breezes my tale of devotion
I. n your soft music oh! murmur it well
L. ong shall I think of thee, love with emotion
D. eep in my heart shall thy idea dwell
G. one is my happiness—sweet one farewell

In every fancy ev’n now I can trace
Never shall time from my
More musical than twenty dozen rills
Thy voice my charmer [feels me pace] thy hills
With lips [more sweet than lovely sand] jars
of jam; and eyes that part all the stars.
My truest one I hear them & I swear
Though I am here & thou my angel there
I'd crush all space to nothing to seek
Thy form [unparagoned] on [friendly] peak
My lovely one my fair, my dulcet duet
How could your [eyes] muster up the [planete]
To scale that crag a maiden sweet beware
It is a [supping] & an eager air
[Ten] Turkish baths [1 word illeg] thy lungs of phlegm
And those [unparagoned] [only say what of them]
From [blood with flame], & [waking with their past]
Thy [1 word illeg] all [1 word illeg] [tempest] [1 word illeg]
The undulations of thy snowy hair
Turned to a meteor in the mountain air
Come down my pet forsake that crag unblest
And lay thy little cheek upon this head.
Let them like arms thy snowy neck entwine
[Darling] I'll press them Oh my Valentine
24 [The star that gems life’s morning sky] 1840s?

The star that gems life’s morning sky  
Smiles sweetly on thee now  
And flowers around thy pathway lie  
And roses crown thy brow

Thy head was on my shoulder leaning  
Thy hand in mine was gently pressed;  
Thine eyes so soft and full of meaning;  
were bent on me and I was blest.

No word was spoken, all was feeling.  
The silent transport of the heart.  
The tear that o’er thy cheek was stealing  
Told what words could ne’er impart.

And could this be but mine illusion?  
Could fancy all so real seem?  
Here fancy’s scenes are wild confusion,  
And can it be I did but dream?

I’m sure I felt thy forehead pressing,  
Thy rosy breath stole o’er my cheeks  
I’m sure I saw those eyes confessing  
What the tongue could never speak.

Ah! No, t’is gone, t’is gone, and never  
Mine such waking bliss can be;  
Oh, I would sleep, would sleep for ever,  
Could I thus but dream of thee!

Never forget our loves, but always cling  
To the fixed hope that there will be a time  
When we can meet unfettered and be blest  
With the full happiness of certain love.
When thou art near,
   The sweetest joys still sweeter seem,
The brightest hopes more bright appear,
   And life is all one happy dream,
When thou art near.
We must part a while
A few short months—though short, they must be long
Without thy dear society; but yet
We must endure it and our love will be
The fonder after parting—it will grow
Intenser in our absence, and again
Burn with a tender glow when I return
Fear not; this is my last resolve, and this
My parting letter.
26 [Oh Mary pon my soul]¹ 1840s

Oh Mary pon my soul my love
   I love you very dear
The [1 word illeg] [hour] now rolls my love
   & yet you are not here—
Amid the far blue ether love
   My thoughts in welness roam
Can lovely Mary faithless prove
   Oh! Why am I alone?—
When last I pressed your cheek my love
   & trembled in your eye
The world was fast asleep my love
   And full of stars the sky
You said you’d meet me here my love
   When I my vigil keep
& while I think you false my love
   I blow my nose and weep

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Then come oh! come my only love
   & cheer this poets heart
Oh Mary still the window sill
   Is warmer than thou art
The morn is bright & cloudless love
   & yet thou art not here
With diamond eyes my soaring dove
   Appear appear appear!

¹ Mary is not identified.
27  [A desolate forlorn swain]  1840s?

A desolate forlorn swain
Who loves and soothly loves in vain
Now pours his tide of griefs and fears
A weary girl whose bosom bright
Into a hundred poets ears
Has often bounded with delight
When Ellen’s¹ radiant smiles impressed
A blissful image on my breast
Evn now the waves and mountains rise
Their towering summits to the skies
Between the [1 word illeg] still appears
Her dulcet accents bless my ears
Een now as memory cheers the gloom
I see afar her raven plume
Unfold each glossy trembling tress
Her snowy bosom to caress
Ye shadows of Egyptian night
Oh quench, for ever quench the light
Which busy recollection flings
Around my minds imaginings
Oh! thou oblivious Lethe roll
Thy cheerless billows o’er my soul
And wash the images away
The germs of my [brains] decay

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Vain prayer – each flowret blooming fair
And waving in the summer air
Reminds me where in beauty blows
A fairer flower, a lovelier rose.
And now when water sheds its blight
On leaflet green and petal bright.
When oer the fields bleak Fevrier throws
Her dazzling counterpane of snows
When resting in its cavern deep
Each withering thought had courted sleep
Why wake them from their soft repose
Why rouse again my burning throes
For this oh! Ginty\(^2\) – on thy head
I shower my imprecation dread
Around thy couch for ever dwell
The highest harmony of hell
May fury stamp in living flame
A blustery devil on thy fame
At last may hell’s hot river roll
Its burning bellows oer thy soul

I pause—methinks my angry ban
Quite unbefitting of a man
The impulse of a flashing thought.
The sense of feelings over-wrought
But now I see—oh! jealous kind
The latent workings of thy mind
I cursed thee reckless of the Spring
Which moved thy muse and shook thy string
Where “Ellen’s” memory’s treasure hung
In trembling accent, on thy tongue
Oh! pity soft that in my breast
Has ever been a welcome guest
In tender accents let me pour
My vast—my overwhelming store
Of sympathy for Ginty’s fears
His moving moans and midnight tears
Did you pour chilly valentine
With Ginty’s [wonted] sparkle shine
Where was the poets fervour fled
Like Autumn leaflets seared and dead
The music of his song was hushed
His spirits noble phrenzy crushed
And cold and flat the raylet lay
That winged to Fishergate\(^3\) its way.
Ellen’s: see poem 18, n. 5.

Ginty: William Ginty, see poem 10, n. 1. Ellen ‘of the raven plume’, from Kinsale, features in many letters and poems between them.

Fishergate: a street in Preston, near the railway station, where several of the surveyors appear to have lodged.
28  [Dont you remember love]¹  1840s

Dont you remember love, one happy night
You granted me a little crumb of bread
Slipped thro the mystic ring which circled bright
Your taper finger—underneath my head
I placed the precious fragment—then I slept
And Fancy, wafted to the land of dreams
Through bright arcades with zephyrs softly crept
Oh! listen—pencilled with supernal beams
Before my ravished eye the future brightly gleams

Methought I wandered by a lovely river
Fringed with a thousand shrubs of various hue
O’er whose clear face the chestnut leaves did quiver
And flowrets bloomed as beautiful as you
It seemed a spirit gliding thro’ the breast
of a signal vale—the hills on either side
And robes of waving foliage bravely dressed
Rose to the noonday sun in sylvan pride
Who from his high abode the tears of morn had dried

‘It is not good for man to be alone’
Is Heaven’s own dictum—Fancy thought so too
Mayhap she had no power of her own
But as in duty bound the curtain drew
Which veiled my destiny, so let that lie
Till some more subtle mind uncoil the charm
But while I wandered ‘neath that sunny sky
The lord preserve my sinful soul from harm
A maiden bright as love clung gently to my arm

Her head was clothed with ringlets of rich brown
Which fell in clouds upon her snowy shoulder
Her Queenly brow was made to grace a crown
Her tinted cheek to ravish each beholder
Her eyes! By heaven her eyes! Oh who can tell
The latter vied in whiteness with the gown
of muslinet that softly did enfold her
Her brow was slightly arched her forehead fair
Her cheek a pure carnation lips clear red
As if the blood of roses trickled there
And roses breath a double fragrance shed
Around them as they slumbered on their pearly bed

And now I have disposed of many a grace
Possessed by this fair being—features dyes
And charms which lent enchantment to her face
But I have omitted mention of her eyes
Her eyes resembled what?—oh could I dare
To dig the brightest diamond from its mine
And say her eye, deep lustre dwellith there
Twere false

Those gems of heaven resembled what? oh I have
The question for I cannot tell many
The depth of witchery which slumbers there

Her head was clothed with ringlets of rich brown
Which fell in clouds upon her snowy shoulder
The latter vied in whiteness with the gown
Of muslinet, which softly did enfold her
Her brow was slightly curved, her forehead fair
Her cheek a light carnation, lips clear red
As if the blood of roses trickled there
And rose’s breath a treble perfume shed
Around them as they slumbered on their pearly bed!

And now I have disposed of many a grace
Possessed by this fair being—features dyes
And charms that lent enchantment to her face
A dim hiatus still exists—her eyes!
What of them? Thirsa if I dare
Where shall I find their likeness—in the star
That gems yon heaven—or in the midnight hue
Her eyes! I no other subject shall [without]
Upon this stanza
One place alone on earth their equals beam
I’ll lead thee gently where thou mayest see
Their archetypes—bend oer thy glassy stream
Behold them shining there as bright as in my dreams
Once I remember Thirsa to have seen  
Three graces, from the chisel of Canova  
And read with pleasure of a certain Queen  
Belovéd by Gonzales de Cordova

Oh! give me a lay that sparkles bright  
with the gems of the radiant soul  
A song for my Thirsa ever bright  
As I quaff the generous bowl  
Let it shine with the hue which [trickles] dark  
The spirits hidden spring  
From the fount of truth let the [1 word illeg] leap²

And now I have disposed of many a grace  
Possessed by this fair being, features dyes  
And charms that lend enchantment to her face  
A dim hiatus still exists—her eyes!  
Where shall I find their likeness? Come with me  
One place alone on earth their equals beam  
Nay frown not Thirsa thou shalt see  
Their bright reflection & confess the same

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Her eyes! Oh lovely Thirsa who can tell  
The depth of witchery, which slumbered in them there  
Now soft as sunset their full glances fell  
Anon half closed with such a [dreaming] air.  
They murdered thro their fringes and yet again  
they sparkled like a brilliant in a mine  
To gaze upon thy looking glass & then  
But words are vain & feeble is my pen  
to paint their power  
Oh suck not all their beauty from my pen  
With most enchanting wickedness and then  
But why continue
Parts of this poem also appear in drafts of ‘With cloudy head’ (poem 29). The manuscript shows extensive working, with about 50 alterations. The repetitions have been left as they were written.

This stanza is written across the page.
With cloudy head and discontented breast
As I sat basking in the setting sun
And wishing time defunct—an unbid guest
Made supper on my shin—and oft he'd run
In frolick gambols o'er the downy plains
Anon he'd fix his little fangs in me
And quaff a bounteous potion from my veins
And twitch my cutis most unpleasantly
I turned my stocking down—behold! It was a flea
I clutched him but he bounded from my thumb
and like a bloodhound I pursued
Determined to revenge upon his limb
The insult offered to my flesh and blood
Ho, for the merry chase!—tis sweet to see
The stretching pack on mountainside or level
And I can not my Hark forward on the flea
For in the jaws of death he seemed to revel
Threw somersets and galloped like the devil!

I lost my game, though many a deadly poke
I made, and oft was certain of my prize
But still the miscreant nullified my stroke
And pricked his tail & seemed to blast my eyes
My wrath grew high, but he continued cool
My blows fell thick, but he evaded all
And frisking 'neath the shadow of a stool
he vanished from my view and 'scaped my thrall
the varlet! Had I caught him, faith he'd squall!

'Labour is worship' so some sage has said
And surely it preserves from many an evil
And though it may not lift to Heaven the head
It keeps the heart from wandering to the devil
Thus while this tiny beast my thoughts engaged
I felt the care clouds from my brain disperse
And though when blinked I was the least enraged
It worked for good & now in [numbers terse]
And lightened heart give his pranks a place in here
With happy heart my flea's renown in verse!
RI MS JT/8/2/1/33–5

1 This poem is sufficiently distinct from other drafts to stand separately, and this is the second, neater version, on f. 34. The rest, on f. 35, overlaps substantially with drafts of ‘Dont you remember love’ (poem 28).

2 Tyndall sent the four lines ending here, presumably a reference to Thomas Carlyle, to his cousin Hector Tyndale on 27 July 1855 (RI MS JT/1/T/1443; RI MS JT/1/TYP/1604–9).
To Elizabeth

Sweet sleep has sealed the weary eyes
Of all, love, those who love, like me,
To hear the nightwind as it sighs
Its sweet, yet mournful melody.

And say what image bright and fair,
Now sits on fancy’s aerial throne?
What angel sways the sceptre there?
Oh! who but thee my lovely one?

My peerless Lizzy from whose glance
This soul has caught a loving glow,
Unseen,—unspeakable,—a trance
Which weaves its spell where e’er I go!

The breath of morn may fan my brow—
The rills soft music soothe my ear—
The nightwind lifts its voice as now—
Thy loved idea hovers near!

And do those darkfringed eyes still beam,
As lightly as they beamed on me,
When rapt in that delusive dream,
My gaze of worship hung on thee!

And oer that stainless, Parian brow,
Which puts to shame Canova’s best,
Say does the ringlet cluster now,
And curl to kiss thy snowy breast?

Oh! there are thoughts beyond revealing,
Which from their depths defy confession,
Oh! there’s a tide—a tide of feeling,
Which finds no floodgate in expression!

Thus oft my labouring breast did swell,
As pressed by that unseen emotion,
I’ve longed—but longed in vain to tell
The glowing tale of my devotion!
Thou'rt absent now sweet girl, but still,  
While spreads the vaulted sky above me  
Ill cherish that impassioned thrill,  
Which bids me never cease to love thee!

votre devoué

[Matieux]\(^2\)
31 On being caught oversleeping when the postman came
1840s

Morn was spreading calm and clear
O’er the eastern hemisphere,
Golden curtains hung on high
Hid the blushing orient sky,
Wandering where the streamlet flowed,
Stealing perfume from the rose,
Thence through groves where linnets sing,
Gentle zephyr spread her wing.
Lightly o’er the western hills
Rolled the mist which Night distils,
Rising from his lowly bed
Labour shook his stalwart head,
Brawny bosoms, brown and bare
Drank the gentle morning air,
To the plough the team was strung
In the Vale the Cowboy sung,
Clad in summer vesture gay
Nature smiling blessed the day!

Who is he that slumbers now
Sunshine dancing on his brow
Like a messenger of love
Sent to cheer him from above?
Who that shuts his leaden eyes
To the glory of the skies
On his senseless pillow prone
Dull unprofitable drone
Still inhaling o’er and o’er
Gas which he disgorged before?

Tyndall thou!—the very man
Come, deny it if you can
‘Guilty,’ ‘guilty,’ written is
On thy puckered parchment phiz
Oer thy chalk of turnip hue
Blushes murmurs ‘it is true’!
True by Heaven!—my darling Bob
There I lay a senseless log
Dreaming. Snoozing. Stretching long
Heedless of the skylarks song
When the Postman’s heavy tread
Washed the vapours from my head
Ho! what news I cry aloud
Dashing off my blanket shroud
Letters, letters, one two three!
Two from Ginty—one from thee!
How I grasped the welcome prize
Pleasure dancing in my eyes
Welcome as the joyous note
Bursting from the draftsman’s throat
Blew the breakfast bugle clear
Falls like music on his ear
Welcome as in days gone by
Was the glance of Allen’s eye
Where the thought which spurned control
Shone reflected from his soul
Beaming proudly free and fair
Living independent there!

Oh! I love to dream upon
Nights of toilsome pleasure gone
When mid silence hushed and dread
Slumber shunned my vacant bed
And my cranium over wrought
Panted with its load of thought
When I bent my dewy brow
Oer the page forgotten now
Or with sunken eye afar
Watched the blinking midnight star.

Transient Fancy plumes her wings
From the stupid present springs
Wild regions wandered o’er
By thy friend in days of yore
Memory throws the curtain back
Cleans the mortals misty track
Lets the child of Fancy roam
Over times for ever flown
Opens to the backward gaze
All the light of other days
Tinted with a thousand dyes
Caught from richer, happier skies!

To be continued?

1 Perhaps written after he had left Preston (November 1843 for the first time and September 1844 for the second time).
2 Bob: possibly Robert (Bob) Allen, who lived in Preston and who had worked for the Irish Ordnance Survey.
3 Ginty: William Ginty, see poem 10, n. 1.
Why sinks into apathy Chadwick's soul?—Why upon his brow gathers darkness?—Mourns he for the past? or flits the ghost of other days before his mental ken?—over the memory of friends departed sheds he tears?—my soul would comfort him!—with sympathy she swells—oh! that I were near him—the jocund laugh should chase the lingering shadows from his bosom—from the brow of Tyndall should flash a ray bright and benignant—glorious as the morning sunbeam and soothing as the evening glory which settles on Compass Hill!!!

oh! that I were near him—but even here my speech would comfort him—thou friend of Tyndall, listen!—from his pen drops balm—like the music of the honey-bee is his voice, shedding sweet langour over the heart—hear Tyndall for he is mighty to soothe!—

Dost thou sigh over the tarnished lustre of thy once bright drawing pen?—hovers the shade of the parallel rulers around thy sleepless pillow?—or do the mysteries of the beam compass still burst upon thy view?—sheds the sun of other days a glory round the point of thy once burnished prickler?—useless now it lies—coated with rust
is its silvery surface—no more
shall it puncture the snowy
surface of a six inch plan—
gone is the glory of the pricker!
—child of the pensive brow, mourn
not for these—the soul of Tyndall
is sick within him, but from
his sickness shalt thou catch
comfort—darkly lours the cloud
of discontent—around his heart
it lours—turbid is the tide
which swells there—has Chadwick
stood on Phreghane?4—has
he seen the mountain billow
rise in the distance?—nearer
and nearer come till with
deadly energy it was anatomised
on the dark Bulman5
hast thou not seen the consequent
convulsion?—behold its arch-
type in the bosom of Tyndall
—the birthplace of the sombre
thought—why swells
thus the breast of Tyndall?—
listen!—over the hosts of the
survey waves the black banner
of tyranny—its shadow is flung
where should else shine the
sun of independence—in the
fell gripe of the oppressor the
sons of the prickler and the pen
do writhe—his eyes round the
cycle of the survey Tyndall casts—thro’ its darken
atmosphere beams no star—dark is the horizon
of the survey—
woulds’t thou crush its gloom?—No! where
the smile of loved and lovely ones ever greet
thee shall I now dwell—far, far away from
the influence of the sapper’s mandate and
the bloody hue of his goatee
Probably written soon after Tyndall had been sacked from the English Ordnance Survey, in
November 1843.

Chadwick's: see poem 11.

Compass Hill!!!: a stretch of land in Kinsale overlooking the River Bandon, on the west side.

Phregane: the headland on the east side of the River Bandon outside Kinsale.

Bulman: the Bulman pub in Kinsale, situated a few metres from the Atlantic Ocean.
No more dear Bill the deep blue sea
Its billows lifts twixt you and me
For now on Erin’s surfbeat shore
The voice of Tyndall’s heard no more
Ive left my fatherland my home
And bounded oer the snowy foam
Ierne’s coast has seen my hand
Wave an adieu—a stranger land
Now bears my footprints shall I tell
The thoughts which in my bosom swell
Despair his deepest shadow flings
And sorrow spreads her dewy wings
Where erst dwelt happiness alone
yes, now the heavenly guest has flown
Oh! memory’s star with brilliant rays
Sheds lustre over by-gone days
Its golden radiance brightly gleams
Like sunset over burnished streams
But can I hold the burning sigh
Or check the tear which dims mine eye
When fancy paints in colours bright
Those starry eyes transcendent light
So deep—so dark—so eloquent
So mild—so pure—so innocent
Oh! Ginty can I think on this
Nor deeply mourn my withered bliss
Can I forget our last farewell
Can I forget the downy spell
Which softly oer my senses stole
And wound its fibres round my soul
Oh no let others faithless prove
Ill never—never cease to love

When last your fancy plumed her pinion
And soared beyond the world’s dominion
Sweeping the welkin in her flight
Towards Parnassus cloudy height
There perched upon her roost chimerical
And gazing on the world so spherical
She built a castle wondrous fair
But lo! she built it in the air
This phantom of your [corporation]
This beam of your imagination
This effervescence of your brain
You sent across the darkling main
The breeze from Lancashire and York
Wafted the creature into Cork
I cried with potent exclamation
La! what a monstrous [musereation]
Then as the [brugh] convulsed my throttle
I thought you had embraced the bottle
Which caused the creature to exhale
Mixed with the fumes of English ale
In Tyndalls humble estimation
Your bonds opposed your molestation
By all the scratches of his pen
Bill Ginty is himself again

The instrument of which I write
Placed me in pitiable plight
you called me desolate and drear
you wrapped poor Tyndall in despair
I'll end this portion far too long
By swearing “Ginty you were wrong!”

A trifle now on plumes and prancers
When you and I were embryo dancers
You asped your whispers in the ear
Of Sally—witching little dear
You may call this an antique story
Tis true and truth is Tyndalls glory
the darling heard with many a blush
each overflowing tender gush
And deemed harmonious every note
That blubbered from your rusty throat
Her albums lovely page contained
Effusions by your genius framed
you set before her ravished sight
“We've met when heavenly morn was bright”
And fearing lest the merit due
To your performance should accrue
To other bards you then exclaim
(Insatiable thirst for fame!
Oh! tell it not in Askelon!)
Miss Sally this ere bit’s my own
But I will quickly close this scene
nor rake the memories of the green
Where oft “When twilight shadow fell”
you watched with her the ocean’s swell
or heard the sweeping surges roar
In madness on the nameless shore?

My song which for a [space] did fail
Now wafts my reader to Kinsale
When there arrived you stoutly swore
To us a bombproof heart you bore
“Now boys if me you ever find
“Again by beauty rendered blind
“or hung obeisant on the will
“of woman—cod me then your fill
“Let all your vengeance on me fall
“Ill patiently endure it all”
That human vows are mutable
Is fact quite undisputable
Your high resolve proved passing vain
Frail as a bubble after rain
oh foolish addleheaded boy
Thou good for nothing womans toy
enthusiast you little dreamed
that Ellens’s eyes in glory gleamed
From when on you her glances fell
Your bows all withered ‘neath the spell
And like a donkey to a rod
You bowed submissive to her nod
I own that every warming grace
found shelter in her lovely face
That with the lustre of her eye
The state of even could not vie
I own that her unsullied brow
Was pure as Cheviots purest snow
But what of this—should beauty bind
In fetters an immortal mind
Shall woman—creature of an hour
Unnerve my soul and crush its bower
Bid every generous thought expire
And lead me to a kitchen fire

RI MS JT/8/2/1/40–1

1 William Ginty, see poem 10, n. 1.
2 *Erin’s*: romantic name for Ireland.
3 *Ierne’s*: ancient name for Ireland.
4 Written across the left-hand margin:
   and dares which [kiss] the sod
   Yet such there is—I marked him well
   His name and nation I could tell
   I've seen him wrapped in Cupid’s trance
   I've seen him shiver in the glance
   Adown his woebestricken cheek
   As o'er his fate his bosom yearned
   The mucous in his nostril churned
   And ever and anon would slip
   In yellow ropes adown his lip

5 Written across the right-hand margin:
   Good lack a day and [must I tell]
   Twas Ginty when he sobbed farewell
   and many [again] of purest lay serene

6 Sally: unidentified.
7 After this, and before the next section, Tyndall wrote: ‘This is no fanciful sketch Ginty—I
have not b[illeg]lk my imagination to exuberances and left the sombre curtains which shroud
futurity—there is nothing ideal in what I have said—could every tooth in Sallys pretty mouth
find a tongue a ban for you would foam upon her lips. You proved yourself a sublime rascal in
your treatment towards her—pardon me—I must speak the truth—here's at you again—.’
8 *Ellens*: see poem 18, n. 5.
9 Written across the left-hand margin:
   Cou du Conduct

10 Written across the right-hand margin:
   Perish the thought—eternal shame
   Should shroud the [kerry farmers] name
   Who thus would crouch beneath the hand
   of woman and embrace her band
   which chains him to the trodden clod
   line missing
   of me,—the truth I can't forego
   tho make play kiss St [Simon’s] toe
   La! I have seen the great big tear
   Just like Tom Barrys at a prayer
   In sad sad silence slowly creeps
“The past, – the lovely past! – my soul has fed
   Upon thine idea, till it has been,
Like light upon the dewy petal shed,
   Blent with her very essence, – now I seem
Thy habitant once more, fair Preston, where
   The star of Friendship glowed, whose heavenly ray
Oft cheered my heart when shaded o’er by care
   And tinged its midnight with the hues of day;
Fair, fleeting dream, too bright, too beautiful to stay!

The Preston Chronicle, 13 January 1844
Typewritten transcript only

1 This is one of a series of stanzas sent to The Preston Chronicle (the others are lost), under the pseudonym Wat Ripton. The editor wrote: ‘WAT RIPTON. – the stanzas sent us by this correspondent, who describes himself as a “distant one,” discover considerable poetic feeling, and no small skill in the art of weaving verse. But they have one capital fault, – they are too high flown: sense being, in many instances, sacrificed to sound. One stanza, however, we give – and a very pretty one it is – on account of a local allusion:--.’

2 Tyndall was in Leighlinbridge after being sacked from the English Ordnance Survey.
35 Yet, if to calm ungifted sight\textsuperscript{1} \hspace{1em} 1840s (‘after 1843’)

Yet, if to calm ungifted sight  
This wizard cell is dread,  
What may it be when spells of night  
Are through the chamber spread?  
When all with gaunt device is rife,  
And springs at once to magic life  
The heroes of the dead!  
To act upon this wondrous spot,  
Seems history knew not, or forgot.  

They come! fresh and living train,  
Not vision like, nor pale;  
The prince is in his pride again,  
The warrior in his mail:  
Stern puritan and priest are here,  
Gallant and gay, and maid as fair,  
As if oblivion’s wail  
Had never wrapped them in its shade  
Nor death had taught their cheeks to fade  

Yes! in that train is many an one  
Whom time shall ne’er destroy;  
The brave and gentle “Marmion”,\textsuperscript{2}  
And “Scotland’s bold Rob Roy!”\textsuperscript{3}  
The Lady of Loch Katrine’s lake\textsuperscript{4}  
Where Allan Bane\textsuperscript{5} yet seems to wake  
His harp to notes of joy;  
To think his nature north can claim  
One minute of immortal fame!  

There too a living history  
Of Britain seems to pass;  
As “Ivanhoe and “Waverley”\textsuperscript{6}  
Lead on the moving mass:  
Whilst he, the great, the mastermind;  
Like Banquo’s spirit\textsuperscript{7} walks behind,  
And bears a peopled glass,  
Where many a future scene is shown,  
And proudly claims them for his own
Aye and thine offspring shall be Kings,
Where meaner works shall die,
They only bound of glorious things
:’tis ‘immortality!’
Oh, ’tis a proud and goodly page,
Which truth and fiction both engage

To guard and glorify:
Not veiled like hoarded gold or gem
But worn like radiant diadem

Now lose the vision lest its rays
“Blast with excess of light!”
As those who in the noontide blaze
Have fixed their dazzled light,
But though the charmed spot ye leave,
The raptured scene will to it cleave,
Until ’tis vanished quite;
And all the earth holds wise or rare
Memory will deem lies treasured there
36 Why did I e’er behold thee: A Valentine
13 February 1844

Why did I e’er behold thee
Too lovely as thou art
Why did I e’er allow thee
To steal away my heart
Time was I knew thee not love
A peaceful time for me
Before my eyes met thine love
For then my heart soars free
I think I could forget thee
And give my heart a rest
Which palpitates for thee love
Within this ardent breast
But ah, I try in vain love
From all thy charms to fly
Thou art my life and soul love
And without thee I shall die

RJ MS JT/8/2/1/45–6
1 Tyndall was in Leighlinbridge, after having been sacked from the English Ordnance Survey.
Like a saint ere he enters
  Yon realms of delight
While the flames of heaven
  Gush full in his sight

He is gone and the valley
  Is shadow alone
The purple has vanished
  The radiance is gone
Yet the skirts of his mantle
  Fall soft on the hill
And the brown crag is smiling
  Good bye to him still—

He is gone, and the mountain
  Rejoices no more
A pall is flung over
  His summit so hoar
And his dark rugged height
  From his base to his brow
With its granite tiara
  Lies desolate now

He is gone but behold
  How the veils of the sky
With their soft silver fringes
  Roll silently by
Mid the conclave of Heaven
  A hymn of delight
Is swelling to welcome
  The Queen of the night
38  [I tread the land]  29 June 1844

I tread the land that bore me  
The green boughs tremble o’er me  
When the friends I’ve tried are by my side  
All dangers fly before me!—

A milky parody on Scott—let us try again:—

Ye Squires of Carlow hear me  
No cause have ye to fear me  
A heart of steel, I’ll face the de’il  
With George’s Nose to cheer me!!!—

RI MS JT/2/1/13; RI MS JT/2/13a/44

1 Written in Leighlinbridge when Tyndall was bidding for the Carlow survey.  
2 A milky parody on Scott: not identified.  
3 With George’s Nose: Probably a reference to George Latimer’s nose. See poem 11, n. 7.
The sun has fallen beneath the western hill,
And o’er me spreads in slumber deep and still
the wondrous sky, without a single star
To gem its azure bosom—from afar
Phoebus, though bidden, flings a feeble spray,
Quenching their feeble fires in dubious day,
O, holy sky! How beautiful art thou!
Spreading in ages gone as calm as now:
Heaven’s balm ’tis thine to gather and to shed,
Like Hermon’s dew, upon thy weary head:
Strife is becalmed, the waves of passion cease,
Shamed into quiet by thy tranquil face:
And ever as I fix my sunken eye
In worship on the, O, eternal sky!
Celestial melody, from pole to pole,
Steals soft, in spirit numbers, o’er my soul!

Our sunless atmosphere too weak to chain
The rays shot upward from the western main,
A shade more sable settles on thy brow,
Through which each timid star pales feebly now,
And, like true friendship, but the brighter glows,
As night around thee deeper shadow throws.

Friendship! thy name is empty with the crowd
As sounding brass—a phantasm with the proud;
By others deemed a miscreation fair,
Distilled by poet’s brains from upper air—
An essence brighter than the rainbow’s hue,
But just as frail and unsubstantial too—
A pretty word to suit a wordy age,
Or grace perchance a sentimental page!

Let those who weave the web of hollow smiles,
And torture nature with a thousand wiles—
Let pride within her chariot cushioned high,
Serenely smiling at the passer-by,
In pity or contempt as veers the gale
Which sets her courtly phantasies asail—
Let the plumed exquisite with clouded cane
And graceful forehead, certified, “Inane”!
Delightful extract of a tailor’s shop,
Of sense as guiltless as a scullion’s mop
Let soulless, senseless, bipeds such as these
Question thy being, friendship, as they please,
Or deem thee of their own frail, filmy kin,
Prismatic dyes without, but wind within!
Such was the creed of ancient fools who trod
The paths of folly—“Tush! there is no God!”
The Great Unnameable, enthroned high,
Impalpable, unscann’d by carnal eye—
He, the Invisible, whose silent law
Had chastened rebel chaos into awe,
And quarried from its bosom stern and drear
Yon glorious host, and set them shining there—
By owl-eyed folly, blind to reason’s beam,
Was held deniable, because unseen!

But say, oh friendship! though thy lovely face
Is veiled where mockeries usurp thy place—
Though bright non-entity thou dost forego,
Shall I prove infidel to thee?—Ah, no!
Though sun-tinged icebergs never felt thy thrill,
My heart of hearts shall hold thee sacred still!
Cold, isolated, must the mortal be,
Whose spirit finds no comeliness in thee.

Sooner than change my lowly lot with him,
Though greaves of gold encircle every limb;
Let me, O Heaven! unheeded let me crawl
My noiseless cycle o’er this earthly ball—
Let cloud or sunshine—weal or woe attend,
This sweetens all—“I still possess a friend!”

Carlow Sentinel 3 August 1844, [4] 5; RI MS JT/1/HTYP/715
Typewritten transcript only

1 Tyndall sent a short version of this poem, with some word and punctuation changes, to his great friend Thomas Hirst in 1888. He wrote: “This came in great part back to my memory as I wrote
it. The beginning is cut off. It was headed “The Sky, apostrophe to Friendship”. It was written by John 45 years ago, and is now copied for Tom, having been suggested by his last letter’ (John Tyndall to Thomas Hirst, 11 April 1888, RI MS JT/1/HTYP/715). This is the original published version.  

2 Tyndall was in Leighlinbridge, looking for work.  

3 Phoebus: Apollo, in Greek and Roman mythology.  

4 Hermon’s dew: a reference to friendship: ‘Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion’; Psalm 133:1–3.  

5 W.S.: Walter Snooks, one of Tyndall’s pseudonyms, used with The Carlow Sentinel.
40  [And must I touch the string] 3 June 1845

“And must I touch the string
And woo the muses from their courts above
Traverse the past and wing
From memory a claim upon thy love?” &c.

RI MS JT/2/1/111, RI MS JT/2/13a/83

1 Tyndall wrote in his journal: ‘wrote rhyme to Latimer’ (3 June 1845, RI MS JT/2/13a/83). This is probably George Latimer, who was also working in Yorkshire at the time.

2 Tyndall was living in Halifax, Yorkshire, working as a railway surveyor.
[Oh my cottage!] 5 June 1845

Oh my cottage! how I mourn
O’er thy dark prospective lot!
Tears, that in their courses burn,
Flow for thee, my pretty cot!

Now the roses cluster round thee
But the time is coming when
Noisome vapours shall surround thee
Who will praise thy beauty then?

Say thou harbinger of sadness,
Glancing through thy level, say
Will you drive my soul to madness
Can you find no other way

Even now mid din & clatter
Fancy hears the ‘whistle’ swell
Wild as o’er the wreck of matter
Nature poured her dying yell.

Vile embankments—horrid tunnels
Guards & stokers, great and small
Hissing engines—puffing funnels
How I hate you one and all!

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1 On this day, while surveying the possible track of a new railway line, Tyndall encountered a woman worried about her cottage. He reassured her that they could go round it (Tyndall Journal, 5 June 1845, RI MS JT/2/13a/83).
2 Tyndall was living in Halifax, Yorkshire, working as a railway surveyor.
3 *Glancing through thy level*: looking through the theodolite.
4 Nature poured her dying yell: on 17 July 1846, Tyndall found a copy of Wordsworth’s celebrated sonnet against railways enveloping a bundle of cigars, and quoted it in his journal:

“Is there no nook of English ground secure
From rash assaults, schemes of retirement sown
In youth, and mid the busy world kept pure
As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown
Must perish: how can they this blight endure?
And must he too his old delights disown?
Who scorns a false utilitarian line
Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?
Baffle the threat, bright scene from Orrest Head
Given to the pausing travellers rapturous glance
Plead for thy peace thou beautiful romance
Of nature; and if human hearts be dead
Speak passing winds, ye torrents, with your strong
And constant voice protest against the wrong!”
(17 July 1846, RIMS JT/2/13a/133–4)
From the high hill—where queenly Catherine
First drew her infant breath, where still are seen
The traces of bygone magnificence
And strength colossal, whose high use is now
Debased and misapplied, in the arch’d halls
Where once the Chieftain’s voice resounded and
The light of ladies’ eyes shed ecstasy,
The cattle congregate and deem each dim
Polluted chamber shelter from the sun.
From here I gaz’d—westward as if the orb
Drew my eyes thither. Frail is the human tongue
At best: but oh! so frail in me
I dare not whisper of the scene which lay
Before me. But there is a spirit language,
A converse high, which man may hold
With courteous Nature in her haught abodes.
Day had clasped nature in his last embrace,
And, blushing from his first kiss, the empurpled fells
Receded—mass above mass sublime—
Till the most distant blended with the haze
Which like a golden dream encircled all.

1 Written after Tyndall’s visit to Kendal and the ruins of the castle in which Catherine Parr was then said to have been born. From Kendal, he walked to Ambleside, and on to see Wordsworth’s cottage in the pouring rain. He went to Kendal at the end of July (RI MS JT/2/13a/93) and wrote this in his journal in either Manchester or Halifax or on the train between them on 2 August.
Johnny my dear
I am no engineer
From which you will see
That the letters ‘C.E.’
Apply not to me.

Hope whispers a day
Will come when you may
To the letters J.T.
Attach the ‘C.E.’!
44 Beacon Hill1 1840s2

Beacon Hill

Hail to thy hoary summit, ancient friend! Beauty from the east.

Whose brown rocks pillar heaven—holding high

Communion with the stars, which nightly bend

To whisper tales of centuries gone by.

Framed by the haze, and shrouded by the gloom

Thou cares for neither—rugged titan thou!

Heaven’s cloud spread o’er thee like a wargod’s plume,

Finds stern defiance written on thy brow.

Thou brave old hill! From whom the beacon’s glare

Shone like a comet o’er the startled land

Bidding the hardy sons of youth prepare

To fight for home against each hostile band.

And now as then these homes are worthy all

The high devotion of true hearted men

And should the clarion of th’invader call

His belted legions to thy hills again.

To stand in battle for those starry eyes

To shield their bosoms pure from slight or wrong

You champions of the ‘rose of snow’ arise

Die if you must! Ye live in deathless song.

Wat Ripton

---

1 Beacon Hill overlooks Halifax from the east.
2 Probably written while Tyndall was based in Halifax, between late 1844 and August 1847.
There is a grace intangible
   An attribute of soul
Which sets details in harmony
   And beautifies the whole
‘A mind—a music to the face’
   And tho’ the critic sneer
Here dwells thy mystic influence
   Sweet witch of Lancashire

1 Fanny Smith, who Tyndall referred to as ‘the Witch’, with whom Tyndall had some relationship. Bob Allen told Tyndall she broke off her engagement because of him. See Robert Allen to John Tyndall, 2 July 1847, RI MS JT 2/13a/224–5 (letter 333 in TC2).
2 Tyndall was in Preston, where Fanny Smith lived, after a visit to Ireland and before going back to Halifax.
46 Retrospective poem\(^1\)  c.1845

Chance led my wandering hands today
Mid dusty papers, grave and gay
Some sparkled with Sam Weller’s\(^2\) wit
While here and there were, stewed a bit
Of Cupids rusty prose—again
From George’s methodistic pen\(^3\)
Unravelled came a friendly page
A page appeared—a warning page
Of holy love and counsel sage
Next rise to view a pair of poems
From Cuddy’s\(^4\) pen, a line from Holmes\(^5\)
Another from Foy,\(^6\) a scratch from Davy\(^7\)
A sheet from Chad\(^8\) as rich as gravy
An invitation to a party
A cherished scrap from Miss McCarthy\(^9\)
A mathematical solution
Of sundry “probs” in evolution
A Valentine where love in roses
A lazy little boy reposes
A rhyme from Ginty\(^10\) when his heart
First felt the little blind boys dart
A curse from ditto loud and long
Another oath and then a song
A shady grove a flowery dell
Moonlight and love from Berkenfell\(^11\)
Another essay most uncivil
Wherein I’m called “an ugly devil”!

\(^1\) This poem exists in three very similar versions. It was probably written around 1845, and a version also appears on 10 December 1848 (RI MS JT/2/13b/404), where Tyndall noted in a letter to Ginty that this, written in Halifax, had turned up. He copied it into his journal. The version here is from RI MS JT/2/5/181–2. The others are RI MS JT/8/2/1/51; RI MS JT/2/13b/404.
Sam Weller’s: the pseudonym for John Roberts. See John Tyndall to John Tyndall snr, [3] November 1841, RI MS JT/1/10/3252 (letter 109 in TC1) and a character in Charles Dickens’s *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–7). Roberts was discharged from the Irish Ordnance Survey on 9 January 1841. It was on a walk with Roberts that Tyndall christened himself ‘Walter Snooks’.

George’s methodistic pen: George Latimer was a Methodist.

Cuddy’s: Martin Cuddy, who had worked with Tyndall on the Irish Survey. Cuddy went to Bandon in May 1841 as part of the Irish Survey’s 2nd Division, C District, and stayed there until he was transferred to the English Survey on 8 April 1842 (TC1, 203, n. 3).

Holmes: George Holmes, who worked with Tyndall on the Irish Survey, before being transferred to the English Survey in May 1842.


Chad: John Chadwick (see poem 11).

Miss McCarthy: possibly the daughter of Tyndall’s landlady at Strand Road, Cork.

Ginty: William Ginty (see poem 10).

Berkenfell: see poem 17, n. 3.
47 [A snail crawled forth]  September 1846

A snail crawled forth from his darksome cell
    To breathe the scented air
And he looked on the tinges of gold which fell
In softest radiance upon the bell
    Of a flowret bright and fair!

And envy fomenting like yeasty milk
    Thro’ his glutinous heart did run
Shall I he cried in darkness sink
While yonder proud and pitiful pink
    Is nurtured by breeze and sun

Onward he went with a felons intent
    This most repulsive snail
Leaving behind his filthy track
While sensitive grass blades started back
    From the touch of his nasty tail!—

He reached at length the flowrets stem
    With malice like rheum in his eyes
It bloomed aloft like a precious gem
Which nature to garnish her diadem
    Had dropped from the golden skies

And then the hate of his jelly race
    Grew darker and sterner still
And he muttered proud pink ere I leave the place
I will climb your stalk and spit in your face
    And sully your beauty—I will—

And his word he kept to his utmost power
    The pink he struggled to gain
But a breeze came in and a sunny shower
Which shook the reptile away from the flower
    To his own vile dust again

Thus Tidmarsh your slime you endeavoured to throw
    With malice prepense upon me
Having shaken you off I will now let you go
As a creature too ugly too wretched and low
To be crushed by
Yours truly
J.T.

Tyndall was in Halifax, working as a railway surveyor.

1 Tyndall was in Halifax, working as a railway surveyor.
2 Tidmarsh: John (Jack) Tidmarsh (see poem 9, n. 1 and poem 48). This poem includes three drawings of Tidmarsh's nose.
48 Tidmarsh’s nose\textsuperscript{1}  \textit{c.1846}

Thou ugly sample of the nasal throng
   Dirty within and misshapen without
With thee what poet would pollute his song
   Thou huge offensive miscreated snout

Thou libel upon all the human race
   Unlucky Tidmarsh I to thee appeal
Say why the Furies planted on your face
   A type so ugly of an infants heel

I’ve heard of many beaks & noses queer
   Of noses short and pug and large and small
Of noses red and blossomed o’er by beer
   But yours in ugliness outshines them all

God wot thy face was ugly quite enough
   Then why appeared another foolish feature
Unlucky Tid you have been treated rough
   Both nose & face are fulsome peaks of nature—

A fellow sits opposite
   Has such a nose
That I cannot really go to bed
   Till I compose
A bit of poetry showing its horrible shape
For in truth it belongs to regular ape
It is long—but Oh! Lord it is of such bone
If you saw it you’d stare as if you’d trod on your own
It is short—when compared with its terrible length
In fact it must be a nose of no small beer strength
To stand all the blowings it gets with his wipe
And now I’ll give over [a kiss] for the pipe

\textsuperscript{1} See also poem 47.
49  [The awful 30th]¹  30 November 1846²

The day whose grim idea, like a share
    Furrows the brain-box of the engineer
Clutching him from his pillow mid the glare
    Of torturing gas till daylight does appear
Which dawns upon him bending o’er his section
    Like some stray spectre from the resurrection.

¹ A reference to 30 November, the deadline for all evidence for Railway Bills to be submitted to Parliament. It caused immense stress to the surveyors, who often had to work round the clock in the days before.
² Tyndall was in Halifax, Yorkshire, working as a railway surveyor.
50 Acrostic1  6 December 18462

B old as the bird of Heaven which soars
O n the rocking cloud when the tempest roars
B raving the lightning’s withering tongue
A nd dipping his wing in the whirlwind’s womb
L ooking for home where the storm tossed wave
L ashes the walls of some rock spanned cave
E mber of Intellect struck from the sky
N ever, Oh never! to vanish or die!

Wat Ripton

M ild as the gush of infant dawn
A s it steals from the sky to the flowery lawn
G entle and pure as the silver rill
G urgling soft from its moss-clad hill
I s there a bliss which thy Bob could prove
E qual at all to the sum of thy love

RI MS JT/2/3/174–5, RI MS JT/2/13a/167–8

1 For his friends Bob Allen and his wife Maggie.
2 Tyndall was in Halifax, Yorkshire, working as a railway surveyor.
The clown and the bees: a fable after the manner of Aesop
28 February 1847

A rompish clown one morning clear
When radiant summer ruled the year
A garden’s beauty wished to view
Where buds and blossoms gemmed with dew
Sun-tinted, pearly, pure and fair
Poured their fresh odour to the air
He plucked the tulip from its stalk
And cast it wanton on the walk
Carved “Hodgy Smith” on many a tree
Where blushing fruit hung temptingly
He shook the rosebud from its stem
And soiled the sunflower’s diadem
With clog shod feet presumed to tread
Upon the lilly’s gentle head.

He reached at length a humming hive
Like fresh-caught cockles “all alive”
Rare sport he cried and cracked a bough
Eh crickey! what a precious row!
In vain the swarming worker’s hum
Fell soft upon his thick ear drum
He thrust the twig within the door
And damaged all their little store
At once there rose so wild a yell
The waxy walls of every cell
Gave back an echo full
And rushing forward right pelmel
Upon th’invading foe they fell
Who often wished himself in Hell
Or Halifax or Hull!

A thousand stings gleamed wildly round
A cloud of wings upon him frowned
The bowels of that hive profound
Disgorged a countless throng
His arms around are vainly flung
Upon his nose the queen bee hung
Within his ear a cohort sung
Around his eyes a dozen clung
The lilly bells an echo rung
   To curses deep and strong!

The sun is up he sees it not
His eyes are bunged—he damns his lot
Sky, earth and air and grove & grot
Are one illimitable blot
He turns blindly from the spot
   And rushes through my song

To Ginty—The application to come?

1 Tyndall was in Halifax, Yorkshire, working as a railway surveyor.
2 “Hodgy Smith”: not identified.
52  [The joys and the wishes]¹  11 March 1847²

“The joys and the wishes
The loaves and the fishes
On which you so wantonly revel
Will go—and quite right—
To the people’s delight
Most exceedingly quick to the Devil!”

Wat Ripton
Ex. Gov. official

¹ Fragment, probably by Tyndall, in a letter to the Editor of The Sligo Champion (which appears not to have been published). The political context is given in letter 328 in TC2.

² Tyndall was in Leighlinbridge visiting his father, who died on 27 March, three days after Tyndall had to return to England.
Though to the common eye my lot may seem
Uncheered and lonely,—though the lovely spell
Which works in woman’s eyes points not to me,
Nor woman’s tongue to the material ear
Appeals in music—still I’m not alone.
Pale is my cheek, perchance, and somewhat scarred
By inwards workings, whence the crowd might deem
My thoughts unhappy; yet it is not so.
I lack not sweet companionships; my soul
Has the society of those she loves:
Over the graves of buried years she treads,
And, from their amber coffins, ancient eyes
Beam lovingly upon her,—audible to her ears
the deep-toned whispers of the mighty dead
Sound like cathedral bells! Nor need she seek,
Amid the debris of departed times,
For genial company: even now she holds
Intense communion with the peopled world,
And clasps in friendship the immortal hands
Of godlike man. The glowing Cadmean page,
Poured from its great composer’s prodigal brain,
Spreads like an ocean, whose unbounded waves
Mirror soft rainbows, and expend their force
In dulcet music on celestial shores!

Dark clouds may gather, hostile thunder roll,
And, buffeted by fortune, I may seem
Outcast from joy. Suspend thy sapient sneer,
O man of many pounds! exulting still,
My spirit treads upon the Andean tops,
Superior to the storm which crushes thee.

Beautiful Nature! boundless source of bliss,
To those whose souls are tuned to thy sweet tongue:
With eyes more true than woman’s, pouring light
Over empyreal hills! My queen, my bride!
Whose love is changeless as the eternal source
From whence thy beauty springs,—I am thine own,
Wholly and undivided: and when fate
 Strikes this organic structure to the dust, 
Like a freed slave my spirit shall arise, 
Throw her unmanacled arms around thy neck, 
And lose herself within thy smile for aye!

_Preston Chronicle_, 10 July 1847, [3], signed Wat Ripton
Typewritten transcript only

1 Tyndall was in Halifax, Yorkshire, soon to leave for his teaching job in Queenwood College, Hampshire.
[All smatterers are more brisk and pert]¹
2 June 1848²

all smatterers are more brisk and pert
Than they which understand an art
As little sparkles shine more bright
Than glowing coals which give them light

¹ According to Melinda Baldwin and Janet Browne (letter 348, n. 5 and n. 6, TC2) this is derived from *Hudibras*, a poem by Samuel Butler, satirising the Presbyterian Church and the Parliamentary position on the Civil War. These lines, written in the context of the need for modesty and humility when tackling problems, do not appear in the poem. The letter leads in with: 'Tom's remarks as to the necessity of modesty are quite correct but Hudibras says:'

² Tyndall was at Queenwood College, Hampshire, preparing to leave on a visit to Paris.
Our seasons of joy
Are like flowers on the mountain
Far beneath lies the treasure,
The life giving fountain
We may gather our flowers
At ease in the sun
By the sweat of our brow
Must the other be won
Labour then
Fellow men
Up brave hearts, try again
Ours is no struggle for might or domain
Ours no ignoble strife
Aiming at purer life
Front we all hardships, all trial, all pain!

1 Tyndall was at Queenwood College, having returned from Paris and Brussels, and gave his first lecture in physics on this day.
56 Alone  29 December 1848

There is a kind of music in the word,
Which, like a storm at night, swells in the soul
Mysterious joy. The massive druid stones,
The crumbling castles of our native land,
Upon whose shoulders Time his strata builds,
Are lonely, all; yet, here though latent, live
Electric memories, and men are roused
To valour by appeals to these old walls.
The tombs of ages! voices from the dead
Find sympathetic echoes in the heart,
And man is more than man when thus he dwells
Amid the wrecks and ruins of the world!
But, higher, still, the rapture which he feels,
When ’mid the wonders of the universe,
His soul unpinioned soars, to be alone
Upon the high, untrodden, mountain top,
Where the winds whistle and the pine-trees moan,
Amid the solemn grandeur of the night,—
It is not joyless thus to be alone.
The joylessness is his whose glossy eye
Depicts eternals faithful as the lens,
Whose iris can refract the slanting ray,
And retina receive the landscape fair,
And nothing more,—who sees no loveliness
Under the tinted surface of the leaf,
Behind the crag, beyond the star no life,
Shining through Nature’s features as the gleam
Which lights the eye and beautifies the cheek
When an overflowing love is in the heart.

They talk of pleasures which I, too, have proved,
And kindly ask me here and there to join
The banquet and the dance; and I have gone,
And laughed my share and listened to the song,—
Described the mazy waltz, and schooled my lungs
Into the soft cadences, to win the ear
Of lovely woman, thinking this was bliss,
And that the gods no higher could bestow:
Yet was it evanescent as a dream,
Which melts like frost-work in an infant’s hand.
I censure not, decry not; but, let me,
Myself, unravel from the tortuous throng,
With free stretched pinion, let my spirit fly
Like the strong mountain-bird to its own hills;—
The world my banquet room, the floating clouds,
Fringed with the amber of the setting sun,
The curtains of my chamber, and the stars,
Nailed to the deep blue ceiling of the sky,
My substitute for gas. Thus—thus, alone,
The ministering angels swoop from heaven
And whisper joy, the shadows disappear,
And life is light—thine eyes, sweet girl, which once
Sent through the succulent fibres of my heart
Electric bliss, and served, perchance, to guide
My footsteps for a time, wax pale and dim
Amid the brightness of my present day!
Listen! The hills are singing, vocal all;
The cloud, the crag, the torrent, and the tree,
The wild wind piping to the stars its song,
The spirit voices of the universe,—
All call me friend, and bid me welcome here.

One thing, alone, worth aught can man bestow—
His gold? I need it not—my own right hand
Shall carve my daily bread, therewith content.
But, that last relic of primeval bliss,
Which still to man amid his ruin clings—
His LOVE—to me is precious as my breath.
And here I can’t complain, I bless the gods
For loving hearts; and when I call to mind
The banks of Ribble, from the terraced slope
Of Avenham, to Red Scar’s lovely sweep,
I people them with friends and faces dear.
Already thought forestalls the work of time
And ante-dates the seam upon my brow,
But touches not my heart,—its amaranth
Blooms on, unfading, and gives love for love!
Tyndall was in Marburg, studying for a PhD.
Ribble: The River Ribble flows through Preston, Lancashire.
Avenham: in Preston.
Red Scar’s lovely sweep: near Preston.
The version in Tyndall’s journal is somewhat different. See also RI MS JT/2/5/191–4; RI MS JT/2/13b/407–9.
There is no cloud in heaven tonight
The moon is empress there
And the stars are glancing keen and bright
Through the clear and frosty air

Far far from the roof where my youth was reared,
And far from my childhood’s home,
And far from my father’s silent grave,
I ponder all alone

The stinging tear is in mine eye
And the grief is in my heart
As each trace of hope is smitten away
When I think of what thou art.

O, art thou gone, for ever gone,
Shall I see thy face no more
From the echoing tombs of the old churchyard
Comes the sad reply “No more”.

Low he lies all crumbling there
Arm and chest and limb
The moonbeams cold, or the sundawn fair
Shall shine no more on him.

Oh, I was a dweller within thy heart
Ere it was changed to clay
And my name was on thy bloodless lips
When thou wert snatched away.

But now the light is quenched and gone
Which cheered my endeavours here,
And I must plod through life alone
And smother the useless tear.

Yet there is an essence survives his shroud
And defies the dart of death,
Which vanishes not as the morning cloud
Nor flies with the fleeting breath.

He made no will, he had nought to leave
A struggler poor was he,
But the royal stamp of an honest man
Was his legacy to me.

Erect among men my father stood
His son shall do the same
He shall live by God’s help as true a life
And die with as fair a name.

The last pulse beat of the dying year
Rings out from yon mountain head.
Hark, the shouts of man and the roar of guns
Proclaim that the year is dead!

---

1 Written thinking about his father, who had died the previous year.
2 Tyndall was in Marburg, studying for a PhD.
3 From the echoing tombs of the old churchyard: Tyndall’s father was buried in the churchyard of St Laserian’s Cathedral, Old Leighlin, Carlow.
I cannot write of love as poets do
Not twist the little iron I possess
To wires of agony. I cannot pour
My molten spirit on the artistic sand
Whose wrinkles are expression, I have built
Within my breast a plain domestic hearth
Where the sweet memory of an absent friend
Kind word, fair face, or honorable act
May dwell unfrozen. Still I sometimes feel
A hint of powers I would not verify
A kind of earthquake rumble in my soul
Portending fire below, but reason still
With granite arms has clasped the turbulent waves
And kept their forces down, or haply is’t
The lack of circumstance which yet may come
Loose hounds of passion, wasteful as the storm,
Which throttles ocean like a tortured bull
And shakes my circumspection into rags.

[Correct this you dog!]

Tyndall wrote this poem in his journal, following a comment about Emerson: ‘To the accountant and man fond of comforts the writings of Emerson are false because unintelligible, he asks proofs but can receive none. the narrator is not asked to prove his adventures by the rules of logic, he describes what he has seen and heard; would the querist know the truth he must visit the region himself.’

Tyndall was in Marburg, studying for a PhD.
And here he dwelt, whose mighty voice, like thunder,
Shook the proud battlements of Rome asunder;
Here paused, perchance like me, when day was failing,
Watching the bright-edged clouds through heaven sailing,
Tracking the swallow in its course so cheery,
Cleaving the stillly air with wing unwearied,
Fixing his glance upon the western glory,
Beaming aslant upon these mountains hoary.
Brave hills of Thuring! or with forests planted,
Bearing aloft your oaken brows undaunted,
Or stark and grim upholding summits dreary,
Where the wild eagle loves to build his eyrie,—
Stout orators! who stir the gazer’s spirit
With the wild energies your crags inherit,
Who nerved those stalwart thoughts which fell like granite
Upon the caked traditions of our planet,
Crushing, despite her terrors, stakes and lashes,
Rome’s ancient formulas to dust and ashes!
And here he sat, and here he paused and pondered,
Gazed from those heights, and through those valleys wandered,
And once, when leaning o’er this ancient table,
As midnight clothed the world in robes of sable,
His candle waned—a shudder curdled o’er him,
When lo! the Prince of Darkness stood before him.
A moment’s fear,—’tis gone—and Heaven-reliant
He lowered upon the fiend a brow defiant:—
“Or com’st thou, by permission, here to try me,
Or deputy from hell to terrify me;
The effort’s vain—I fear thee not—I’ll face thee,
And as an earnest, Oh, thou son of Evil!
Take that.”—He shied his inkstand at the devil!


1 Tyndall wrote this poem in Luther’s Room at the Wartburg near Eisenach. He copied it out again on 19 June 1871 in Folkstone and on 21 June 1871, the day he left Folkestone after a week’s
break to visit Mary Egerton. He then posted a third copy of the poem, of which a fragment remains, to James Clerk Maxwell (see Jackson 2018, 322). The envelope is dated 27 June 1871 from Cambridge and was presumably forwarded on to Maxwell in Scotland. Tyndall was observing the lighthouse at Howth Bailey, in Ireland, that day but had been in London a couple of days previously.

2 *And here he dwelt*: the poem is a homage to Luther, exiled to the Wartburg near Eisenach, who translated the New Testament from Greek into German. To banish his vision of Satan he famously threw an ink-well at it. Tyndall wrote a lengthy description of his visit in his journal (RI MS JT/2/13b/433–5).

3 There are several other versions: RI MS JT/2/5/261–2 (28 May 1849); RI MS JT/2/13b/434–5 (28 May 1849, typescript copy); RI MS JT/8/2/1/55–71 (two copies, made on 17 and 19 June 1871). In addition there is the fragment sent to James Clerk Maxwell on 27 June 1871 (CU Add 7655/Vl/3 (vii)), which reads as follows:

top of page cut off, with half of one missing line illegible, then:

- Or o’er the foliage lifting summits dreary
- Which the bold eagle chooses for his eyrie.
- Mute presences! who quell the gazer’s spirit
- A measure of the strength your crags inherit
- In front of you he stood when day was failing
- Watching the listed clouds through azure° sailing
- Tracking the swallow in its course so cheery
- Clearing the stilly air with wing unwearied.
- With eye and heart sublime as fell the glory
- From the red west upon their ridges hoary.

----------------------------------------------------------------

Fit [nurses] of the thoughts which fill like […]
Upon the caked had[illeg] of our planet.
----------------------------------------------------------------

178 THE POETRY OF JOHN TYNDALL
To McArthur

17 September 1849

Were not our universe so rich I’d mourn
Thy sudden disappearance from among
Our ranks on earth—But nature leans on none,
And choice as was thy texture can refill
Thy vacant post—yet does thy early blight
Thy sad extinction reach me like the sound
The low sad wailing of the autumn wind
Laden with grief—clear head and noble heart,
The free drawn outline of an able man,
I saw in thee—Oh little understood
Conceived of through thy failings by the herd
Whose grosser organs cannot penetrate
The inward essence of a man like thee
Pronounced unholy, wretched, unredeemed,
Nay haply doomed—but what of that reekst thou
Brother of the Eternities no more
To mingle with the clangour of the day
Sleep sweetly till we come and O ye stars,
In decent silence sentinel his grave!—

McArthur was a friend of Tyndall and his colleagues in Yorkshire. He was apparently a heavy drinker of gin, and died after taking poison. See John Tyndall to Thomas Hirst, [2 July 1849], RI MS JT/1/T/520 (letter 0379 in TC2).

Tyndall was in Marburg, about to set off on a long walking trip that would take him into Switzerland for the first time.
61 My story of “the Screen”\(^1\)
c.1891 but originally written much earlier\(^2\)

Large has my love for Nature been,
   I loved her from a child
I loved her in her summer sheen
   And when the winter wild
Wrapped storms around her awful brow,
   And ocean formed a throne
To bear her, Queen and conqueror,
   My love was her’s alone

\(\textit{RI MS JT/3/38}\)

1 The Screen was Tyndall’s huge edifice erected near his house in Hindhead, to shield him from the view of his neighbour’s stables. See Jackson 2018, 442, 446, 448.

2 Tyndall notes: ‘Thus I wrote in my Lehrjahren. The lines are worthless but they mark a tendency.’ The writing of ‘Lehrjahren’ in German suggests that this was perhaps written in Marburg.
62  [Common the hum of the bee]  c.1850¹

"Common
the hum of the bee
the torrid zone between two
temperate ones.

Tinted leaves of beech

Ball
We all have our periods of doubt and darkness, of laziness
perhaps, but the habit is the thing."³

¹Possibly around 1850 but copied into his journal on 11 February 1854, when Tyndall was in
London.
²Before this, in his journal, Tyndall wrote: ‘Found my pocket book which contains my notes of
some of Faraday’s experiments. On opening it I find written in pencil on the first page I look at
the following cabalistic words.’
³After this, in his journal, Tyndall writes ‘I do not know where or in what circumstances these
words were written.’
On the death of Dean Bernard

The sun is gone, and night her shadowy robe
Throws round the east, upon whose sable brow
Arcturus sparkles like a fiery gem.
Yonder, Orion clasps his starry belt
About his mighty loins and stalks thro' Heaven.
Great Sirius flames, and right above my head,
Capella twinkles—eastward whirls the Bear,
Around yon solitary globe of light,
Firm axled in the north—its silent home,
Myriads of ages ere the creator's thought
Found an incorporate utterance in Man.
Aye, all is stable there—they come and go,
Beholding races perish, states decay,
Creeds vanish, temples crumble in the dust,
Chartered by God to walk the Universe
Unchanged by centuries; while feeble man,
Mutative as the breeze, sees every hour
Laden with new-born grief. A while ago
I was a son—that sound is senseless now,
For he has disappeared, and moonlight teems
Its silver on his grave. And now again
A knell sweeps o'er the surface of the Rhine,
Whose emerald waters shiver in the sound,
As if reluctant to revive the throb,
So lately stilled.

Gone to return no more
Guide of my youth, my counsellor, my friend!
A drear bewilderment has settled in my brain,
And startled fancy shudders to convey
The total import of those fearful words—
“He's dead!” What means it? To be seen no more,
And heard no more;—the gentle cadence hushed,
The mild eye quenched eternally—extinct!
Infinite distance in a moment spread
Twixt him and me. A stupor steeps my sense,
My soul reels baffled from the vain attempt
To solve all this—Almighty, what is man?
The puppet of thy sufferance sublime,
A water drop, which, loosened by thy breath,
Glitters a moment o’er the eternal wave,
Then seeks the boundless deep from whence it came.
God’s goodness, in a mild incarnate form,
Revealed itself in thee—sent down to cheer
The orphan’s heart, and wipe the widow’s eye
But thou are gone; and widows’ tears may flow
And orphans’ sighs invite thee back in vain.
Where gone? Hence incubus! that is not he
Which moulders in yon dark and narrow hole!
Oh! thou wert the inscrutable handiwork of God,
Within it placed, unseen by sensuous eye,
And unexplainable by human thought.
Thy scaffolding it was, but not thyself
A mystic organ officered by thee
Unsharing its derangements thou hast laid
The weary coil aside, and sought again
Thy father’s house—that many-mansioned dome
Eternal in the Heavens. There to dwell
Nor stoop from thy empyreal heritage
To share earth’s clangor.—Spirit, Friend—Farewell!


1 Richard Boyle Bernard, or Barnard (1787–1850), was the second son of Francis, Earl of Bandon. After studying at Cambridge and being called to the Bar, he returned to the family seat and served as MP for Bandon Bridge, County Cork, from 1812 to 1815. He subsequently vacated his Parliamentary seat and was ordained as a priest. In 1820 he became rector of Glankeen, County Cashel, and two years later he was appointed Dean of Leighlin and was based at the Cathedral Church of St Laserian in Old Leighlin. Tyndall and his father considered Barnard a useful and reliable patron. This is the only one of Tyndall’s published poems with the byline of his own name. All the others are given under pseudonyms, except ‘From the Alps: a fragment’, the original version of ‘A morning on Alp Lusgen’ (see poem 76), which uses his initials J.T.

2 Tyndall was in Marburg when he heard of Dean Bernard’s death.

3 There are also handwritten and typescript versions: RI MS JT/2/5/383–5; RI MS JT/2/13b/483.
Hail to thee, mighty runner! before whom my senses reel
The greyhound's foot is fleet but O! it lags behind thy wheel
The soaring eagle steeps his breast in yon ethereal sea
And cleaves the tempest with his wing but yields the race to thee.
Oh who can chain his sweating limbs or curb his stormy speed
When the stoker stirs his courage up our gallant iron steed!

In Lincoln it is true my friends, there lives a rusty wight
I purpose no offence against the town of Mr Wright
But a hundred thousand Sibthorps—my brothers what are they
When they dare to check our charger bold he tramples them like clay
And scatters them my brothers mid the thunder of the train
As the roaring lion shakes the dew at morning from his mane!

Oh! tis glorious lads to see him when the darkness spreads around,
And his fiery eye-balls glisten as he stretches o'er the ground.
Like the sound of many waters he rushes through the vale
And the crags around re-echo to the rattle of the rail.
With his banner-cloud of vapour high over him unfurled
He makes the mountains shiver boys and jostles with the world!

But most of all should Mr Haas admire our courser brave
For it carried him to Jersey in the teeth of wind and wave
And though it made his stomach reel the sickness soon was o'er
When it landed him in safety on that hospitable shore
Where wine is got for nothing and you're paid for drinking beer
Oh! could we shelve our books my boys and make a Jersey here!

And when the thoughts of mountain homes came crowding on his mind
What carried him to Switzerland thrice quicker than the wind?
And back again triumphant o'er the billows of the sea
To steam and wheels Oh! Mr Haas right grateful should you be
I mourn your country Mr Haas with all its heights sublime
Where the hardy ferns cluster and the stalwart mountain pine
For we cannot tunnel through those rocks so obdurate & hard
And a single line of rails (+) is all that's left unto the bard.

And Christmas too is coming boys when ivy-berries shine
In hospitable welcome o'er the wallnuts and the wine.
Hail to the great magician who will carry us away
From problems, nouns, and chemicals upon that happy day
When school breaks up and every boy is dreaming how
He will kiss his little cousin underneath the mistletoe bough
And hail to him my brothers! when his whistle sounds again
To bear us back to fight the fight of gallant little men
To beat old Euclid under us and conquer every foe
Fresenuis, Arnold, Hutton, Haas, and Mr Colenso!

(+) Between Baden and Zürich

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1 Tyndall called this 'a scrap written for Borlase to conclude his lecture on the steam engine'. Borlase is not identified, but may have been a teacher at Queenwood College.
2 Tyndall was based at Queenwood College at this time.
3 Mr Wright: perhaps Tyndall’s Queenwood colleague was born in Lincoln.
4 Sibthorps: Colonel Charles Sibthorpe (1783–1855), born in Lincolnshire, was a Tory politician who believed that railways were a fad and the country would soon return to stagecoaches.
5 Mr Haas: John Haas was a teacher at Queenwood with Tyndall. He had previously taught at Fellenberg’s Hofwyl School in Switzerland.
6 Fresenuis: possibly Carl Remigius Fresenius (1818–97), a German analytical chemist.
7 Arnold: not identified.
8 Hutton: possibly James Hutton (1726–1797), Scottish geologist.
9 Mr Colenso!: possibly John William Colenso (1814–83), mathematician and theologian, though this poem predates his controversial writings.
The heights of Science woo me, and I clamber
With patient strides the mountain's rugged back
At times o'er flinty boulders slowly wending
Beat by the storm while clouds obscure my track.
Weary it is to wander thus so lonely
And mighty must that mystic instinct be
Which prompts my toil, commanding ever onward!
Drowning dismay in stern necessity.
My feet are sore but yonder is the summit
Rough clouds and chasms loom athwart my way
Into the clouds Oh worker!—brave the labour
Rest is beyond—not here—away! away!
“You must proceed!” Oh! who can truly measure
The bone and muscle of a brave self-trust
The might and compass of a man's endeavour
Till scourged to action by a strong “you must!”
A deadly whisper to the coward hearted
A challenge to the brave who loves to try
The metal of his manhood in the conflict
With circumstance, which shapes his destiny.
Dear Tom, the sky is gray

Today:
And like a vapour dense and dull
Something within my scull
Weighs heavily upon my aching brain.—
Would that the mind could rain!
And thus discharge in one full shower the weight
Which cumbers me of late.
Would that thou hadst a horse
To bound o’er grass and gorse
And make a breeze, though none should stir in heaven
I’d start before eleven
Next Sunday with the bridle in my hand,
And gallop o’er the land
The wind should stir the hair
Around my temples fair
And the bright crimson to my pale cheek bring
Till maids should long to kiss so fair a thing.
And then the whisker’s span
Sublime appendix! which thou canst but scan
On cheeks like mine,
Denied alas! to Debus’s² and thine
Or, half ashamed to be espied
Pays Haas³ a furtive visit at one side!

finis
Without, the Heaven’s grand Engineer
Has bent his dome so wide and high
Within, four panels \(^{(x)}\) shining clear
Compete in colour with the sky.
Without, the white frost crystals shed
Their lustre in the morning glow
Within, the linen on my bed
Transcends the frost and rivals snow.
Without the larks and linnets dear
Sing sweetly to the morning star;
But Oh! meseems thy silence here
My bonnie room is sweeter far.
Oh! I would give for this small span
Far, far, from London’s smoke and din,
Where whispering angels speak to man
Whose words are lost in yonder din.
Yes, I would give,—but ah! not mine
The right—sweet Anna\(^{2}\) must I speak?
I’d give—great Tom\(^{3}\) thine ear incline—
I’d give, by jove! five bob a week!

\(^{(x)}\) in the door.

RI MS JT/2/7/25–6; RI MS JT/2/13b/732

1 Tyndall was on a weekend break in Queenwood College, where he wrote this poem.
2 Anna: Anna Hirst, who had married Thomas Hirst on 27 December 1854. She died of tuberculosis on 1 July 1857.
3 Tom: Thomas Hirst.
68  [God bless thee Poet!] 1  7 August 1855 2

God bless thee Poet! while the dewy tear
Shines in my eyes, and with expanded arms
And shuddering joy I drink thy melody
Murmuring ‘beautiful!’ I bless thy voice,
Thy perfumed voice which searches me all through,
Which kills my apathy and plants new life,
New hope, new strength, new beauty in my heart.
God bless thee! let me hear thee oft—Oh! come,
When the cold brain o’erbalances the soul,
When intellect untinctured by a hue
Of feeling deems all Nature a machine,
And life itself the product of a force
Which acts it knows not why,—Thou mak’st me feel
A force beyond the force which science knows—
A life beyond her life, whose mystic seeds
Are songs, thy songs Oh! fragrant brother mine,
Which cause the heart to blossom where they fall.

J. T.

1 Tyndall wrote in his journal: ‘The following may be pleasant to me at some future day and I therefore copy it to save it from being lost. I wrote it in a blank scrap of Tennyson’s Maud’ (RI MS JT/2/13b/799). It is presumably a homage to Tennyson, who Tyndall did not meet until 1858.

2 Tyndall was in London.
69  The morning bell1    27 October 18552

Oh how I love thy silver tones melodious morning bell
When through the long drawn corridors thy mellow pulses swell
With voice each morn thrice sweeter than the famed Orphean fife
Thou makest every coverlet to ripple into life.

I start, great bell, when thou dost call, with all my vigour roused;
I stand with ten boys’ energies within my muscles housed,
And bless thee as thy dulcet tones upon my senses fall,
And drop a tear when thy dear tongue is silent in the hall!

They talk of harps and fiddles—of flute and deep bassoon;
They talk of songs which nightingales perform to please the moon;
But ne’er on mortal tympanum a softer music fell,
Than thine—thou joy of all the boys—delicious Morning Bell!

Our Cornwall3 tickles every string with light elastic hand,
Our Haas4 in his peculiar way is wonderfully grand,
And Dr Hirst,5 with lengthy arm and equally long bow,
Brings music from the bowels of his Violincel—lo;

But thou dost topple o’er them all as pine tree o’er a weed;
Thou art a blowing rose, and they mere charlock gone to seed.
Beef to the Ringer! Give him strength to do his duty well,
And charm us with the sweet ding dong—the boys’ beloved Bell!

ONE OF THE BOYS

The ‘bell’ to say the truth, is considered a peculiarly dismal
affair by the boys.

The Queenwood Observer (31 October 1855), vol. 3, no. 8, p. 68; RI MS JT/2/7/205–6; RI MS JT/2/13c/798

1  Written for The Queenwood Observer, the school magazine. Tyndall wrote in his journal:
‘Having promised Beck to write something for the Observer, one night returning from the
Lodge my promise occurred to me. The night was cool and calm and speech came to me’ (RI MS JT/2/13c/798).

2 Tyndall was based at Queenwood College for around a month at this time.

3 Cornwall: [John] Cornwall, the music master (Hirst Journal, RI JT 2/32c/1166).

4 Haas: John Haas, see poem 64, n. 5.

5 Dr Hirst: Thomas Hirst, an accomplished cellist and pianist.
At 7. the sound of preparation ceased
For breakfast—we attacked it—Wright\(^2\) and I
And Mrs Wright, and Allman\(^3\) a young Celt;
They to their tea, I to my cocoa mild
Which Mrs Leary\(^4\) mixes every morn
With milk thus forming a nutritious mud
For like to water charged with silica
Which lodged within the caverns of the earth
Turneth to flint, so tea within the dome
Of my deep stomach seemeth turned to stone
And lies a heavy nodule on my heart.
A chop this morn kind Mrs Wright prepared
For us; while Allman whose stomachic juice
Can deal with stiffer matter, fed on ham.
At half past 7 our little chariot wheels
Crunched the loose gravel opposite our door,
And we took up our places; Wright and I
To make the strain upon the pony less,
Took the front seat, with Mrs Wright behind.
We only three—for Allman young and lithe
Scattered his convex limbs towards Bournemouth.
“What glorious weather! see you” I exclaimed
“A single cloud, or trace of cloud, to spot
The cobalt of the sky?” “No”, not a trace—
But yes—see there is one! cried Mrs Wright
I looked aloft and saw the floating snow
High up in heaven; as if a thoughtful saint
In white apocalyptic linen clad
To whom the earth had been a place of love
And beauty in the pleasant summer time,
Had left angelic concerts to revive
Acquaintance with the lark, and warm his soul
With the dear memory of terrestrial joys.
We passed the gate where the mean mortar sphynx
Turns her cracked buttocks from the morning sun
As if ashamed to let the rosy dawn
Shine on the shabbiness of painted clay.
Forward through Milton Green, where Wright and I
Some days before enjoyed a pint of beer
And the sharp twinkle of a female eye
Of doubtful radiance; so at least thought Wright,
And I, though all unskilled, inferred the same.
Onward! alighting where the slopes hung steep;
And once at such a time I walked beside
A slow old man, on whose blue jacket gleamed
Two silver medals, and I asked him where
He had obtained them: “in the wars” he said
“On the Peninsula five years I fought
And struck my man at bloody Waterloo
Dear Sir the crops were good for many a year
With the rich dung we scattered on that day”.
Onward again until the clustering roofs
Of Lymington appeared: the cleanly walls
And painted shutters which today were up
In honour of the Queen, the sober air,
To me were pleasant for a human voice
Is here a sound, not broken, swamped and lost
As in the growl and clash of London wheels.
And as we trotted down the street
Through the laburnum tracery there gleamed
Two faces which seemed fair, and bright with smiles
The hindering foliage passed I looked again
For beauty of my heart confers a boon
Whether it be a landscape or a child
Or sprouting maiden on whose tender face
The soul makes music, blending with her voice.
And so I looked—the false laburnum green
Had thrown a glare subjective in my eyes
Which made the ugly fair; for I saw through
The unimpending air two wenches coarse
Who grinned and nodded at me as I gazed.
I cursed their impudence, and moodily
Looked at the townclock—it was half past nine.
We put our pony in the hostler’s hands
And told him to be bountiful with corn
And charge each fibre of the beast with force
To bear us homeward cheerily at eve.
We reached the steamer where with heart of fire,
Though motionless, she lay—a human swarm
Already filled her decks, and me to swell
The throng stepped forward; when a sunburnt son
Of Lymington, with brawny arms and brow
As massive as a bull’s accosted us—
“Pray Sirs are you the gents who hither came
On yesterday and asked about a boat?”
“The same” we answered, “but we now propose
On economic grounds quite plain to you
To join the steamer and reject the boat”.
“The day is fine” he urged “and if you take
A boat you can command it as you will.
Yon steamer casts its passengers ashore
At Yarmouth, but my merry craft is yours
To Alum Bay. The wind and tide this morn
Will sweep us there in two short hours, and you
Can quaff the breezes on the noble downs
Admire the pointed cliffs or dream for hours
Upon the yawning verge of Scratchell’s bay”.
The day was heavenly and the water shone
And Mrs Wright caught courage. In her eye
Her husband read her soul—“we go” he cried—
Eight shillings, is it not? The man said “yes”.
And thus, the bargain closed, we spread our sails,
The boatman and his comrade grasped the oars
And I the helm; beacons of trees and pine
Stuck in the mud traced out a winding course
And this we followed. Half a little hour
Set us advancing on the emerald waves
Quite clear beyond the river, straight across,
For so the wind required, we scudded swift.
The steamer passed us, bearing at her stern
A stately yacht, with masts like slender spears
So tall, they seemed to scrape against the sky.
And ever and anon a note of joy
Jumped like a singing thrustle from the throat
Of Mrs Wright. Health was in every wave,
And I to give my muscles exercise
And by the friction of their fibres rub
All rust away from chest and ribs and arms
Seized a relinquished oar, and long I tugged
And then I steered again, and saw with joy
Our craft o’ertake and pass with conquering sweep
her canvassed sisters of the Solent sea.
We tacked and tacked, for so the wind decreed
While I with hand upon the helm took in
The boatman’s hints and linked his facts to laws.
He knew the how, and I resolved the why
And through the light of principles discerned
A beauty in his acts unseen by him.
No sickness marred our pleasure: Mrs Wright
Drew forth defiant from her wicker pouch
A crust, which she disposed of in a way
That proved she liked it; and were sickness there
The agitation of the inner deeps
Affinities reversed and fortunes turned
In wrong directions would have doubtless made
A different picture far of Mrs Wright.
Safely arrived in lovely Alum Bay
We walked a narrow plank from boat to shore
For which the man who laid the plank received
The sum of sixpence, which with many thanks
As if it did exceed his normal gains
He pocketed amain, and we went on
Attracted by the colour of the cliffs
Which here stands vertical and tell a tale
Of dire commotion when the level beds
Of this fair isle were wildly tossed on end;
And to the thoughtful wanderer even now
Preach what the world was in the ages gone.
At times I bounded up the banded seams
Streaked with their purple green and red
And helped myself to specimens which broke
And crumbled in the pockets where they lay.
My scarf I cast upon the pebbled beach
Trusting no visitor to that fair strand
(For visitors were plentiful today)
Would stoop to peculation; now and then
I cast my wary eye upon the spot
Where the cloth rested; upward then my glance
Wandered and marked the courses of the flint
Running contorted through the massive chalk
Which manifestly shared the jerk which set
The neighbouring rocks on edge; a little cave
Worn by the lapping billows asked us in 
We entered it, and heard the water plash 
From roof to floor, the tangled weeds around 
Its porch were gathered up by Mrs Wright. 
Two maidens were beside us at the time 
One stooped & raised a leaf, and holding high 
The dripping shred, exclaimed in accents coarse 
“What can she want with rubbish such as this?” 
Meanwhile my anxious eye glanced back once more: 
My plaid had disappeared! Speed stirred my limbs 
And vengeance on the thief, if thief there were, 
Took fire and burned determined in my heart. 
I reached the place and found two yellow boys, 
Yellow with dirt and tan, and at their sides 
In contact with their proper filthy gear 
I saw my scarf. I scowled upon the pair 
And asked them why they dared to move my plaid 
“To guard it for you” was the prompt reply. 
“We found it stretched without an owner there 
And to the owner we are ready now 
To give it up”. I scanned each urchin’s face 
On which the natural law or evil use 
Had written scamp and scoundrel—“you young dogs!” 
I cried in wrath, and turning then to Wright 
“Is a policeman to be found?” I said 
The rascals shivered, muttering once more 
“We only meant to keep your wrapper safe”. 
I looked around, saw no policeman there 
And with a frown which doubtless fell on them 
As sunshine on the plants of Alum Bay 
I left the varlets stretched upon the sand. 

Upward we went, and where the man of stones 
And shells and spar displays his island wares 
I turned aside and sunk full half a crown 
In geologic stuff. I wished to know 
The way in which the stone was rendered hard. 
There was a cataract on the seller’s eye 
On his right eye, which gave a lying look 
To his whole countenance; but delayed 
To draw from physical deformity
An inference to the prejudice of this man.
Alas he lied! The cataract on his soul
Was ten times worse than that upon his eye
He afterwards acknowledged that he lied
And with an effort I scooped out the truth
From his false lips. I bade his shed good bye
And faced the hill where my companions stood
Pondering my absence. From the Chine below
The broken music of a German band—
A ragged band came up the sunny hill.
And upon grassy platform cloths were spread
And mighty pies, and loaves, and ginger beer,
And picnic parties crowded round the food
“How capital”! I cried—they heard the word
And many a maiden with audacious lip
Dipped deeper in roses, jeered me and my joy
And asked me would I like to take a bit
Yet manifestly meant me not to take
Even if I liked it. Now we faced the hill,
The glorious down, close shaven, which extends
Its needle spurs into the western sea.
The way was steep, I bore the scarfs of all
And Wright in duty lent a helping arm
To his fair wife; my arm at once proferred she
Had found on trial that she must decline.
For at each step she trod upon her gown
Which therefore needed lifting, and for this
She claimed the freedom of the arm which hung
On mine, I loosed it, and jogged on alone.
And at the summit Mr Wright averred,
That he was blown. I stood on sturdy limbs
And measured the magnificent expanse
Of ocean, and the bending dome of sky
Which closed down on it, sweeping with a curve
Clear, definite as with a compass drawn
The far horizon beaded o’er with ships.
Along the ridge we walked, the crisping breeze
Was balm and cordial to our heated brows
To distant Freshwater our thoughts went on
Before our bodies. Images of stout
Reaming with foam, and Bass’s sparkling ale
Raised locomotive wishes in our hearts
Which in those days when fairies scorn to lend
Their aid and seven leagued boots cannot be had
Were all in vain. Poor Mrs Wright oft sighed
And wished us there, and as each mocking ridge
Which promised when we reached it to reveal
The place on which our wearied hopes were fixed
Only deceived us, and poor soul quite spent
With cheeks all suffering from the ungentle kiss
Of scorching sunbeams oft and oft exclaimed
“Oh what a journey for us back again”.
She thus forestalled an ill which never came:
For we got there, and with triumphant voice
I ordered fowl and ham. Poor Wright at first
Affirmed he could eat nothing, but one bite
Of that sweet fowl and that delicious ham
Awakened a capacity for food
Within him, which considering all his vows
Of absent appetite astonished me.
We fed right royally and quaffed our ale;
Our only drawback was that Mrs Wright
Adhered to bread and butter, eschewed wine
And lemonade, and every other draught
Which my remembrance taught me to suggest.
We fed right royally; and afterwards
We rode like princes back to Alum Bay.
Wright, as he smoked, and partly that he wished
To scan the landscape set himself on high
Beside the driver; “see” he quickly cried
“The house of Tennyson!” I tried my best
To see the house, but beech and lime tree flung
Their clustering leaves between the house and road.
I saw a corner gleaming through the trees
It went—a second for a moment came
And that was all. No matter, ’twas a boon
To glance upon the corner of a house
Which holds a poet—One in whose clear mind
Burns a celestial coal, for ever bright.
No smoke, no glare, but smoke and glare condensed
To living fire which warms the hearts of men.
The air seemed fresher when we knew it was
The same that vivified his noble blood
Filled with the thought of him we settled down
And halted on the verge of Alum Bay
Here people thronged like pismires and a voice
Enquiring cried aloud to Mrs Wright
“Pray who’s your hatter!” and the question spread
Like babbling echo, till a score of tongues
Thirsting for knowledge all enquired the same
And ere we found ourselves afloat once more
I marked a duskiness upon the face
Of our conductor, like the wreck of clouds
Which spreads at times confusion o’er the heavens
The man was muzzy from excess of beer
I kept my eye upon him, watching how
He shook his sail abroad and used his oar
His touch was prompt and sure: athwart the wrack
That marred his countenance his spirit saw
The work before him, and his ready hands
Were quick to execute his spirit’s will.
“A nasty jump Sirs” he exclaimed as oft
The waves thumped at us through the sounding keel
Our sails at first shook idly: not a breath
Bellyed the canvass, but our oarsmen plied
Their oars and soon a stiff north easter sprung
Half angry on us from a clouded sky.—
Partially clouded, for while we in gloom
Scudded along, the cliffs of Alum Bay
Shone white and splendent in the smiling sun.
The wind augmented, and the waves at times
Butted our skiff like rams and made her pant
Through all her seams, while salt-spray from the prow
Caught by the wind fell over us in showers,
One half my plaid was swathed round Mrs Wright
An end around myself, who windward sat
And like a cliff received the rudest splash
Thus sheltering my companion. Wright was wrapped
In tartan plaid—his seamless countenance
Or from the strife within, or waves without
Imaged at intervals the tartan hue.
Eyeing the boatman he at times exclaimed
“You’re in the waves again—I like the sea
But could dispense with this accursed see-saw!
Though splashed and wet, with cheeks all hot and lips
All tender with the sunbeams and the brine
I felt unwonted strength within my frame.
I drank the breeze, and sang an inner song
To which the waves beat time: Could look aloft
And lift my heart on high; feel duty light
And glory in the vigour of a man.
Not as a week ago when smitten down
I crawled the earth, and felt with feeble hands
Across dispeptic tangle for the law
Which ought to guide the conduct of my life.
The law was now at hand, and forced to cope
With its demands, and render into deeds
The [peerless] aspirations of the soul.
The wind’s eye dark and squally on we went
With sundry tackings—shifting to and fro.
And at each move the boatman with his flag—
Wiped the salt water from the flooded seat.
Once more we tracked the river’s winding course
And landing safe we paid our men and clomb
The steep incline to the Commercial Inn.

A room where Wright and I the day before
Had sandwiches and beer received as now
The woolly carpet cut without regard
To symmetry of pattern bore the stains
Of scattered ink, while little oilskin prisms
Told us we sat where those in technic phrase
Called “bagmen” revel in commercial dreams.
A maiden with a mild voice and slender waist
And darkling eyes from which a radiance gleamed
Like Byron’s lightning through the Alpine cloud
Asked us upstairs into a private room.
We went and had a tea the gods might share.
Wishing to pay the shot I rang the bell
But Wright forestalled me; yet the maiden came
And said “Oh Sir I thought I had seen
Your face before, but could not call to mind
How, when or where;—you lunched here yesterday”.
“True”, I responded gently “but as I
Have not forgotten you, it follows clear
That the impression which you made on me
Is deeper far alas! than mine on you”.
The maiden bent her head and sweetly smiled
And rose and lily rippled o’er her cheek
In waves of light while a more tender beam
Broke from the crystal of her shaded eye.
She softly spoke and hoped that I had found
The day a day of pleasure. I said “yes”.
And as our voices thus began to flow
In one melodious current Mrs Wright
Damned the discourse by whispering she would tell
My friends how I had “flirted” with the girl!

Stunned by the threat: I bade the maid good bye
Drank the last light of her delicious eye
And halted at the bottom just to sip
The latest murmurs of her ruby lip.
Her image in my heart; her body where
The plane of the first lobby cuts the stair
And now the hostler yields the whip and rein
To Wright, who tickles Fanny’s ribs again
A moment’s hesitation—I am gone
And that dear maid may cogitate alone.
Alas! not so: the thought of Bagmen’s arms
In the wrong place my jealous soul alarms
Oh happy Bagman—Oh unhappy me
The woe is mine—the waist remains to thee!

Oh soft and calm the saintly evening drooped
In silence o’er the earth—the world within
As warm and peaceful as the world without
Cradled in foliage lay the smiling fields
The soft green of the pastures gleaming through
Their sylvan frames of hazel and of elm.
The beanfields came to meet us with their balm
The tinted woodbine netted through the hedge
Poured out in sweetness all its floral soul
And when the twilight darkened into night
The knolls on either hand were like the sky
Studded with earthly stars: the grass was gemmed
With glow worms, one of which I knelt beside
And saw it like a little sun illume
The grass-blades near. And afterwards I sought
To make the nature of this wondrous thing
Called light, as far as science has explored
Its essence, manifest to Mrs Wright
Poor Wright was silent—afterwards I learned
That as we talked of ether and of waves
His stomach, shaken sadly by the sea,
Began to totter, and when he resigned
His charge at Mudeford he quite gave way.
For me I carried home a stack of force
A health, a hope, a happiness, a joy.
Which stamp the memory of this precious day
In big red letters on my grateful heart.
71 [What though the mountain breezes]¹
18 August 1856²

What though the mountain breezes
Do drive away the bile
It merely gives another room
For man is very vile

In vain in their sublimeness
The mountains lift their thrones
These heathens, sans the blindness
Will fret you to the bones!

¹ When two guides had tried to overcharge Tyndall and Huxley after taking them over the Wengen Alp, Tyndall wrote in his journal: ‘I thought that a verse of Heber’s might be parodied in somewhat the following fashion:’ (RI MS JT/2/13c/876).

² Heber’s original reads as follows:

From Greenland’s icy mountains, from India’s coral strand;
Where Afric’s sunny fountains roll down their golden sand:
From many an ancient river, from many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver their land from error’s chain.

What though the spicy breezes blow soft o’er Ceylon’s isle;
Though every prospect pleases, and only man is vile?
In vain with lavish kindness the gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone.

Shall we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,
Shall we to those benighted the lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation! The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth’s remotest nation has learned Messiah’s Name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story, and you, ye waters, roll
Till, like a sea of glory, it spreads from pole to pole:
Till o’er our ransomed nature the Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator, in bliss returns to reign.

Tyndall was at Grindelwald, with Thomas Huxley, on his first glacier explorations.
72 [The sea holds jubilee this sunny morn]
17 June 1861

The sea holds jubilee this sunny morn
And I with heart content upon its verge
Join in the laughter of the breaking waves.
And glad, right glad the sympathetic land,
Shaking her hazel tresses in her mirth
While all her copses tremble into song
The thickset trees which crowd the Undercliff,
The scented woodbine on the neighbouring knoll,
The foxglove shaking all its purple bells,
And roses blushing mid the tender green,
All blend to form a bouquet for the sight;
But not for sight alone, for beauty sends
Its finer essence down into the heart.
Lady! my friend—thou surely wilt not frown,
If lingering here I miss that other joy
Of meeting thee and thine to-morrow night!

J.T. | Monday 17th June 1861.

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1 Tyndall went to the Isle of Wight on 16 June, returning on 19 June.
2 In the original version, written into Tyndall’s journal the same day, the first two lines are slightly different:
   The sea is joyful on this sunny morn,
   While with heart content upon its verge

3 Undercliff: The Undercliff is a stretch of land on the south coast of the Isle of Wight, between Niton and Bonchurch.
4 See also letter 1788, TC7.
73 There was an unfortunate Divil  August 1861

There was an unfortunate Divil
Who wanted the view from the Riffel  

So tho’ pathways were boggy
And atmosphere foggy
He clambered and climbed up the Riffel.

The way seemed amazing lontano
And tho’ he went on piano piano
The rain & perspiring
Were drenching and tiring
and [not] the proverbial sano.

And sacré verflucht [maledetta]
And good round British oaths (which are better),
While not one “magnifique”
Or in growl or in squeak
Broke in on this Swiss Donner Wetter.

For Rosa was still lachrymosa
Though known as puella formosa
And the great peak of Mattu  
Was buried in battu
And all nature venditio famosa.

So all things were chilly & clammy
To that Job might himself have cried D—me
Whilst alpenstocks battered
Boots stamped & tongues chattered
And no door but was creaky & slammy.

Beds, walls, floors are clammy & chilly,
And the “Night” the reverse quite of “Stilly”,
Till this middle aged Divil
Who slept on the Riffel  
Had at length to get up, willy-nilly.

In this Tavern perfumed—not by [Rimmel]—
He glared for one speck of blau Himmel,
But from morning to night
The fog was as white
And as slow as a Postmeister’s Schimmel.

With hobnails & uproar & bother
’Tis surely the Faulhorn’s own brother
And from chambers off
He could hear a great cough
As he set down some vessel or other.

He strove, this unfortunate Divil,
The tongue in his head to keep civil,
And scribbled his verses,
With deep, not loud, curses,
And then he went down from the Riffel.

August 1861

RI MS JT/3/21; Riffelberg Hotel Book, Matterhorn Museum archive. The latter enabled reading of some unclear words in the RI version.

1 Tyndall made the first ascent of the Weisshorn on 19 August 1861. He went on to Zermatt and up to the Riffelalp on 22 August, where he may have written this limerick before crossing the Théodule Pass to prospect the Matterhorn for a second time.
2 Riffel: the Riffelhorn, above Zermatt, gives a spectacular view of the glacier below and the peaks all around.
3 Rosa: Monte Rosa, the highest mountain in Switzerland, visible across the glacier from the Riffelhorn.
4 Mattu: The Matterhorn, across the valley beyond Zermatt, and still unclimbed at this point.
5 Who slept at the Riffel: there was, and still is, a hotel on the Riffelberg.
6 Faulhorn’s: The Faulhorn is a peak near Grindelwald.
74 To the moon¹ 14 February 1863²

To the moon

1863 Feb. 14th

Say does the crimson of the drooping rose
When soft it falls upon delighted eyes
Close up those eyes against the glorious sun
Which gives all flowers their odours and their bloom?

Or does the song of lark and nightingale
Mingling at dawn along the Devon shore³
Make the full heart less fitted to enjoy
The grander music of the gleaming sea?

Is it not rather so, that when a love
So large as that which fills my soul for thee
Unlocks the doors, the smaller loves of earth
Troop in without disturbance to the great?
Dismiss thy fear; retract thy strong reproach
And bend thy beauty o’er me as of yore.—

Nor Bromine richly brown, nor Chlorine green—
Nor Aqueous Vapour⁴ which the praying earth
Swings from her censers underneath thy beams,
Has ever caused my love to swerve from thee.

These are but melodies of minor note
Which mingle with that grander holier strain
My soul for ever sendeth to that heaven
Where thou dost reign, the Queen of all the Stars.

Dissolve those clouds, unpucker that fair brow,
Nor let thy lover for moment deem
The shock of worlds could move thy steadfast heart
Thou’rt bright once more,—come nearer then my love,—
Still nearer—stoop—a little lower—there!
I kiss thy silver cheek, Goodnight! Goodnight!

JT

Thus nobly mated we shall love through time—
Our time—& send the memory of our love
To other times; a torch to kindle trust
To burn up doubt, and give the sinking hearts
Of men reliance on the force of love.

I knew thee by thy eyes (J's)
Hamlet.

1 This poem actually consists of two sonnets followed by a 5-line fragment. In the typescript version, probably produced by Louisa, it appears immediately before poem 75, which is clearly to Juliet Pollock. This set of poems appear also to be to her. The fragment is followed by to ‘thy eyes (J’s)’. If so it is very revealing.

2 Tyndall was in London. He had not been very well for the previous week and spent much of it at Queenwood College.

3 Devon shore: in March 1861 Tyndall had undertaken a walking tour in Devon with Francis Galton and Vaughan Hawkins.

4 Nor Aqueous Vapour: Tyndall had given his Discourse ‘On Radiation Through the Earth’s Atmosphere’ on 23 January.
75  [The queenly moon] 1  March 28 2

The queenly moon commands the plastic sea  
Which rolls around the world its silvered brine  
And thus on Sunday evening drawn by thee  
I'll roll from woodless ‘woods’ 3 to 59. 4

J.T.

March 28

RI MS JT/8/2/1/47, RI MS JT/1/TYP/6/2003

1  The queenly moon is probably Juliet Pollock.
2  It is possible that this poem dates to 1863, following poem 74. If so, Tyndall was probably in London. He had not been well for a while and had been uncharacteristically out of sorts emotionally, as Hirst had commented earlier in the month (Hirst Journal, RI MS JT/2/32c/1633).
3  ‘woodless “woods”’ may be a reference to Tyndall’s residence in London: 14 Waverley Place, St Johns Wood.
4  59 Montagu Square, home of the Pollocks.

THE POETRY OF JOHN TYNDALL
76 From the Alps: a fragment/A morning on Alp Lusgen
1881 (Pall Mall Gazette) and 1892 (New Fragments)

Pall Mall Gazette version:

The sun has cleared the hills, quenching the flush
Of orient crimson with excess of light.
The long grass quivers in the morning air
Without a sound; yet each particular blade
Hymns its own song, had we but ears to hear.
The hot rays smite us, but a rhythmic breeze
Keeps languor far away. Unslumbering,
The eye and soul take in the mighty scene.
The plummet from those heights must fall a mile,
To reach yon rounded mounds which seem so small.
They shrink in the embrace of vaster forms,
Though, placed amid the pomp of Cumbrian Fells,
These hillock crests would overtop them all.
Steep fall the meadows to the vale in slopes
Of freshest green, scarred by the humming streams,
And darkened here and there by clouds of pine.
Unplanted groves! whose pristine seeds, they say,
Were sown amid the flames of nascent stars.
How came ye thence and hither? Whence the craft
Which shook these gentian atoms into form,
And dyed them with azure deeper far
Than that of heaven itself on days serene?
What built these marigolds? What clothed these
knolls
With fiery bilberries? What gave the heath
Its purple blossoms and the rose its glow?
Ah weary head! the answer is abroad,
Buzzing through all the atmosphere of mind.
’Tis Evolution! East, West, North and South—
From droughty sage and spinster shrill we learn
’Twas Evolution! When that word has spread
Its magic to the limits of the world,
Till its reverberation thence becomes
A lullaby—how sweet ’twill be to doze
Over thy emptied cup of nectar’d sweets
Divine Philosophy!—To doze in peace.
Low down, the yellow shingle of the Rhone
Hems in the scampering stream, which loops the sand
In islands manifold—beyond, a town,
Whose plated domes flash back the solar blaze—
Large domes for town so small! But here erewhile
Unfurled itself the Jesuit oriflamme,
And souls were nurtured on the tonic creed
Of Loyola—grand creed! if only true.
Oh! sorrowing shade of him, who preached through life
Obedience to the Highest! could men find
That Highest much more clear! Yon tonsured monk
Will lie and die obedient to a power
Which he deems highest, but which you deem damned.
Not for a monk your message; but for men
With strength potential—leaders of the world
Who took the truth you preached to set them free.

Scarred by a gorge, the vale beyond the town
Breaks into squares of yellow and of green—
Of rye and meadow. Through them winds the road
Which opened to the hosts of conquering France Lombardian plains—the Simplon Pass—
Flanked by the Lion Mountain to the left,
While to the right the mighty Fletschorn lifts
A beetling brow, and spreads abroad its snows.
From one vast brain yon noble highway came;
“Let it be made,” he said, and it was done.
In one vast brain was born the motive power
Which swept whole armies over heights unscaled,
And poured them, living cataracts, on the South.
Or was it force of faith, faith warranted
By antecedent deeds, that nerved these hosts
And made Napoleon’s name a thunderbolt?
What is its value now? This man was called
“A mortal God!” Oh, shade before invoked,
You spoke of Might and Right; and many a shaft
Barbed with the sneer, “He preaches force—brute force,”
Has rattled on your shield. But well you knew
Might, to be Might, must base itself on Right,
Or vanish evanescent as the deeds
Of France’s Emperor. Reflect on this,
Ye temporary darlings of the crowd.
To-day ye may have peans in your ears;
To-morrow ye lie rotten, if your work
Lack that true core which gives to Right and Might
One meaning in the end.

J.T. 7

‘From the Alps: a fragment’, Pall Mall Gazette (16 August 1881), p. 10
(signed J. T.)
Typewritten transcript only

New Fragments version:

The sun has cleared the peaks and quenched the flush
Of orient crimson with excess of light.
The tall grass quivers in the rhythmic air
Without a sound; yet each particular blade
Trembles in song, had we but ears to hear.
The hot rays smite us, but a quickening breeze
Keeps languor far away. Unslumbering,
The soul enlarged takes in the mighty scene.

The plummet from this height must sink afar
To reach yon rounded mounds which seem so small.
They shrink in the embrace of vaster forms,
Though, placed amid the pomp of Cumbrian Fells,
These hillock crests would overtop them all.
Steep fall the meadows to the vale in slopes
Of freshest green, scarred by the humming streams,
And flecked by spaces of primeval pine.
Unplanted groves! whose pristine seeds, they say,
Were sown amid the flames of nascent stars—
How came ye thence and hither? Whence the craft
Which shook these gentian atoms into form,
And dyed the flower with azure deeper far
Than that of heaven itself on days serene?
What built these marigolds? What clothed these
knolls
With fiery whortle leaves? What gave the heath
Its purple bloom—the Alpine rose its glow?
Shew us the power which fills each tuft of grass
With sentient swarms?—the art transcending
thought,
Which paints against the canvas of the eye
These crests sublime and pure, and then transmutes
The picture into worship? Science dumb—
Oh babbling Gnostic! cease to beat the air.
We yearn, and grope, and guess, but cannot know.

Low down, the yellow shingle of the Rhone
Hems in the scampering stream, which loops the
sands
In islands manifold. Beyond, a town,
Whose burnished domes flash back the solar blaze—
Proud domes for town so small! But here erewhile
Unfurled itself the Jesuit oriflamme,
And souls were nurtured in the tonic creed
Of Loyola. Grand creed! if only true.
Oh! sorrowing shade of him,* who preached through
life
Obedience to the Highest! could men find
That Highest much were clear! Yon tonsured monk
Will face the flames obedient to a power
Which he deems highest, but which you deem
damned.

Cut by a gorge, the vale beyond the town
Breaks into squares of yellow and of green—
Of rye and meadow. Through them winds the road
Which opened to the hosts of conquering France
Lombardian plains—sky-touching Simplon Pass—
Flanked by the Lion Mountain to the left,
While to the right the mighty Fletschorn lifts
A beetling brow, and spreads abroad its snows.
Dom, Cervin—Weisshorn of the dazzling crown—
Ye splendours of the Alps! Can earth elsewhere
Bring forth a rival? Not the Indian chain,
Though shouldered higher o’er the standard sea,
Can front the eye with more majestic forms.

From one vast brain yon noble highway came;
‘Let it be made,’ he said, and it was done.
In one vast brain was born the motive power
Which swept whole armies over heights unscaled,
And poured them, living cataracts, on the South.
Or was it force of faith—faith warranted
By antecedent deeds, that nerved these hosts
And made Napoleon’s name a thunderbolt?
What is its value now? This man was called
‘A mortal God!’ Oh, shade before invoked,
You spoke of Might and Right; and many a shaft
Barbed with the sneer, ‘He preaches force—brute
force,’
Has rattled on your shield. But well you knew
Might, to be Might, must base itself on Right,
Or vanish evanescent as the deeds
Of France’s Emperor. Reflect on this,
Ye temporary darlings of the crowd.
To-day ye may have peans in your ears;
To-morrow ye lie rotten, if your work
Lack that true core which gives to Right and Might
One meaning in the end.

* Carlyle

‘A morning on Alp Lusgen’, New Fragments (London: Longmans, 1892), pp. 498–500; drafts are in
RI MS JT/3/44 (see 76a–l).
Typewritten transcript only

There are two versions of this important poem, one almost certainly written in 1881 and the
second in 1892, a year before Tyndall died. Thomas Carlyle had died on 5 February 1881,
and this poem may be a direct response, honouring Carlyle, his view of the universe and his
morality, Tyndall went to the Alps on 17 June that year. He was not well initially, and the poem was probably written at Alp Lusgen in July. There are significant differences between the two versions. In particular the stanza ‘Tis Evolution!’ is missing from the later version. See Francis O’Gorman’s article (1997) ‘John Tyndall as Poet: Agnosticism and “A Morning on Alp Lusgen”’, though O’Gorman clearly did not know of the Pall Mall Gazette version.

2 See RI MS JT/3/44 for the draft version for this stanza.

3 Unlike the 1892 version, Carlyle is not footnoted by Tyndall here. Perhaps, for a publication in 1881, he thought it obvious and unnecessary.

4 Tyndall crossed out ‘more’ and inserted ‘were’ (as in the 1892 version). This may be a misprint in The Pall Mall Gazette.

5 These three lines are not in the 1892 version. See RI MS JT/3/44 for the draft including this.

6 Five lines were added after this in the 1892 version.

7 Given the subject matter it is likely that many readers would have deduced the name of the author from these initials.