pretended that they did. It was true that the bent of his genius was slightly altered, in a direction which seemed less purely and austerely that of the highest art ; but his concessions to public taste vastly added to the width of the circle he now addressed. The home of the Tennysons was now at Cheltenham : on his occasional visits to London he was in the habit of seeing Thackeray, Coventry Patmore, Browning and Macready, as well as older friends, but he avoided “ society.” In 1848, while making a tour in Cornwall, Tennyson met Robert Stephen Hawker of Morwenstow, with whom he seems—but the evidence is uncertain—to have talked about King Arthur, and to have resumed his intention of writing an epic on that theme. In his absent-minded way Tennyson was very apt to mislay objects; in earlier life he had lost the MS. of *Poems, chiefly Lyrical,* and had been obliged to restore the whole from scraps and memory. Now a worse thing befell him, for in February 1850, having collected into one “ long ledger-like book ” all the elegies on Arthur Hallam which he had been composing at intervals since 1833, he left this only MS. in the cupboard of some lodgings in Mornington Place, Hampstead Road. By extraordinary good chance it had been overlooked by the landlady, and Coventry Patmore was able to recover it. In this way *In Memoriam* was dragged back from the very verge of destruction, and could be published, in its original anonymous form, in May 1850. The public was at first greatly mystified by the nature and object of this poem, which was not merely a chronicle of Tennyson’s emotions under bereavement, nor even a statement of his philosophical and religious beliefs, but, as he long after- wards explained, a sort of *Divina Commedia,* ending with happiness in the marriage of his youngest sister, Cecilia Lushington. In fact, the great blemishes of *In Memoriam,* its redundancy and the dislocation of its parts, were largely due to the desultory manner of its composition. The poet wrote the sections as they occurred to him, and did not think of weaving them together into a single poem until it was too late to give them real coherency. The metre, which by a curious naïveté Tennyson long believed that he had invented, served by its happy peculiarity to bind the sections together, and even to give an illusion of connected movement to the thought.

The sale of Tennyson’s poems now made it safe for him to settle, and on the 13th of June 1850 he was married at Shiplake to Emily Sarah Sellwood (1813-1896). Of this union no more need be said than was recorded long afterwards by the poet himself, “ The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her.” Every species of good fortune was now to descend on the path of the man who had struggled against ill luck so long. Wordsworth died, and on the 19th of November 1850 Queen Victoria appointed Tennyson poet laureate. The salary connected with the post was very small, but it had a secondary value in greatly stimulating the sale of his books, which was his main source of income. The young couple took a house at Warninglid, in Sussex, which did not suit them, and then one in Montpelier Row, Twickenham, which did better. In April 1851 their first child was born dead. At this time Tennyson was brooding much upon the ancient world, and reading little but Milton, Homer and Virgil. This condition was elegantly defined by Carlyle as “ sitting on a dungheap among innumerable dead dogs.” In the summer of 1851 was made the tour in Italy, of which *The Daisy* is the immortal record. Of 1852 the principal events were the birth of his eldest son Hallam, the second Lord Tennyson, in August, and in November the publication of the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.* In the winter of 1853 Tennyson entered into possession of a little house and farm called Farringford, near Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, which he leased at first, and afterwards bought: this beautiful place, ringed round with ilexes and cedars, entered into his life and coloured it with its delicate enchantment. In 1854 he published *The Charge of the Light Brigade,* and was busy composing *Maud* and its accom­panying lyrics; and this volume was published in July 1855, just after he was made D.C.L. at Oxford: he was received on this occasion, which may be considered his first public appear­ance, with a “ tremendous ovation.” The reception of *Maud* from the critics, however, was the worst trial to his equanimity which Tennyson had ever had to endure, nor had the future anything like it in store for him. He had risen in *Maud* far above his ordinary serenity of style, to ecstasies of passion and audacities of expression which were scarcely intelligible to his readers, and certainly not welcome. It is odd that this irregular poem, with its copious and varied music, its splendid sweep of emotion, its unfailing richness of texture—this poem in which Tennyson rises to heights of human sympathy and intuition which he reached nowhere else, should have been received with bitter hostility, have been styled “the dead level of prose run mad,” and have been reproved more absurdly still for its “ rampant and rabid bloodthirstiness of soul.” There came a reaction of taste and sense, but the delicate spirit of Tennyson had been wounded. For some years the world heard nothing from him; he was at Farringford, busying himself with the Arthurian traditions. He had now become an object of boundless personal curiosity, being already difficult to find, and the centre of amusing legends. It was in 1857 that Bayard Taylor saw him, and carried away the impression of a man “ tall and broad-shouldered as a son of Anak, with hair, beard and eyes of southern darkness.” This period of somewhat mysterious withdrawal from the world embraced a tour in Wales in 1857, a visit to Norway in 1858, and a journey through Portugal in 1859. In 1857 two Arthurian poems had been tentatively and privately printed, as *Enid and Nimue, or the True and the False,* to see how the idyllic form would be liked by the inner circle of Tennyson’s friends. In the summer of 1859 the first series of *Idylls of the King* was at length given to the world, and achieved a popular success far beyond anything experienced before by any English poets, save perhaps Byron and Scott. Within a month of publication, 10,000 copies had been sold. The idyls were four in number, “ Enid,” “ Vivien ” (no longer called “ Nimue ”), “ Elaine ” and “ Guinevere.” These were fragments of the epic of the fall of King Arthur and the Table Round which Tennyson was so long preparing, and which he can hardly be said to have ever completed, although nearly thirty years later he closed it. The public and the critics alike were entranced with the “ sweetness ” and the “ purity ” of the treatment. A few, like Ruskin, were doubtful about “that increased quietness of style”; one or two already suspected that the “ sweetness ” was obtained at some sacrifice of force, and that the “ purity ” involved a con­cession to Victorian conventionality. It was not perceived at the time that the four idyls were parts of a great historical or mystical poem, and they were welcomed as four polished studies of typical women: it must be confessed that in this light their even perfection of workmanship appeared to greater advantage than it eventually did in the general texture of the so-called “epic.” In 1859 “ Boadicea ” was written, and “Riflemen, Form ! ” published in *The Times.* Urged by the duke of Argyll, Tennyson now turned his attention to the theme of the Holy Grail, though he progressed with it but fitfully and slowly. In 1861 he travelled in Auvergne and the Pyrenees, with Clough, who was to die a few months later; to this year belong “ Helen’s Tower ” and the “ Dedication ” of the *Idylls* to the prince consort, “ These to his Memory.” The latter led to Tennyson’s presentation in April 1862 to the queen, who “ stood pale and statue-like before him, in a kind of stately innocence,” which greatly moved his admiring homage. From this time forth the poet enjoyed the constant favour of the sovereign, though he could never be moulded into a conven­tional courtier. He now put the Arthurian legends aside for a time, and devoted himself to the composition, in 1862, of “ Enoch Arden,” which, however, did not appear until 1864, and then in a volume which also contained “ Sea Dreams,” “ Aylmer’s Field ” and, above all, “ The Northern Farmer,” the first and finest of Tennyson’s remarkable studies in dialect. In April of this year Garibaldi visited Farringford; in February 1865 Tennyson’s mother died at Hampstead in her eighty-fifth