

Civilian Poets and Poetry of the  
Crimean Conflict:  
The War at Home

Tai-Chun Ho

Ph.D.

University of York

English and Related Literature

December 2014

## Abstract

Cast in the shadow of the soldier-poets of the First World War, the Civilian poets of the Crimean War (1854-56) have long been dismissed as ill-informed patriots. Challenging this long-standing assumption, this thesis argues that Crimean War poetry constitutes a distinctive category of war poetry which should be studied in its own right, and that reading a civilian's war poem requires a careful consideration of the poet's engagement with the epistemological, ethical and formal implications of dealing with war and suffering at several removes. For mid-nineteenth-century critics and poets the distant war in the Crimea was not only a media war but also a literary one, during which they drew on established traditions and forms to negotiate with revised conceptions of the role and genre of war poetry. These conceptions were in turn being constantly updated and contested by modern forms of reportage, particularly telegraphic dispatches and photographs.

This thesis considers the artistic endeavours of a wide range of civilian poets including Alfred Lord Tennyson, his friend Franklin Lushington, the 'Spasmodic' Sydney Dobell, the working-class Chartist Gerald Massey, the *Punch* contributor Tom Taylor, the satirist Robert Brough and anonymous poets whose works appeared in newspapers, journals and magazines at the time. In doing so, it seeks to provide fresh, historically nuanced readings of the cultural impact and legacy of their poetic output. This thesis also argues for a differentiation between early and late poetic responses. Burdened with their knowledge of the suffering caused by their government's mismanagement of the war, civilian poets from January 1855, set out to challenge established conventions of war poetry and experiment with sophisticated poetic forms other than the lyric. They drew on a range of formal resources, including the sonnet, satires and dramatic monologue to write new kinds of documentary, questioning, or even satirical war poetry. As such, their poetic responses were not intended to arouse readers' patriotic sentiment and to advocate the government's military campaign as did traditional patriotic poetry, but to perform a wide variety of political critiques- to challenge the political elite's prosecution of the war and the dominant class system; to commemorate the bodily pain of the wounded; to give voice to the emotional suffering of civilians remaining at home during the war; to ease the public's anxiety about the welfare of soldiers' families, and to explore the trauma of war.

## TABLE of CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	ii
List of Illustrations	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Declaration	vi
 Introduction	 1
 Chapter 1      “Sit[ting] at Home at Ease”: The Victorian Tyrtæus	 17
 Chapter 2      “[T]he People’s War”: Challenging the Governing Classes	 55
 Chapter 3      “[H]ome-reflections of that blazing affair in the East”: Commemorating suffering from a distance	 110
 Chapter 4      “Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die”: Tennyson’s Echoes of War-Cries in <i>Maud</i>	 146
 Chapter 5      The Afterlife of Thomas Campbell and “The Soldier’s Dream”	 180
 Afterword	 213
 Bibliography	 222

## List of Illustrations

		Page
1	“A Home and Foreign Question,” <i>Punch</i> (June 24 1854), 260.	71
2	“Austria still plays on the Scotch Fiddle,” <i>Punch</i> (December 2 1854), 222.	76
3	[John Leech], “Enthusiasm of Paterfamilias,” <i>Punch</i> (November 25 1854), 213.	122
4	Joseph Noel Paton, <i>Home</i> (1856). Reproduced by Courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust	140
5	“The Camp at Chobham,” <i>Punch</i> (June 18 1853), 244.	193
6	William Turner, “The Soldier’s Dream,” in Thomas Campbell’s <i>The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell</i> (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), 100.	197
7	[John Tenniel], “The Soldier’s Dream,” in <i>Punch</i> (April 1 1854), 131.	197
8	George Eyre, “Royal Patriotic Jug,” January 1855, Samuel Alcock and Co, Hill Pottery, Burslem. Reproduced by Courtesy of the National Army Museum, London.	200
9	“Britannia taking Care of the Soldiers’ Children,” <i>Punch</i> (March 4 1854), 84.	204
10	“Britannia Takes the Widows and Orphans of the Brave Under her Protection,” <i>Punch</i> (October 21 1854), 158.	204
11	“Right Against Wrong,” <i>Punch</i> (April 8 1854), 140.	208

## Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful for the support, encouragement, and intellectual companionship I have received to write this thesis.

My original interest in Crimean War poetry was inspired by Matthew Bevis. My appreciation goes to him for his guidance during the early stage of my research project. My TAP Member Emma Major commented on chapter drafts, provided lots of resources and introduced me to early nineteenth-century war poetry. I have benefited greatly from her knowledge and enthusiasm. I would also like to express my gratitude to Jane Moody, who chaired my upgrade meeting and encouraged me to pursue this project.

I have been incredibly lucky to have two inspiring Victorian scholars as my mentors. I am greatly indebted to Matthew Campbell for his expertise on poetry, insightful criticism and advice. My heartfelt thanks go to Trev Broughton, who gave me meticulous comments on every draft I wrote, warmly supported me during all stages of my work, and challenged me to become a better thinker. I thank you both for your patience, encouragement and guidance for a very slow writer.

I owe a huge debt to Tracy Hayes for proofreading several finished chapters. The errors in this thesis are mine and there would have been a lot more if it were not for your generous help.

I would like to thank the Fellgetts for welcoming me into the family during the final stage of my writing. My special thanks go to Alison, who cheered me up along the way and helped me bring the thesis to completion.

My parents, Ming-Li Ho and Pi-ChuTsai, supported me with their love and believed in me. This thesis is for you.

## Author's declaration

I declare that all material in this thesis is original and my own work, except where otherwise identified, and that no material has previously been submitted for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

## Introduction

In May 1855, in a review of war poetry, Edward Bruce Hamley paints a satirical portrait of the civilian poet of the time:

Scenes of the campaign glow and expand in the pictures of an imaginative “own correspondent” writing up to the requirements of an excited public. The poet, catching the enthusiasm, burns to sing of the war. Fancy and invention he need not call on for aid, as those elements of poetry have already done their utmost in the columns of the newspaper he subscribes to. Nothing is wanting but verse; and his eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, glances from the *Times* to a quire of foolscap, which he presently covers with ballads, sonnets, or some other form of lay, plaintive as the odes of Sappho, or sanguinary as the songs of Tyrtæus.<sup>1</sup>

Hamley’s phrase that “his eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, glances from the *Times* to a quire of foolscap” is of course a direct echo of Theseus’ speech in Act V, scene 1 of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: “The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,/Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven” (5. 1. 12-14).<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Athens continues: “as imagination bodies forth/The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen/Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name” (5.1. 15-17). Shakespeare mocks Plato’s notion of the poet’s divine frenzy to create “the forms of things unknown,” whereas Hamley invokes this famous scene to satirize civilian poets’ attempts at war poetry. Divine frenzy now comes from *The Times* and penning war poetry is reduced to rendering newspaper reports into verse. The “foolscap which he presently covers” suggests not only the paper upon which the poet is writing but also the fact that he is perceived as a jester: “catching” the war

---

<sup>1</sup> [Edward Bruce Hamley], “Poetry of the War: Reviewed Before Sebastopol,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 77 (May 1855), 531.

<sup>2</sup> See *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brooks (London: Methuen, 1979), p. 104.

fever from an “imaginative” correspondent of *The Times* who is feeding stories to “an excited public,” the vehement poet feels inspired to write about the war in various forms of mimicry.

Hamley’s lampoon emphasizes his mistrust of the civilian poet’s experience of the war from the perspective of the soldier-writer. By the time he joined the war as the adjutant of Colonel Richard Dacres, he had already published his first novel *Lady Lee’s Widowhood* (1853).<sup>3</sup> While performing his military duties in the Crimea, he also wrote the review quoted above and served as a private correspondent for the conservative, pro-war magazine *Blackwood’s*, which printed his letters serially under the title *Story of the Campaign*.<sup>4</sup> It is the combination of his literary background and military experience that allows him to question, with exceptional authority, both the truthfulness of the correspondent of *The Times* and civilians’ home-front responses.<sup>5</sup> His satirical attack embodies a military writer’s critique of civilians who had no combat experience but took up the subject of war as though it were fiction.<sup>6</sup>

Reading through mid-century reviews of Crimean war poetry, one finds that commentators had very little praise for their contemporary poets and easily slid into Hamley’s military perspective, casually dismissing their works. Ironically, these

---

<sup>3</sup> See Alexander Innes Shand, *The Life of Sir General Edward Bruce Hamley* 2 vols (Edinburgh: William Blackwood’s, 1895), I: 68.

<sup>4</sup> Hamley’s *Story Of the Campaign* was published between December 1854 and November 1855 in 11 instalments in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*. The first instalment was introduced as “the private letter of our correspondent.” See [Hamley], “Story of the Campaign,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 76.470 (December 1854), 419.

<sup>5</sup> Later, Hamley was the guru of the Crimean War invoked by Tennyson in “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade” (1885): “We spoke of what had been/Most marvelous in the wars your own/Crimean eyes had seen” (II. 10-13). See Afterword, pp. 210-11.

<sup>6</sup> Hamley chiefly reviewed two war volumes Richard Chenevix Trench’s *The Alma and Other Poems* (1855) and Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell’s joint volume *Sonnets on the War* (1855). His bias against and mockery of their experience as civilians is obvious. For instance, commenting on Trench’s Greek version of the poem “Alma,” he writes: “If the translation into Greek on the next page was made for the benefit of military readers, we must suggest to Mr. Trench that the slenderness of a war-kit forbids us to carry lexicons, and we must continue to avail ourselves of the vernacular.” He ends his review by sardonically welcoming Smith and Dobell to join the army: “We hope they may distinguish themselves in the war, so as to become in their turn the subjects of a sonnet, ode, epic, or any kind of poem except an elegy.” Hamley, “Poetry of the War,” pp. 532, 535.



critics took issue with the civilian poet's outdated and mediated experience of war and the resulting poetry precisely because their own conceptions of the role and genre had been shaped by earlier traditions of war poetry. These in turn were now being updated and contested by modern representations of war, especially telegraphic dispatches and photography. The civilian poet of the Crimean War was thus writing poetry in a complex cultural and literary milieu.

This thesis seeks to consider the artistic labour of a group of British civilian poets during the Crimean War and to provide fresh, historically nuanced readings of the cultural impact and legacy of their works. In doing so, it will examine the various challenges of composing war poetry at home, and the ways in which civilians reworked established traditions of war poetry in order to engage with the pressing issues emerging from contemporary newspaper reports. Where Crimean War poets have often been disparaged as arm-chair, ill-informed patriots, I argue that civilian poetic representation of the war was far more varied, and at times more profound, than has previously been assumed. I argue that this work constitutes a distinctive category of war poetry which should be studied in its own right, and that reading a civilian's war poem requires careful consideration of its engagement with the epistemological, ethical and formal implications of dealing with war and suffering at several removes.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, I contend that these matters impinged on its production and reception differently at different moments of the war. This introduction will begin by providing a brief and thus necessarily simplified overview of the Crimean War, then go on to examine and challenge what may be perceived as the early twentieth-century

---

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of British civilians' literary responses to distant conflicts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Mary A. Favret, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010).

negative critical reception of Crimean War poetry, and will conclude by explicating challenges which confronted civilian poets in their attempts to represent the war.

## II

The Crimean War was the major European conflict in which Britain engaged between her defeat of France at the battle of Waterloo (1815) and the outbreak of the First World War (1914).<sup>8</sup> It had its origins—according to European historiography—in the Western powers’ handling of the Eastern Question, that is, of the problems caused by the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The immediate outbreak of the war in 1853 was due to a religious dispute between Russian Orthodox and French Catholic monks over who had access to the Holy Lands in Palestine.<sup>9</sup> Seeing it as an opportunity to restore the glory of his uncle Napoleon Bonaparte and redraw the map of Western powers, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1853), then Emperor of France, supported the Catholic claims and confronted Russia. Czar Nicholas I (1853) insisted on the right to protect the Holy Lands and sent troops to the Danubian principalities of Wallachi and Moldavia (Turkish territories in present day Romania).<sup>10</sup> On March 27 1854, England declared war on Russia, forming an alliance with her old enemy France. Whilst the message of Queen Victoria which was read out in the House of Commons announced that England originally entered the war in order to safeguard “the dominions of the Sultan against the encroachments of Russia,”<sup>11</sup> the cause of

---

<sup>8</sup> For historical accounts of the Crimean War, see Philip Warner, *The Crimean War: A Reappraisal* (London: Arthur Baker, 1972); Alan Palmer, *The Banner of Battle: The Story of the Crimean War* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1987); Andrew Lambert and Stephen Badsey, *The War Correspondents: The Crimean War* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994); Trevor Royle, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War, 1854-1856*, (London: Abacus, 2000); Alastair Massie, *The National Army Museum Book of The Crimean War: The Untold Stories* (Oxford: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2004); Orlando Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade* (London: Penguin, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed account of the religious background of the Crimean War, see Figes, *Crimea*, pp. 1-22.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> “Message From the Queen—War With Russia,” HC Debates, 27 March 1854, vol. 131, col 1352-3, *Hansard Online 1803-2005*  
<<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1854/mar/27/message-from-the-queen-war-with->

England's military intervention, as the pro-war Prime Minister Lord Palmerston wrote it in a letter on September 25 1855, was to contain Russia's imperial expansion: "We went to war not so much to keep the Sultan and his Musselmen in Turkey, as to keep the Russians out of Turkey."<sup>12</sup>

The Crimean War was famously the first modern conflict documented by a group of civilian war correspondents who kept the reading public up to date with what was happening on the battle front. Between April and August 1854, there was a period of phony war marked by the Aberdeen coalition's diplomatic negotiations with Austria.<sup>13</sup> When in August Austria signed the "Four Points" treaty with the British and Franco allies, which put pressure on Russia, the latter evacuated her forces from the Balkans.<sup>14</sup> In response to the public's enthusiasm for war, already aroused by the press, the British government pursued the aim of destroying Sebastopol, the Russian naval base in the Crimean peninsula, landing a force in Eupatoria in September 1854. The first three months of Britain's military campaign in the Crimea saw three major battles: the battle of Alma, (September 20), the allies' first military victory; the battle at the harbour Balaklava, (October 25), during which the famous Charge of the Light Brigade occurred; and the battle of Inkerman, (November 5), initiated by a Russian attack by night, resulting in a costly victory for the British and French allies.

While reports of the British soldiers' conduct in these battles inspired national pride and initially satisfied the public's expectations of the British lion's fight against the Russian bear at the start of the war, for the first time the nation was gradually confronted with the evidence of soldiers' suffering overseas. In the aftermath of the battle of Alma, the correspondents of *The Times* alerted the public to a shortage of

---

russia> [accessed June 2014].

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Figes, *Crimea*, pp. 400-01. This is of course the generally accepted version rather than an exhaustive account.

<sup>13</sup> For an account of the phony war, see Palmer, *The Banner of Battle*, pp. 66-79.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

medical supplies and staff for the wounded lying both on the battlefield and at the Scutari hospitals. On October 12 1854, it was through an article by Thomas Chenery, the correspondent in Constantinople that the public became aware of the chaotic medical regime within Scutari hospitals currently full of unattended wounded.<sup>15</sup> The crisis generated public debates about the availability and expertise of medical practitioners, including the army doctors and nurses. As part of the relief effort, the government initiated a series of charity funds and philanthropic projects aimed at alleviating the difficulties faced by the soldiers' families, including the establishment of the Patriotic Fund in 1854, reserved for the widows and orphans of those who died during the war. Propelled by these initiatives, Florence Nightingale arrived in Scutari accompanied by thirty-eight nurses on November 4 1854.

During the next stage of the war, from December 1854 to January 1855, the public attitude took a drastic turn, as the siege of Sebastopol become protracted and the British army was decimated not by the Russian enemy but by the harsh winter of 1854-55. William Howard Russell's dispatches to *The Times* exposed the plight of the common soldiers suffering from cholera, a lack of warm clothing and food supplies, physical exhaustion and other hardships, and laid the blame on the incompetence of the aristocratic governing classes and on the government's maladministration.<sup>16</sup> His accounts of the deplorable conditions of common soldiers provoked a public outcry and heated debate over an outdated military system currently operating on aristocratic rather than meritocratic principles. It was the public's demand that the government take responsibilities for the military disasters in the Crimea that led to the fall of the

---

<sup>15</sup> [Thomas Chenery], *The Times*, October 12 1854, 6.

<sup>16</sup> The commander-in-chief Lord Raglan bore the brunt of the attack and the Prime Minister Aberdeen was severely censured. For accessible accounts of William Russell Howard's role in the Crimean War, see Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York: Andre Deutsch, 1975); Alan Hankinson, *Man of Wars: William Howard Russell of The Times* (London: Heinemann, 1982).

Aberdeen coalition. On January 29 1855, a motion proposed by the radical MP John Arthur Roebuck that a select committee be formed to investigate the condition of the army and the conduct of the Aberdeen government was passed by 305 votes to 148; seeing the outcome as a vote of no-confidence in the government's leadership, Lord Aberdeen resigned and was replaced by Lord Palmerston.<sup>17</sup>

The allies' military operations in the spring and summer of 1855 were characterized by fierce bombardments of Sebastopol; trench warfare brought war-weariness to armies on all sides. The Russians' last unsuccessful attack on the Chernaia on August 16 1855 resulted in their evacuation of the city. In late August 1855 the allies launched a final bombardment capturing the Malakhov and the Redan; the allies then entered the city on September 12 1855. Although for the allies, the taking of Sebastopol was seen as a symbolic victory, the war did not officially end until the Treaty of Peace was signed in Paris on March 30 1856.

As the forgoing sketch suggests, public reaction shifted several times during the course of the war. What started out as a military expedition to defeat the Czar backed by public support became a protracted siege during which the initial excitement, national pride and self-complacency gave way to indignation at the ordeal of troops and disenchantment with the leadership of the governing classes. Significantly, the Crimean War was the first war that marked a changing attitude, in print and visual culture, to the rank-and-file soldier.<sup>18</sup> The correspondents' depiction of the inadequacy of aristocratic leaders and the consequent needless suffering of the soldiers not only raised public awareness of their welfare but also called into question

---

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed account of John Arthur Roebuck in the Crimean War, see Asa Briggs, *Victorian People : Some Reassessments of People, Institutions, Ideas, and Events, 1851-1867* (London: Odhams Press, 1954), ch.5 "John Arthur Roebuck and the Crimean War."

<sup>18</sup> See Figs, *Crimea*, p. 468 and Matthew Paul Lalumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Ann Arbor, MI: MUI Research Press, 1984), p. xxi.

their sacrifices for the nation.<sup>19</sup> England sent 98,000 soldiers and sailors to the Crimea, and lost 20,813; four in five died of sickness and disease rather than in action.<sup>20</sup> It was in response to this pressing concern for the hardships and social injustice endured by the common soldier that the Victoria Cross, the first medal awarded to individuals based on “the merit of conspicuous bravery” regardless of rank or class, was instituted on January 29 1856.<sup>21</sup>

### III

One of the gaps in modern accounts of the Crimean War is the role played by civilian poets, and their poetic responses. Of the large corpus of Crimean War poetry, Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (1854) is perhaps the only poem remembered by general readers of the twentieth-first century. It would be fair to say that Tennyson’s celebrated battle-piece has transformed a minor incident into one of the most iconic images of the Crimean War in popular memory, generating more scholarly debate than all other Crimean or Victorian war poems put together.<sup>22</sup> In Jon Stallworthy’s classic anthology *The Oxford Book of War Poetry* (1984), only 3 out of 259 war poems are concerned with the Crimean War—Tennyson’s “Charge” and Part III of *Maud* (1855) and “The Due of Dead” (published in *Punch* on October 28

---

<sup>19</sup> For instance, on January 15 1855, a leader of *The Times* asks: “What has become of the 54,000 Englishmen who have left our shores in the course of the last ten or eleven months? How many still remain alive? How many constitute the proportion which has suffered from actual conflict with the foe? How many have died from disease of various kinds as purely connected with maladministration as effect with cause? *The Times*, January 15 1855, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Figes, *Crimea*, p. 467.

<sup>21</sup> *The Times*, February 6 1856, 7. For a detailed account of the institution of the Victoria Cross, see Melvin Charles Smith, *Awarded for Valour: a History of the Victoria Cross and the Evolution of the British Concept of Hero* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> There have been several excellent articles on Tennyson’s “Charge.” See Edgar Shannon and Christopher Ricks, “‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’: The Creation of a Poem,” *Studies in Bibliography* 38 (1985), 1-44; Jerome McGann, “Tennyson and the Histories of Criticism,” in *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 173-203; and Trudi Tate, “On Not Knowing Why: Memorializing the Light Brigade,” in *Literature, Science, Psychoanalysis, 1830-1970: Essays in Honour of Gillian Beer*, ed. Helen Small and Trudi Tate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 160-80.

1854).<sup>23</sup> Yet as the bibliographical lists by Patrick Waddington (1995) and Cynthia Dereli (2003) clearly show, the Crimean conflict gave rise to an extraordinary outpouring of war poetry which evolved in form, theme and quality over the course of the war.<sup>24</sup>

Part of the reason this large poetic output has received such critical shrift in both academic studies and popular memory is that it has been written out of the accepted canon of British war poetry. In recent years Matthew Bevis has drawn attention to the emergence of “poetic oppositions” between Victorian and Modern war poetry, asserting that the “sense of Victorian war poetry as a synonym for victorious war poetry needs to be reconsidered.”<sup>25</sup> He explains: “[a]s the First World War comes to be seen as heralding a break between Victorian and modern conceptions of conflict, so a series of neat poetic oppositions emerges—the glorious verses the gruesome, the heroic versus the hellish, the romantic versus the realistic.”<sup>26</sup> I would add that such “poetic oppositions” were in large part constructed on and perpetuated by a perceived dichotomy between civilian and combatant representations of the war. In a sense, Hamley’s caricature of Crimean War poets as arm-chair, ill-informed jingoists was re-enacted by early twentieth-century critics in a different context.

Following the First World War, critics promoting soldier-poets’ anti-war poetry wrote off Victorian war poetry as “patriotic verse.” According to this new critical consensus, Victorian poets had glorified the conflict uncritically without attending to its horrors. In a 1919 book chapter entitled “Rupert Brooke and the War,” the critic

---

<sup>23</sup> See *The Oxford Book of War Poetry*, ed. Jon Stallworthy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 115-120.

<sup>24</sup> See the bibliographies of Crimean War poetry in Patrick Waddington, *Theirs But To Do and Die”: The Poetry of the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, 25 October 1854* (Nottingham: Astra Press, 1995), pp. 187-224 and Cynthia Dereli, *A War Culture in Action: A Study of the literature of the Crimean War Period* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 237-47. Waddington and Dereli’s bibliographies have been extremely helpful to me.

<sup>25</sup> Matthew Bevis, “Fighting Talk: Victorian War Poetry,” *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*, ed. Tim Kendall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

Arthur Waugh offered an account of the contrasting representation of war depicted by Victorian and Georgian poets:

The Victorians wrote of war as though it were something splendid and ennobling; but as a matter of fact they knew nothing whatever about it. The Georgian poets know everything there is to know about war, and they come back and report it to us as an unspeakable horror, maiming and paralyzing the very soul of man.<sup>27</sup>

John Peck, quoting this passage, observes: “Ever since Wilfred Owen’s ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’ encouraged us to set the honesty of his own vision against ‘The old Lie,’ this view has become a truism of poetry. And there is plenty of Victorian poetry that supports this impression.”<sup>28</sup> Waugh’s verdict, however, is founded on the epistemological assumption that war can only be comprehended and therefore depicted by those who have direct experience of warfare. The Victorian poets “knew nothing whatever about” war in that they did not have first-hand experience of the horror of war on the battlefield in the same way that soldier-poets of the First World War did.

The elevation of the status of soldier-poets by Waugh at the expense of civilian poets anticipates what James Campbell terms “Combat Gnosticism.” This Campbell theorizes as the ideological construction of war experience as secret knowledge available only to combatants, thereby silencing the voices of civilians.<sup>29</sup> In an essay addressing the hegemony of this ideology in criticism of First World War poetry (1999), Campbell contends that scholarship has failed to move beyond the ideology of combat experience as truth and simply replicated what ought to be critiqued. His main

---

<sup>27</sup> Arthur Waugh, *Tradition and Change* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1919), p. 150.

<sup>28</sup> John Peck notes that he chose not to discuss Crimean War poetry in favour of novels because of its “lack of originality,” adding that “so much of it seems little more than a string of patriotic slogans.” See John Peck, *War, the Army and Victorian Literature* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 1998), pp. 19, 21.

<sup>29</sup> James Campbell, “Combat Gnosticism: The Ideology of the First World War Criticism,” *New Literary History* 30 (1999), 203-15.



example of a scholarly work enacting and reinforcing the values of this ideology is Paul Fussell's seminal book *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975). Just as Campbell has shown that combat ideology renders male combatant poets' representation of their experience hegemonic, silencing the voices of female civilians, so the canon of First World War Poetry devalues and marginalizes those of civilian poets of the Crimean War.

#### IV

At the heart of the response of the civilian poet to the Crimean War was the question of legitimate knowledge: as civilians who did not participate in or even directly witness the conflict, how could they depict in poetry something that they did not experience?<sup>30</sup> Given the unprecedented news coverage of the war, one obvious answer was to rely on the correspondents' reports, soldiers' letters and witness narratives circulating in the press in order to understand what was happening at the front. It followed that civilian poets' experience of the war was largely shaped by their interpretations of these first-hand accounts. Like Tennyson's "The Charge," much Crimean War poetry involved civilian poets' reworking of newspaper texts. Critics such as Trudi Tate, Matthew Bevis and Stephanie Markovits have all recently drawn attention to the relationship between newspaper reportage and Crimean War poetry. In her book *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (2009), Markovits has made a case for the profound impact of journalism on literary representations of war:

The ascendancy of journalism [...] had consequences for practitioners of artistic representation in other modes [...] what might be called the pressure of the press changed the shape of novels, poems, and paintings about the war, either through

---

<sup>30</sup> Markovits phrases this question in slightly different terms: "how does one write without first-hand experience about a war that journalists and soldiers were recording from the thick of the action [...]" See Stefanie Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 125.

oppositional reaction to the dominant form, or by an attempt to accommodate its forces.<sup>31</sup>

This thesis will demonstrate that the Crimean War was not only the first “media war” but also a literary one. One fertile source of inspiration for Crimean War writing was war poetry itself. In seeking to interpret and make sense of the distant conflict, mid-century Victorian critics and poets alike turned to the established traditions and forms of war poetry inherited from a wide variety of sources— from Homer’s epics and Tyrtæus’ war songs in the classical period to the Bible, Shakespeare’s plays, and Thomas Campbell’s early nineteenth-century war poetry. As both the first and final chapter of this thesis will show, the classical warrior poet Tyrtæus and the Scottish poet Campbell could have been regarded by mid-century Victorians as the great fathers of war poetry; the conventions, motifs and diction of their works, familiar to educated mid-century readers, provided poets and writers a wealth of poetic resources with which to negotiate their experience of the war.

As an illustration of commentators’ use of the epic traditions of Homer one might note that it was commonplace to compare the siege of Sebastopol to that of Troy as a political critique of the war.<sup>32</sup> Hamley, for example, opens his review of war poetry by inviting readers to draw parallels between Greek heroes at Troy and Crimean officers before the camp of Sebastopol—“Fancy, reader, the son of Peleus, the white-haired Nestor, and the sage Ulysses, reading, towards the close of the first year of their sojourn before Troy, the first book of *The Iliad*, to be continued in parts

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> In December 1854, the reviewer of *London Journal* wrote: “This great siege, only paralleled in importance and magnitude by the sieges of Troy, Saguntum, Carthage and Saragossa, commenced on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October.” One month after the allies’ capture of Sebastopol, William Robson’s *The Great Sieges of History*, which begins with the siege of Bactra and Troy and ends with that of Sebastopol, was published. See “The Siege of Sebastopol,” *London Journal*, 20.510 (December 1854), 202; William Robson, *The Great Sieges of History* (London: G. Routledge and Co., 1855).

as a serial.”<sup>33</sup> The epic scene invoked by Hamley serves as a means to bridge the distance between home and the battlefield while foregrounding his unique literary and military status. In his modern version of the siege, Hamley is “the Crimean Achilles [who] reads the inspiring stanzas which tell of his own deeds in the last battle, before the blood has rusted on his bayonet.”<sup>34</sup> Yet, at the same time, when Hamley’s review appeared, *Punch*, a satirical magazine aimed at the middle and upper classes, used the analogy between the siege of Sebastopol and that of Troy to censure the incompetence and imbecility of the aged military leaders: “There is one important difference between the two sieges: in the latter there was but one Nestor among the besiegers; in the former there are many, but they unfortunately are Nestors in nothing but senility.”<sup>35</sup> These two Homeric echoes sharply distinguish the commentators’ differing political views of their respective government. Hamley was a noted opponent of press criticism of the prosecution of the war.<sup>36</sup> By contrast, *Punch* printed a series of cartoons, verse, and snippets satirizing the government and the military disasters it oversaw.

As we shall see, the ways in which civilian poets reworked the traditions and forms of war poetry to engage with the politics of the military campaign were intricately linked with their political affiliations, class backgrounds and emotional reactions to the newspaper reports. During the early phase of the war, from England’s declaration of war to the battle of Alma, most civilian poets including Martin Tupper, Franklin Lushington, Gerald Massey and a large number of anonymous broadside balladeers assumed the public role of patriotic poet, composing exhortative war

---

<sup>33</sup> [Hamley], “Poetry of the War,” p. 531.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 531.

<sup>35</sup> “Troy and Sebastopol,” *Punch* (May 3 1855), 179.

<sup>36</sup> In April 1855, one month before the publication of his review, he had defended the miserable condition of the army during the winter of 1854-55 from the press in “Exculpatory,” the fourth part of his *Story of the Campaign*. Also, for a discussion of the difference between Hamley’s accounts of the war and William Russell’s reports, see Markovits, pp. 48-49.

poems intended to advocate England's military intervention and stimulate readers' patriotic zeal for the conflict.<sup>37</sup> However, because of civilian poets' non-combatant status, such home-front responses came under scrutiny. As the news of casualties reached home in the wake of the battle of Alma, the civilian poet became ever more conscious of his role on the home-front as a spectator of soldiers' suffering. For instance, at the end of Westland Marston's poem "The Death-Ride: A Tale of the Light Brigade" (1854), he includes a note: "The preceding lines come less as one tribute [...] than as a relief to the mind of the writer [...]. What can we—mere spectators—give for homage? [...]. When our all is said, can we be as lavish even of praise as our heroes—of life?"<sup>38</sup> In lamenting the role of the civilian poet as a spectator of the suicidal charge and wondering about the effectuality of his home-front response in retelling and memorializing the sacrifice of the cavalrymen, the perplexed, anguished poet pinpoints an ethical dimension of civilian poetic representation. Susan Sontag memorably wrote that "Being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience, the cumulative offering by more than a century and a half's worth of those professional, specialized tourists known as journalists."<sup>39</sup> This modern experience originates in the civilian correspondent reports of the suffering of soldiers in the Crimea. Aware that civilian poets bore responsibility for the political implications of their artistic representation of the war, they began to address issues which impinged on the condition of the rank and file.

Increasingly, as will be demonstrated, writing war poetry at a distance from the scene of the war itself became less an attempt to declare one's love for the nation, to

---

<sup>37</sup> See Martin Tupper, *A Batch of War Ballads* (London: Bosworth, 1854); Franklin Lushington, *Points of War. I. II. III. IV* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1854) and Gerald Massey, *The Ballad of Babe Christabel, and other Lyrical Poems* (London: David Bogue, 1854). For anonymous broadside ballads, see Waddington's bibliography, pp. 214-18.

<sup>38</sup> The poem was reviewed in *The Athenaeum* (December 16 1854), 1522-23; Westland Martson, *The Death-Ride: A Tale of the Light Brigade* (London: Mitchell, 1855), p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 16.

arouse readers' patriotism, or to advocate the nation's military intervention, than an opportunity to commemorate the loss of soldiers, to call for the easing of their suffering, or to critique the military campaign as a whole. Noticeably, where the patriotic song played a prominent role in shaping the public's experience and perception of the conflict before the outbreak and during the early stage of the Crimean War, from early 1855, the civilian poet began to employ sophisticated, experimental poetic forms rather than lyrics to renegotiate the traditions of war poetry. They drew on a range of formal resources, including the sonnet, satire and dramatic monologue in order to create new kinds of documentary, questioning or even satirical war poetry. In the following chapters, I will discuss examples of these modes, including Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell's *Sonnets on the War* (January 1855), Tom Taylor's "Balaklava," published in *Punch* in February 1855, Robert Brough's *Songs of the Governing Classes* (June 1855), Tennyson's *Maud* (July 1855) and Dobell's *England in Time of War* (July 1856).

The first chapter of this thesis will look at the predicament of civilian poets and trace the construction and transformation of the archetypal warrior poet Tyrtaeus from the early nineteenth-century to the Crimean War. It will examine how classical legacies shaped certain mid-Victorians' conceptions of the role of war poet and how a widespread critique of home-front responses to the distant conflict helped to reconfigure a new cultural identity for the civilian poet. The second chapter considers the ways civilian poets reacted to broadsides of correspondents who were against the government's management of the war. While the traditional function of war song was to unite readers of all social classes in a time of national crisis, civilian poets writing in 1855 move from the imperial conflict in the Crimea to the class conflict at home, deploying various poetic techniques to challenge the governing classes. The third and

fourth chapters will be devoted to the contribution of two particular poets to the poetry of the Crimean War. While newspaper reports were filled with accounts of mutilated and dying soldiers which elicited outraged reactions from the public, many civilian poets displayed a tendency to euphemize the predicament of the suffering soldiers. The third chapter will discuss how Dobell confronted the problems of depicting soldiers' bodily pain through his experimentation with poetic forms in a group of poems dealing with wounded soldiers. If the war called for poetic reaction Tennyson, more than any other poet, was expected by the reading public to formulate an acceptable public response. The fourth chapter considers how, in his widely reviewed monodrama *Maud*, Tennyson rose to the challenge of writing a war poem in his role as Poet Laureate. It will also explore the ways in which Tennyson engaged with various components of earlier war poetry and deployed a poetic mode of echoing to provoke and challenge readers' interpretations of the civilian speaker. The final chapter investigates the influence of Campbell's early nineteenth-century works on Crimean War poets, with a particular focus on civilian poets' and artists' rewritings of Campbell's dream-vision war poem "The Soldiers' Dream."

## Chapter 1

### “Sit[ting] at Home at Ease”: The Victorian Tyrtæus

Writing to Thomas Hughes on December 18 1854, the novelist and clergyman Charles Kingsley claimed:

As for a ballad — oh ! my dear lad, there is no use fiddling while Rome is burning. I have nothing to sing about those glorious fellows, except ‘God save the Queen and them.’ I tell you the whole thing stuns me, so I cannot sit down to make fiddle rhyme with diddle about it—or blundered with hundred like Alfred Tennyson. He is no Tyrtæus.<sup>40</sup>

Deriding the civilian poet as “fiddling while Rome is burning,” recalling Nero’s proverbial indifference to human suffering and national crisis, Kingsley declares that he has “nothing to sing about those glorious fellows” and he “cannot sit down to make fiddle rhyme with diddle about it.” He singles out the Poet Laureate’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” (which first appeared in *The Examiner* on December 9 1854), as a target for his criticism. For Kingsley, Tennyson’s rhyme “blundered” and “hundred” had no bearing on the distant conflict. In order to dismiss Tennyson’s poetic output as second-rate he invokes the figure of Tyrtæus, the Greek martial poet of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., whose war songs inspired the Spartan army’s defeat of their enemy during the Second Messenian war, to suggest that the role of war poet should consist less in the artistic labour of rhyme than in actual physical participation in the conflict. Unlike Tyrtæus, Tennyson was viewed as the epitome of the domesticated poet ill-suited to writing a war poem.

When William Cox Bennett published his *War Songs* in June 1855 with a dedication to Kingsley, the latter replied: “As for battle-songs, I cannot write them, for

---

<sup>40</sup> Charles Kingsley, letter to Thomas Hughes, December 18 1854, in *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life*, edited by His Wife [Frances Kingsley], 2 vols (London: Henry S. King and Co., 1877), I: 434.

I have never been in a battle. I must have felt the cannon fever, and seen men drop at my side (not to mention starvation, cold, defeat, and the rest of the devils) before I can put them into words.”<sup>41</sup> Kingsley’s belief that only first-hand experience can legitimize poetic depiction of war is demonstrated in an episode of his post-Crimean War novel *Two Years Ago* (1857), in which the doctor hero Tom Thurnall encourages the sickly poet Elsley Vavasour to go to Constantinople to become a real war poet: “Come along, and tell people what it’s all really like. There will be a dozen Cockneys writing battle songs [...] who never saw a man shot in their lives.”<sup>42</sup> Vavasour concurs wholeheartedly: “It’s a grand thought! The true war poets, after all, have been warriors themselves.”<sup>43</sup> This episode, reasserting the role of warrior poet and the importance of a poet’s direct experience of war constitutes Kingsley’s indirect attack on all the civilian poets of the Crimean War and their works.<sup>44</sup>

Kingsley was the most outspoken man of letters to self-censor his poetic response and to promulgate the view that civilians did not have the credentials to respond to the war in verse. His view, indeed, came to be institutionalised in the history of English language: the *OED* quotes Vavasour’s heartfelt approval that a true war poet must be a warrior for the second instance of the use of the term “war poet.”<sup>45</sup> By contrast, *OED*’s first and third examples of the term “war poet” are references to

---

<sup>41</sup> Bennett’s dedication in the volume reads: “To The Reverend Charles Kingsley, These Songs Are Dedicated in Admiration of the Beauty and Power of the Too Few Lyrics with Which He has Enriched Our Literature.” See William Cox Bennett, *War Songs* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1855).

<sup>42</sup> Charles Kingsley, *Two Years Ago* (London: Macmillan, 1898; first published in 3 vols in February 1857), pp. 398-99.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Martin discusses the tensions between Kingsley and Tennyson after the former’s publication of *Two Years Ago*, remarking that “Tennyson was told and believed that Vavasour was a caricature of himself.” He quotes Rev. F. D. Maurice’s letter of October 16 1858, “If Kingsley—as Tennyson has been told—meant to strike at him in his Vavasour, he never made a greater blunder.” See Martin, *The Dust of Combat*, pp. 162-64.

<sup>45</sup> “War Poet.” *OED Online* (Oxford UP), December 2013.  
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/225589?redirectedFrom=war+poet#eid110471518>> [accessed June 10 2014]



reviewers' eulogies of Sir Walter Scott and Wilfred Owen in the context of the post-Napoleonic Wars and the First World War respectively.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, if Kingsley's critique of the civilian poet reflects a dominant strand of mid-century reception of Crimean War poetry, one that reinforces Hamley's military perspective, there emerged a number of divergent views during the course of war, positions that challenged the notion that a civilian poet was not qualified to depict the war, leading to today's popular conception of Victorian war poets as ill-informed arm-chair jingoists.

In May 1856, two months after the war ended, an article entitled "Street-Ballads of the War" appeared in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature* in which the reviewer observed that due to the technological and military innovations brought about by the war such as "gun-power, steam, [and] the Minié rifle," "the position of the war-poet is very different from what it used to be":

Tyrtaeus no longer goes forth with the army to the fight, or attunes his lyre to the crash of the battle-field; he stays at home, and receives his inspiration per electric-telegraph. He has, therefore, greater opportunities for reflection, and is more of a moralist and a philosopher than in days of yore.<sup>47</sup>

Unlike Kingsley, who mentions Tyrtaeus in order to criticize what he perceives as the physical inactivity of civilian poets and their lack of poetic output, the *Chambers* critic reconfigures the marching warrior minstrel as a philosopher or a moralist reading the "electric-telegraph" at home. For this critic, civilian poets had played a more distinctive role in the conflict than had previously been realized: their role was not to incite men to battle but to reflect on the moral-philosophical dimensions of the

---

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* The *OED* quotes from *Blackwood's* (1818) and *N.Y. Times* (1921): "War, as he [Scott] describes it, is a noble game, a kingly pastime. He is the greatest of all War-Poets"; "The war made him [Owen] a poet...and it is, perhaps, a not unreasonable prediction that, as the years drift by, he will eventually be known as *the* war poet."

<sup>47</sup> "Street-Ballads of the War," *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature* (May 1856), 306.

war. When and how did the role of civilian poets of the Crimean War undergo such a transformation? How did the emergence of this newly conceived identity impinge on poetic responses to the conflict?

In this chapter, I intend to answer these questions by tracing the construction of a “Tyrtaeon” literary tradition from the Napoleonic wars to the mid-Victorians’ revision and rewriting of it during the Crimean War. Despite the disagreements between Kingsley and the *Chambers* critic, both understood the role of civilian poets and the function of civilian poetry through the lens of literary traditions associated with Tyrtaeus, traditions which assumed the foreknowledge of their readers. In a 1994 study focusing on the relationship between the warrior ideal of Tyrtaeus and Tennyson’s “The Charge” and *Maud*, Linda Dowling describes Tyrtaeus’ “reappearance” as “sudden and shocking,” suggesting that “The Crimean War itself belonged not to the world of Tyrtaeus at all but to the incomparably more complicated, bureaucratic world of modern war.”<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Stephanie Markovits, citing Goldwin Smith’s reference to Tyrtaeus (in an 1855 review of *Maud*) comments that “the martial poet—has been domesticated” to stress the poetic challenges facing civilian poets.<sup>49</sup> While Dowling and Markovits have highlighted the obsolescence of the classical legacy of Tyrtaeus in the Crimean War, they do not investigate the impact of the Tyrtaeon tradition on the civilian poet and mid-Victorians’ changing conception of the civilian poet’s role. As the allusions to Tyrtaeus cited by Hamley,<sup>50</sup> Kingsley and the *Chambers* critic suggest and the rest of this chapter will show, in debating and reimagining the role of civilian poets and the function of their poetic output, mid-Victorian critics frequently harked back to literary figures and traditions

---

<sup>48</sup> See Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 49, 51.

<sup>49</sup> See Markovits, *The Crimean War*, p. 127.

<sup>50</sup> See Introduction, p. 1.

emerging during and after the Napoleonic wars for their own point of comparison, especially the semi-mythological Tyrtaeus.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, it will proffer a brief but dynamic history of the ways in which a group of early nineteenth-century translators and poets constructed and negotiated the poetic tradition of Tyrtaeus shortly before and during the Napoleonic wars. It will go on to discuss the civilian poet's reaction to the Crimean War from the early months of 1854 to the battle of Alma, analyzing the ways in which poets embraced the traditions of Tyrtaeus while drawing on British war songs to celebrate Britain's military campaign, and will highlight the problems inherent in such patriotic responses as those suggested by a *Punch* review of war poetry.<sup>51</sup> The third section will look at civilian poetic reaction from the battle of Alma to the end of 1854. It will examine a variety of critiques of the phenomenon of civilians composing patriotic poetry at home, critiques drawn from correspondents' reports of war and civilian poets' refashioning of their roles as portrayed in their works. In response to a widespread skepticism of civilians' legitimate knowledge of war and to the unprecedented newspaper coverage of soldiers' suffering, Victorian poets set out to rework the tradition of Tyrtaeus inherited from the early-nineteenth century predecessors, self-consciously refashioning their role at home and readdressing the function of their poetic efforts. This chapter will argue that in so doing, a new identity for war poet was being forged during the Crimean War: one characterized not by a warrior poet's direct engagement with the war, and capacity to arouse readers' martial enthusiasm, but by a civilian's critical distance from the spectacle of the drama, and capacity to engage in poetic form with the ethical questions raised by newspaper reports being received back home at the time.

---

<sup>51</sup> "Our Patriotic Poets," *Punch* (March 18 1854), 110.

“Of the Elegies of Tyrtaeus, the Translator hath never seen an English version. He is acquainted with no Predecessor” declared Rev. Richard Polwhele in the preface of his 1786 edition of Tyrtaeus’ war songs.<sup>52</sup> Polwhele’s highly-acclaimed English version, which contains four war elegies translated from the fragments of Tyrtaeus, was published at a time when a satisfying English translation of Tyrtaeus was inaccessible to the educated.<sup>53</sup> As the reviewer for *Gentleman’s Magazine* put it in 1787, “as we do not recollect any translation of this celebrated poet, we shall insert one of his Elegies in our poetical department; which our classical readers will accept as specimen of Mr. Polwhele’s abilities as a translator.”<sup>54</sup> In translating Tyrtaeus’ four elegies, Polwhele wrote that he had sought to represent the original work faithfully.<sup>55</sup> His edition of Tyrtaeus’ war songs was the most-reprinted one in the nineteenth-century (first published in 1786 and reprinted in 1791, 1792, 1853 and 1873).<sup>56</sup> It revived the non-Greek-reading public’s interest in the figure of Tyrtaeus and his exhortative war songs.<sup>57</sup> Consider Polwhele’s translation of the first elegy for

---

<sup>52</sup> Polwhele noted that his translation of Tyrtaeus’ war elegies was based on the Greek text published by Robert and Andrew Foulis in 1759. See *Tyrtaeus, Spartan Lessons: or, the Praise of Valour; in the Verses of Tyrtaeus; an Ancient Athenian Poet, Adopted by the Republic of Lacedaemon, and Employed to Inspire Their Youth with Warlike Sentiments* (Glasgow: printed by Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1759); Theocritus, *The Idyllia, Epigrams, and Fragments, of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, with the Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Translated from the Greek into English Verse. To which are Added, Dissertations and Notes*, Trans by the Rev. Richard Polwhele (Exeter: R. Thorn [etc.], first published in 1786), pp. 9, 11.

<sup>53</sup> An anonymous translator published an English translation of Tyrtaeus’ elegies in 1761. Several reviewers referred to but did not think highly of it. For instance, one reviewer commented: “The Versification is too weak, too languid, and destitute both of the spirit and the pathos of the original.” See unsigned review of *Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Translated into English Verse; with Notes and the Original Text*, *Montly Review* (January 1762), 58; *Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Translated into English Verse; with Notes and the Original Text* (London: Tho. Payne, 1761).

<sup>54</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 57.5 (May 1787), 428.

<sup>55</sup> Polwhele noted in the preface that “every copy ought to preserve the character of its original.” See Polwhele, *Elegies of Tyrtaeus*, p. 9

<sup>56</sup> For a survey of the myriad English translations of Tyrtaeus’ war elegies circulating in the nineteenth-century, see [William Maginn] “The Martial Elegies of Tyrtaeus, *Fraser’s Magazine* 66 (June 1835), 621.

<sup>57</sup> For instance, Polwhele’s translation of Tyrtaeus was in circulation in an anthology published in 1853, just before the Crimean War. See *The Idylls of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, and the War-Songs of Tyrtaeus, Literally Translated into English Prose by The Rev. J. Banks* (London:

instance. The Greek poet begins by announcing that for a man all seemingly enticing male attributes and possessions are pointless

If his soul thirst not for the martial field;

Meet not the fury of the rushing host,

Nor bear o'er hills of slain the untrembling shield. (II. 14-16)<sup>58</sup>

In this passage, “the untrembling shield” held by a hoplite, an armed Greek soldier-citizen, in a phalanx, embodies a man’s duty for his community. It is his martial duty to fight on the battlefield and die for his community which makes him a good citizen and wins him immortal fame: “This— this is virtue: This— the noblest Meed/That can adorn our Youth with fadeless Rays” (II. 17-18).

Paradoxically, though Polwhele rescued the poetic traditions of Tyrtaeus from obscurity by making accessible to the reading public an English translation of the war songs, he actually announced the death of the modern Tyrtaeus in the contemporary world. In the biographical account of Tyrtaeus, he recounts with some incredulity how a “lamed, and deformed” poet sent by “the Oracle” to lead the Spartans during the second Messenian war in the 7<sup>th</sup> B.C inspired them to victory through the language of song.

He sung a War-Song! Military Glory and manly Fortitude re-echoed at every  
Pause! The Spirit of Heroism was universally rekindled; and every Bosom  
throbbed for War! Every Eye Sparkled with anticipated Triumph! The  
SPARTANS rushed to Battle, and conquered!<sup>59</sup>

Polwhele’s use of exclamation mark in this passage conveys both his astonishment and disbelief at the miraculous story of Tyrtaeus. While he is able to rationalize the

---

Bell and Daldy, 1873; 1<sup>st</sup> pub. 1853), pp. 337-43.

<sup>58</sup> Polwhele, “Elegy the First,” in *Elegies of Tyrtaeus*, p. 291. Further references to poems in this edition will be internally cited by line number.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

effects of Tyrtaeus' war songs by remarking that "[t]hey seem authenticated by concurrent Testimonies" and that "[i]n ancient Times, indeed, the combined Character of the Warrior and the Poet was no very extraordinary Phenomenon," he concludes that "the Influence and the Glories of the Poet are past" and that "the modern Bard is a feeble Being, a solitary Character."<sup>60</sup> Polwhele's comment underlines the fundamental differences between the civilian poet and Tyrtaeus. Perhaps the only succeeding poet who can be regarded as a modern Tyrtaeus was Lord Byron, who was also a lamed poet championing the independence of Greeks. Yet despite their similarities, in 1809, Byron told his friend that "If my songs have produced the glorious effects you mention, I shall be a complete Tyrtaeus; —though I am sorry to say I resemble that interesting harper more in his person than in his poesy."<sup>61</sup> As we shall see, whilst Polwhele's translation of Tyrtaeus' war elegies sparked a revival of the poetic tradition of Tyrtaeus during the French Revolutionary and the Napoleonic wars (1792-1815), the inherent tensions between a civilian poet's lack of combat experience and his imitations of Tyrtaeus' war songs would break out during the Crimean war.

In 1795, Henry James Pye, Poet Laureate at that time, published *The War-Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Imitated: And Addressed to The People of Great Britain*, announcing at the start of the volume: "The chief deviation of these elegies from the original, consists in the application of the exhortations to my countrymen, and [...] in adapting the instructions that Tyrtaeus gives to the different troops of the Grecian army, to those that compose our own."<sup>62</sup> He added: "The English reader, who wishes to see how far this has led me from the letter of the Athenian poet, may have complete

---

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>61</sup> *Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* ed. Thomas Moore (London: Murray, 1844), p. 74.

<sup>62</sup> Tyrtaeus, *The War-Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Imitated: And Addressed to The People of Great Britain. With Some Observations on the Life and Poems of Tyrtaeus*, by Henry James Pye (London: T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies, 1795), p. 19.

satisfaction by consulting the very faithful, and yet poetical translation by Mr. Polwhele.”<sup>63</sup> Pye was the first British poet who sought to perform the task of Tyrtaeus in the role of the Laureate, and to modernise and anglicize the Tyrtaean mode. In the opening of Tyrtaeus’ third elegy, Pye has replaced “Hercules’ unconquered race” in Polwhele’s version with “Britons [...] Of that unconquer’d race,” calling readers’ attention to the decisive battles in which England had defeated the French armies: “Think on the trophies, Creci [sic], Poitiers, gave,/Remember Agincourt’s illustrious plain.”<sup>64</sup> What Pye has attempted is to arouse readers’ martial consciousness by channelling Tyrtaean fervour via the public’s collective memories of the nation’s military history.

In contrast to Polwhele, who perceived that “Tyrtaeus hath a manner peculiar to himself” and that his “observation and expression were circumscribed by the necessity of the times,”<sup>65</sup> Pye found it appropriate to draw historical parallels, taking up the role of Tyrtaeus and urging Britons to defend themselves against the enemy. Given Pye’s public role as Laureate at the start of England’s war with France, it is interesting to note the reception and the effects of his modern Tyrtaean war songs. In 1804 John Young (1747-1820), a Professor of Greek at Glasgow University, who also published a rendition of Tyrtaeus’ war songs to excite readers’ patriotic sentiment for war, referred to Pye’s version as an “elegant one.”<sup>66</sup> Whilst many approved of Pye’s political response as an act of patriotism, some derided his imitations as farcical and, anachronistic, and still others condemned the political implications of his war songs as unethical and, problematic. Damning with faint praise, a commentator for *English*

---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>64</sup> Pye, “Elegy III,” lines 1-2, *The War-Elegies of Tyrtaeus*, p. 33.

<sup>65</sup> Polwhele, p. 296;

<sup>66</sup> See John Young, *Martial Effusions of Ancient Times; Addressed to the Spartan Hosts; to Excite Them to Valour and Discipline in their Conflicts with the Messenians; and Prescribed as Permanent Recitations by the Republic of Lacedemon, to Inspire their Youth with Warlike Sentiment. From the Fragments of Tyrtaeus* (London: J.Hatchard, 1804), p. viii.

*Review* wrote in 1795: “It was not unnatural, and it may even be considered as patriotic in the poet laureate, engaged as we are in a war...with such a nation as the French, by all his powers, to rouse the whole energy of every British mind and heart.”<sup>67</sup> The critic went on to say: “yet, in truth, to talk of kindling the martial ardour of Englishmen by versions or paraphrases of Tyrtæus, is highly visionary and extravagant.”<sup>68</sup> Pye, indeed, was famously lampooned by Thomas James Mathias in *The Pursuit of Literature*, a popular satire published anonymously in four parts between 1794 and 1797. In Mathias’ note to the line “With Spartan Pye lull England to repose,” he indicates that rather than rousing “reviewing generals” and “a board of general-officers” to martial spirits, a recital of Pye’s work would simply put them to sleep: the poems “were read aloud [...] and much was expected. But before they were half finished all the front ranks, and as many of the others as were within hearing, or *verse-shot*, dropped their arms suddenly, and were *all found fast asleep!!!*”<sup>69</sup>

A more serious poetic response to Pye’s use of Tyrtæus’ war songs is Joseph Fawcett’s “War Elegy, Better Suited to Our Circumstances than the War Elegies of Tyrtæus” (1795). Fawcett’s war elegy is based on an appalling incident recounted in a footnote: “The poor woman, having lost her husband in the war, and having implored relief at several doors in vain, in the town of Liverpool, in a fit of desperation, took her child [...] in the public street, and dashed its head against the wall [...]”<sup>70</sup> In this anti-Tyrtæan poem, he dramatizes the accusative voice of the imprisoned mother awaiting her death.

Here what but wolves, but wild destroyers dwell?

---

<sup>67</sup> *English Review* 25 (June 1795), 465.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Thomas James Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature. A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues. With Notes* (London: T. Becket, Pall Mall, 1798), p. 123.

<sup>70</sup> Joseph Fawcett, “War Elegy, Better Suited to Our Circumstances than the War Elegies of Tyrtæus,” *New Annual Register* (January 1795), 187-89.



They tore my husband from my helpless side

And, when the father in their battles fell,

A little bread his famish'd babe denied. (II. 61-64) <sup>71</sup>

“Here” refers to the homeland and the use of the third person plural— “they tore” and “their battles”—suggests that the mother has become estranged from the community.

While the “wolves” and “wild destroyers” she condemns allude to those who deceive her husband into leaving home at the expense of her family, they also include the civilian poet represented by Pye, reproducing Tyrtaeus’ war songs in order to animate men to join the war. The last two lines of this passage make clear that when the father died on the battlefield, the government did not provide for “his famish’d babe.”

Through the voice of the mother, Fawcett argues that those who wage war or glorify it without taking into account its consequences are those who are truly responsible for the death of her child. Fawcett’s war elegy thus undermines the traditions of Tyrtaeus by drawing readers’ attention to the domestic predicaments faced by soldiers’ families at home. Whereas Pye modernized Tyrtaeus’ war songs to excite readers’ patriotic sentiment and support of the conflict abroad, Fawcett’s aim in lamenting the suffering of the widowed woman who kills her baby was to provoke a public outcry and oppose uncritical militarism.

As we have seen, following the publication of Polwhele’s edition of Tyrtaeus’ four elegies, the outbreak of the Napoleonic wars witnessed multiple strands of responses to his war songs by translators and poets. On the one hand, civilian poets ranging from the Laureate Pye to the Professor of Greek Young embraced the classical legacy of Tyrtaeus anticipated mid-Victorian poets’ jingoistic responses in the early months of the Crimean War as seen in Franklin Lushington’s war lyrics. On the other

---

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

hand, Mathias' satirical portrait of Pye and Fawcett's war elegy illustrate the possibility of a more skeptical, less jingoistic reworking of the Tyrtaean legacy. This anti-Tyrtaean strand, I suggest, resurfaces in *Punch*'s "The Patriotic Poets" and *The Times*' reports which appeared in the aftermath of the battle of Alma.

## II

From the early months of 1854 to the allies' first major victory at the battle of Alma, many civilian poets and balladeers responded to newspaper coverage of the nation's preparations for war by assuming the role of Tyrtaeus, composing exhortatory lyrics intended to stimulate readers' patriotic sentiment and mobilize public support for war. Franklin Lushington, Tennyson's close friend and a fellow Cambridge Apostle from their university days, penned some of the most bellicose, jingoistic Crimean War poems, which appeared in newspapers, pamphlets and poetry collections throughout the war.<sup>72</sup> His "The Muster of the Guards," for instance, first published in *The Morning Chronicle* under the title "Tempo Di Marcia" on February 25 1854, was a popular and often-reprinted piece which commemorates the departure of the British regiments.<sup>73</sup> In February 1854, *The Times* featured a series of reports regarding the departure of regiments and Lushington's poem was probably based on accounts of the third of the Grenadier Guards, who marched to Waterloo Bridge and embarked at Southampton for Malta on the morning of February 22 1854.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Franklin Lushington's *Points of War* consist of four poems: "The Muster of the Guards," "The Fleet Under Sail," "Christos Voscross," and "Laissez Aller!" See Franklin Lushington, *Points of War. I. II. III. IV.* (Richard Clay, Bread Street Hill; first published in May 1854). Henry and Franklin Lushington, *La Nation Boutiquière & Other Poems Chiefly Political and Points of War* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1855).

<sup>73</sup> It was first published in *The Morning Chronicle* under the title "Tempo Di Marcia" on February 25 1854, and subsequently collected in *Points of War* in May 1854. See "Tempo Di Marcia," *The Morning Chronicle*, February 25 1854, 8.

<sup>74</sup> *The Times* noted: "The Grenadiers left the Waterloo station in two special trains, between Half-past 6 and 7 o'clock, reaching Southampton about 10, and embarked in the Ripon and Manilla [names of the ships] to the music of their own bands." It went on to say that "From St. George's Barracks to the terminus they were accompanied, at that early hour in the morning, by crowds of people, whose loud cheers proved the earnestness with which they wished them

Lushington's poem shows the ways in which a civilian poet draws on the recurrent phrases and images of existing war songs to commemorate the marching scene and to elicit readers' excitement and support for the government's military campaign. It starts with an anonymous civilian speaker awakened by a "watchman's warning" on an early "February morning" and "the martial trumpets blowing," signaling that "Tis the Grenadier Guards a-going—marching to the war."<sup>75</sup> The climactic scene that immediately follows is the poet's exhortations to spectators of the departing men.

Cheer, boys, cheer! till you crack a thousand throats;

Cheer, boys, cheer! to the merry music's notes:

Let the girls they leave behind them wave handkerchiefs and scarfs,

Let the hearty farewell ring through the echoing streets and wharfs;

Come—volley out your holloas—come, cheer the gallant fellows,

The gallant and good fellows, marching to the War. (II.13-18)<sup>76</sup>

In his poetic depiction of the marching scene, Lushington draws on an existing repertoire: "Cheers, boys, Cheers" (1852)—written by the Scottish song writer Charles Mackay and set to music by Henry Russell—and two British war songs "The girl I left behind me" (1758) and "The British Grenadiers," all of which were sung by the military bands during the departure of the British soldiers.<sup>77</sup> The first was so

---

<sup>75</sup> farewell." See "The Preparations for War," *The Times*, February 23 1854, 9.  
<sup>75</sup> "Muster of Guards," lines 1-6, in *Points of War*, p. 3. Further reference to this poem in this edition will be internally cited by line number.

<sup>76</sup> Compare Higginson's eyewitness account with Lushington's depiction of the marching scene. In his military memoir published in 1916, General George Higginson, who served as a Grenadier Guard during the Crimean war, recalled the enthusiastic reception they received from the crowd on the day: "Figures still in their night dresses waved handkerchiefs from the windows of houses by the way; the police with difficulty restrained the crowds which accompanied us along the pavement from breaking into the ranks to shake hands with the men as they passed along." General Sir George Higginson, *Seventy-One Years of a Guardsman's Life* (London: Smith, Elder Co, 1916), p. 79.

<sup>77</sup> As Timothy Gowing, who enlisted as a private of the Royal Fusiliers at the start of the Crimean War, recalled, "in marching out of the Barracks at Manchester to the railway station," the military band struck up "The British Grenadiers," "The Girl I left behind me," "We are going far away" and "Cheer, boys, Cheer!" Timothy Gowing, *A Soldier's Experience or a Voice from the Ranks* (Nottingham: Thos. Fobman & Sons, 1892), p. 11. For a detailed study of the history and

popular during the Crimean War that in the words of Lewis Winstock it “became almost a second national anthem.”<sup>78</sup> These songs were performed during the public spectacle of the marching of the troops and other occasions to hearten the departing soldiery, to rouse the spectators’ patriotism and to endorse the nation’s military campaign. It is interesting to note that while “Cheers, boys, Cheer” was originally written by Mackay as an emigration song encouraging youths to seek out their fortune in a foreign land,<sup>79</sup> Lushington borrows the refrain and rhythm of the song to recreate the departing scene and celebrate the men sailing for war. Also, familiar lines such as “the girls they leave behind” and “the gallant and good fellows” drawn from the other two war songs reinforce the traditional gender roles of men and women in times of war. By incorporating the lyrics of three popular war songs into his depiction of the marching scene, Lushington urges his readers to cheer for the departing soldiery and the government’s military campaign.

By contrast, Lushington’s “Laissez Aller” is a straightforward war poem that opens with the exhortation: “No more words:/Try it with your swords.”<sup>80</sup> In this piece, Lushington not only calls upon soldiers at the front to “Bear the battle’s brunt” (I. 20) but also addresses “you that stay at home” (I. 25):

Leave not a jot to chance, while you rest in quiet ease:

Quick! forge the bolts of death; quick! ship them o’er the seas:

If War’s feet are lame,

Yours will be the blame. (II. 27-30)

---

reception of British war songs, see Lewis Winstock, *Songs and Music of the Redcoats: A History of the War Music of the British Army 1642-1902* (London: Leo Cooper, 1970).

<sup>78</sup> Winstock, *Songs and Music of the Redcoats*, p. 168.

<sup>79</sup> The refrain of the song is as follows: “Cheer, boys, cheer! For country, mother country/Cheer, boys cheer! The willing strong right hand./Cheer! boys, cheer! There’s wealth in honest labour./Cheer! boys, cheer! For the new and happy land.” Quoted in *Jeffrey Richards, Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 339.

<sup>80</sup> “Laissez Aller!” lines 1-2, in *Points of War*, p. 20.

The rhyme “lame” and “blame” and Lushington’s emphasis on the poet’s feet makes evident that for him it is the civilian poet’s duty in wartime to evoke and maintain readers’ patriotic ardour through poetry. The pun on the civilian poet’s lamed and metrical feet also harks back to the tradition of Tyrtaeus: despite his physical deformities, the lamed poet helped the Spartans defeat the enemy through his miraculous war songs.

While Lushington’s two early war poems and many other less sophisticated jingoistic verses published at various stages of the war hark back to the traditions of Tyrtaeus in their attempts to exhort soldiers to die for the nation, from the very start of the war, commentators read such Tyrtaean mode of poetic responses with a profound skepticism. One of the first critiques can be seen in an article of *Punch* entitled “Our Patriotic Poets,” published on March 24 1854, just three days before England’s declaration of war.

Our pianoforte poets are all suddenly seized with a fit of patriotism and though continuing comfortably to ‘sit at home at ease,’ they are calling upon everybody to ‘Up with the standard of England,’ price half-crown; to give ‘Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue’—price two shillings; to ‘Unfurl the Flag’—post free for two dozen postage stamps— and to accomplish other valorous feats which are more difficult to do than to sing about, or to write about.<sup>81</sup>

The “pianoforte poets” this critic satirizes are the anonymous balladeers who wrote songs “at home” and performed them in “concert rooms,” often at fund-raising events for the coming war. The three songs quoted in this passage were all broadside ballads frequently sung during the Crimean War. “Up with the standard of England” is the title and refrain of a broadside which ends with “Tis for honour and justice we

---

<sup>81</sup> “Our Patriotic Poets,” *Punch* (March 18 1854), 110.

fight/So forward to conquer [sic] or die!/Then up with the standard” (II. 28-30).<sup>82</sup>

“Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue” is the refrain of a song entitled

“Britannia, The Pride of the Ocean” (1852).<sup>83</sup> The third “Unfurl the Flag” is the title

of another ballad beginning with “Unfurl the Flags of Liberty and teach the Czar to

read,/How France and England both combined can for the oppressed plead/Their

voices, like the thunder loud, shall echo far and wide” (II. 1-3).<sup>84</sup> Here, *Punch*’s

satirical attack on these impassioned balladeers (who “are all suddenly seized with a fit of patriotism”) suggests that their patriotic feelings are contrived for the moment

rather than genuine affectations. To the critic of *Punch*, because of the incongruity

between these balladeers’ patriotic rhetoric and their bodily experience of war at home,

the refrains of these songs have been emptied of their meanings. As we shall see, the

*Punch* critic condemns the patriotic poet through the phrase “sit at home at ease,” a

loaded one frequently employed by contemporary commentators on war poetry to

challenge civilian knowledge and bodily experience of war.<sup>85</sup>

The phrase alludes to a celebrated seventeenth-century sea song by the ballad writer Martin Parker (1624-1647):

Ye Gentlemen of England,

Who sit at home at ease

---

<sup>82</sup> “Up with the standard of England,” quoted in *English Ballads* through National Library of Scotland, <<http://digital.nls.uk/english-ballads/pageturner.cfm?id=74893657&mode=transcription>> [accessed June 10 2014].

<sup>83</sup> “Britannia, The Pride of the Ocean,” *The Weekly Review and Dramatic Critic*, (September 10 1852), 31; A version of this song appeared in a broadside dated September 6 1856. See “Britannia, The Pride of the Ocean,” in *Word On the Street* through National Library of Scotland. <<http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/16132>> [accessed June 10 2014].

<sup>84</sup> “Unfurl the Flags,” quoted in *Broadside Ballads Online*, <<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/static/images/sheets/25000/21173.gif>> [accessed June 10 2014].

<sup>85</sup> In the context of Tennyson’s “Charge,” when discussing a leader of *The Times* on November 13 citing “those Gentlemen of England who live at home at ease,” Christopher Ricks and Edgar Shannon have noted that the phrase “was coloured by Henry V’s speech before Agincourt: ‘and gentlemen in England, now a-bed?’” See the note of Christopher Ricks in *Tennyson*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1989), p. 329. Rpt in Edgar F. Shannon and Christopher Ricks, ““The Charge of the Light Brigade””: The Creation of a Poem,” *Studies in Bibliography*, 38 (1985), 1-44.

Ah, little do you think upon  
the dangers of the sea!  
Give ear unto the mariners,  
And they will plainly show  
All the cares, and the fears  
When the stormy winds do blow.<sup>86</sup>

Parker's song was in turn popularized by Thomas Campbell's naval ode, "Ye Mariners of England" (1801), which was modeled on the former (Campbell acknowledged Parker's debt in the title of his poem "Alteration of the Old Ballad, 'Ye Gentlemen of England'").<sup>87</sup> Since the publication of Campbell's reworking of Parker's sea song, writers had frequently employed Parker's opening lines as a way of addressing a specific group of people considered as ill-informed about the reality of social, political, and religious issues.<sup>88</sup> Just as Parker contrasts "the gentlemen who sit at home at ease" with the mariners who face "the dangers of the sea," so *Punch* weighs "pianoforte poets" against soldiers risking their lives on the battlefield, calling into question the former's knowledge of the experience of warfare. Another important connotation of critics' use of the phrase "sit at home at ease" in the context of the war is their disparagement of civilian bodily experience of war in the domestic sphere.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Martin Parker, quoted in [Charles Mackay], "English Songs: Ancient and Modern" *Nineteenth Century* 16.94 (December 1884), 970. Hyder E. Rollins suggested that Parker might have revised the original version and the latter writers have changed the beginning of the poem. See "Ye Gentlemen of England," *British Minstrel* 3:81 (January 1845), 34; Hyder E. Rollins, "Martin Parker: Ballad-Monger," *Modern Philosophy* 16.9 (January 1919), 119.

<sup>87</sup> Parker's poem is quoted and acclaimed by the Scottish song writer Charles Mackay in his 1884 review of English songs as one "not only excellent in itself, but entitled to double gratitude for having served Thomas Campbell as the model on which he built 'Ye Mariners of England,' one of the noblest songs ever written in language." See, Mackay, "English Songs," p. 970; [Thomas Campbell] "Alteration of the Old Ballad, 'Ye Gentlemen of England'" *Morning Chronicle* (January 1801), 233-34.

<sup>88</sup> For example, Charles Reading the protagonist in John Henry Newman's *Loss and Gain: A Tale of a Convert* (1848) asks: "who is the more likely to be right, —he who has given years, perhaps, to the search of truth [...] or they 'the gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease.'" See John Henry Newman, *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert* (London: James Burns, 1848), pp. 328-29.

<sup>89</sup> The *OED*'s first cited reference to the term "stand at ease" comes from Charles James' *A New*

This point is brought to the fore by its comparison with the military term “stand at ease.” Whereas the command “to stand at ease” is “[t]o be allowed certain indulgence with regard to bodily position, with or without arms,”<sup>90</sup> to claim that civilians “sit at home at ease” is not only to criticize their lack of combat experience but unrestrained indulgence of their sitting posture. *Punch* thus satires the civilian poet sitting and indulging in physical pleasures at home while asking others to stand up and sacrifice their lives for the nation. This is part of the reason why Kingsley insists that he could not “sit down” to compose poetry at home.

*Punch*’s “Patriotic Poets” highlighted the problems arising when the civilian poet take up the role of Tyrtæus, problems compounded by newspaper correspondents’ dispatches from the seat of war. While *Punch*’s critique of civilian poets was echoed by other commentators on civilian poetry in the course of the war, it was during the aftermath of the battle of Alma, as correspondents sent home telegraphic dispatches which drew attention to the misery of the wounded that civilian poets began to reconsider their wartime position and the function of poetry.

### III

For the first time reading correspondents’ telegraphic dispatches bridged the epistemological gap between home and battlefield, allowing the public to envisage in graphic detail the distant conflict almost as it was happening. One important implication of bringing home the physical violence of combat was its impact on civilians’ affective experience of war. “How painfully exciting, this war! [...].

Everything is published in our papers, bad and good, for us and against us, private

---

and *Enlarged Military Dictionary* (1802). According to James, “Ease, in a military sense, signifies a prescribed relaxation of the frame, from the erect and firm position which every well-dressed soldier should observe.” See “Ease, n.5.” *OED Online* (Oxford UP), December 2013. <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/59073?redirectedFrom=stand+at+ease>> [accessed February 28 2014].

<sup>90</sup> “Ease,” Charles James, *A New and Enlarged Military Dictionary; or, Alphabetical Explanation of Technical Terms* (London: T. Egerton, 1802).



letters, public news, —it is quite fearful [...]” exclaimed Ana Jameson the author of *Sisters of Charity* (1855) in a letter of October 20 1854.<sup>91</sup> If “Everything is published in our papers” suggests an omnipotent knowledge of war, “painfully exciting” and “fearful” also suggest that the consumption of newspapers turned readers into voyeurs of distant suffering: readers could now experience the excitement and horror of war in the domestic sphere.

Reading news of soldiers’ bodily sufferings, however, also made civilians feel a great anxiety, and, along with this sense of involvement, a concern as to what they could do to contribute to the war effort. The main reason why Kingsley could not “sit down to” write a war poem and condemned those who did so has to do with anxieties regarding his sense of masculine self-worth.<sup>92</sup> In a letter of October 19, having told his friend F. D. Maurice that he had been “living on the newspapers,” Kingsley lamented: “I am sometimes very sad; always very puzzled [...]. This war would have made me half mad, if I had let it. It seemed so dreadful to hear of those Alma heights being taken and not be there.”<sup>93</sup> Kingsley was “not there” but he knew everything about the war through reading newspaper reports. This knowledge of the war and awareness of physical inactivity disturbed him, generating frustration and hysteria. His wife Fanny described the war as “a dreadful nightmare, which haunted him day and night.”<sup>94</sup> Both the ambivalent responses of Jameson and Kingsley demonstrate the ways in which newspaper reports problematized the civilian poet’s role at home.

In what follows, I will first underscore the first historical moment of the reading

---

<sup>91</sup> Anna Brownell Murphy Jameson, letter to Otilie von Goethe, October 20 1854, in *Letters of Anna Jameson to Otilie von Goethe*, ed. George Henry Needler (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 247.

<sup>92</sup> For a discussion of Kingsley’s literary responses to the Crimean War, see Louise Lee, “Deity in Dispatches: The Crimean Beginnings of Muscular Christianity,” in *Religion, Literature, and the Imagination: Sacred Worlds*, ed. Mark Night and Louise Lee (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 57-74.

<sup>93</sup> Kingsley’s letter to F. D. Maurice, October 19 1854, in *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life*, I: 433.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439.

public's awareness of the distant suffering in the Crimea before turning to civilian poets' revision of their roles at home.

It was a report in *The Times* printed on October 12 1854 that provoked the reading public's first emotional responses to the distant suffering. In this report, Thomas Chenery, the Constantinople correspondent for *The Times*, disclosed the suffering of the uncared-for wounded (transported from the battlefield of Alma to the Scutari Hospital) due to the shortage of medical supplies and staff. Claiming that "there are no nurses at Scutari" and "the British government has not even found linen to bandage their wounds," he called on the public to donate material comforts and money for the wounded soldiers.<sup>95</sup> The effects of the report were immediate and far-reaching: it initiated a series of private and official philanthropic projects including the establishment of the Patriotic Fund, reserved for the widows and orphans of the soldiers who fell during the war, and Florence Nightingale's nursing expedition.<sup>96</sup>

In seeking to arouse the public's sympathy for the wounded and call for their philanthropic aid, Chenery started his report with a telling critique of their consumption of newspaper reports of the war:

Every man of common modesty must feel, not exactly ashamed of himself, but somehow rather smaller than usual, when he reads the strange and terrible news of the war. Here we are sitting by our firesides, devouring the morning paper in luxurious solitude, lazily tracing the path of conquest on one of

ARROWSMITH'S best maps, counting the days of Sebastopol, and imagining

---

<sup>95</sup> [Thomas Chenery] *The Times*, October 12 1854, 6.

<sup>96</sup> In the following days, *The Times* printed a profusion of letters addressing Chenery's philanthropic project and the lack of doctors and nurses at the military hospitals. On October 13, the first letter that appeared in the columns of *The Times* came from Sir Robert Peel, the son of former Prime Minister, who not only advocated Chenery's proposal but launched a public subscription campaign for the wounded. See Robert Peel, Montague Gore, James Stiff and A. D., letter to the editor, *The Times*, October 13 1854, 6.

the look of the Czar as he finds that the key of the Euxine is wrenched from his hands. To us, war is a spectacle, and, if we happen to have no friends engaged in it, a very amusing spectacle [...] on the whole, the suffering is sadly vicarious. These poor fellows are going through innumerable hardships [...] not for any quarrel of their own, but to satisfy our high feelings of honour, and save us the trouble of a personal vindication. We indulge in all the sentiment of the affair; we revel in a chivalrous detestation of Russia and compassion for the Turk; we are ruling the destinies of earth; we are weighing in the balance the mightiest Power of modern times, and pronouncing its doom. All this is very awful but very interesting, and though the drama has hitherto been tedious, the catastrophe must now be at hand.<sup>97</sup>

“Every man of common modesty must feel” draws readers’ attention to an ethical obligation in civilian response to news of soldiers’ sufferings. The phrase “smaller than usual” suggests that one effect of perusing such reports is to compromise a civilian’s sense of masculinity in the domestic sphere in wartime as seen in Kingsley’s case. Yet contrary to this ethical response, Chenery satirizes the privileged middle-class man who gratifies his war fantasies and bolsters his masculinity at home in an imaginative space constructed by newspapers. The map of the world he uses to navigate the “conquest of the army” symbolizes a kind of imperial spectatorship of war. The words “devouring,” “luxurious,” and “lazily” conjure up the image of a well-to-do middle-class paterfamilias who indulges in the domestic comforts of home while envisaging himself as a combatant of the war and the ruler of his world. He denounces this paterfamilias by using the theatrical terms “spectacle,” “drama” and “catastrophe” to make the point that the reading public have experienced the war

---

<sup>97</sup> [Thomas Chenery], *The Times*, October 12 1854, 6.

vicariously as though watching a drama at the expense of soldiers' sufferings. He goes on to protest that

Soldiers and sailors are not the savage, murderous, raving, and destroying creatures they are sometimes imagined. Till they are dying of hunger and thirst, or have seen their comrades falling all round them, they are the merest sheep in the world. The wolves are those who stay at home, blow up the angry passions of the war, and feed its perpetual resentments.<sup>98</sup>

Though he does not identify who is to blame for feeding the public with unrealistic assumptions of the war and the misrepresentation of the rank and file, it is clear that "those who stay at home" includes civilian poets assuming the role of Tyrtæus: the passage recalls *Punch*'s criticism of patriotic poets, while the imagery of the wolves is a direct echo of "the wolves [...] the destroyers, who tore my husband from my helpless side" in Fawcett's anti-Tyrtæan poem. Taken together, Chenery's use of sheep and wolves imagery implies an ethical critique of civilian poets writing patriotic poetry. Such misrepresentation is responsible not just for prejudice against but actually for the physical suffering of the serving soldiers. Like his early-nineteenth century predecessor Fawcett, who undermined Pye's modern adaptation of Tyrtæus' war songs by reiterating that war "is a subject, upon which fact surpasses all the power of fiction,"<sup>99</sup> Chenery, in the next paragraph of the article, debunks the heroic image of the soldiers glorified by patriotic poets, informing readers of the medical maladministration in the hospital.

---

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> In his 1798 collection of the poem "War Elegy, Best Suited to Our Circumstances than the War Elegies of Tyrtæus," Fawcett appended the words: "Founded on a Recent Tragical Fact" to the title page and proclaimed in an advertisement that war is "a subject, which needs no help from imagination to rouse and agitate the breast: a subject, upon which fact surpasses all the powers of fiction, and veracity is poetry." See *Poems, by Joseph Fawcett. To which are Added Civilised War, Before Published under the Title of The Art of War, with Considerable Alterations; and The Art of Poetry, according to the Latest Improvements, with Additions* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1798), pp. 247-48.

Chenery's article served not just as reportage, but as an indictment of the patriotic poetry of the war, provoking questions with regard to civilians' spectatorship of war, the ethical responsibilities of civilian poets, artistic representation of soldiers' suffering, and the government's mismanagement of war. All these matters had profound implications for the role of the civilian poet and the agency of civilian poetry.<sup>100</sup>

#### IV

Amongst the multiple responses to Chenery's call for philanthropic action was Tom Taylor's "The Due of the Dead," published in *Punch* on October 28 1854.<sup>101</sup> Appearing two weeks or so after Chenery's report, this war poem urged readers to subscribe to the Patriotic Fund.<sup>102</sup> The circulation and dissemination of this poem was impressive. Several local newspapers published it on October 28 1854<sup>103</sup>, many in the context of the philanthropic projects aimed at alleviating the suffering of the soldiers. On October 28 *The North Wales Chronicle* published it below an article on the charity of Miss Nightingale; on November 8, *The Bury and Norwich Post* reprinted it under the heading "The Wounded"; and one week later on November 15, the same

<sup>100</sup> The civilian poet's reactions to the blunders of the war and artistic representations of soldiers' suffering body will be discussed in Chapter 2 and 3 respectively.

<sup>101</sup> Often wrongly attributed to William Makepeace Thackeray, "The Due of the Dead" is one of the three Crimean War poems selected in Jon Stallworthy's war anthology *The Oxford Book of War Poetry* (1978) and one of the most frequently discussed in studies of Crimean War poetry: it was cited in Malvern Van Wyk Smith's *Drummer Hodge* (1984) as an example of mid-century Victorian poets viewing "war as futile horror and individual disaster" and in Markovits' discussion of home-front poetry. The confusion of the authorship of "The Due of the Dead" might be caused by Friswell's note to the poem: "We know not whether we be right in our conjecture, but we believe that ["The Due of the Dead" is] from the pen of Thackeray." See, James Hain Friswell, *Songs of the War*, p. 29. Patrick Waddington has identified the authorship of this poem based on the *Punch* office ledger for 1854-1855. See Waddington, p. 29. Malvern Van Wyk Smith, *Drummer Hodge: The Poetry of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978) p. 13; Markovits, *The Crimean War*, p. 127.

<sup>102</sup> While better known for his dramas in the studies of Victorian literature and culture, Tom Taylor (1817-1870), a regular contributor to *Punch*, wrote three war poems in its pages: "The Due of the Dead" (October 28 1854, 173), "The Battle of Balaklava" (December 2 1854, 219) and "Balaklava" (February 17 1855, 67). See Winton Tolles, *Tom Taylor and The Victorian Drama* (New York: Columbia Press, 1940).

<sup>103</sup> See *Daily News*, October 25 1854; *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, October 27 1854; *The Bristol Mercury*, October 28, 1854; *The Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, October 28 1854.

newspaper included an excerpt from the poem to raise money for the Patriotic Fund:<sup>104</sup>

Parents made childless, babes bereft,  
Desolate widows, sisters dear.  
All these let grateful England take;  
And with a large and liberal heart,  
Cherish, for her slain soldiers' sake,  
And of her fullness give her part. (II. 55-60)

This poem of sixty-four lines, I will argue, is a revisionist patriotic poem that must be read alongside Chenery's article and in light of the public's responses to the philanthropic projects, for it draws on the critical structure and satirical tone of Chenery's article to address the suffering of the soldiers in the war. In doing so, Taylor rewrites the poetic traditions of Tyrtæus concerning the role of war poets and the function of war poetry. We can divide the poem into four sections: Taylor begins with a description of a middle-class male civilian at home (II. 1-16), followed by that of the chaotic scene in the aftermath of the battle of Alma (II.17-32); then, he stresses the nation's debt to the dead (II. 33-48) before making it clear that civilians should donate money to the widows and orphans of those who died in the war (II. 49-64). The first part runs as follows:

I sit beside my peaceful hearth,  
With curtains drawn and lamp trimmed bright;  
I watch my children's noisy mirth;  
I drink in home, and its delight.

---

<sup>104</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, October 28 1854; "The Wounded," *The Bury and Norwich Post*, and *Suffolk Herald*, November 8 1854; "Patriotic Fund," *The Bury and Norwich Post*, and *Suffolk Herald*, November 15 1854.

I sip my tea, and criticise

The war, from flying rumours caught;

Trace on the map, to curious eyes,

How here they marched, and there they fought.

In intervals of household chat,

I lay down strategetic [sic] laws;

Why this manoeuver, and why that;

Shape the event, or show the cause.

Or, in smooth dinner-table phrase

Twixt soup and fish, discuss the fight

Give to each chief his blame or praise,

Say who was wrong and who was right. (II. 1-16)<sup>105</sup>

While both Chenery and Taylor begin with a critique of a middle-class male civilian's emotional response to the war, the civilian Taylor satirizes is not only a self-indulgent one reading the war vicariously through the mediation of newspapers but also going so far as to presume to know everything about the war. It is the imperial "I," which occurs five times in the first ten lines and signifies the civilian's obsession with his own personal experience of war that Taylor condemns. In doing so, Taylor caricatures this paterfamilias by presenting him first as a gossip who "criticise[s] the war, from flying rumours caught" and "[t]race[s]" the location of the army "on the map" only to satisfy his curiosity. Ridiculed as a general who "lay[s] down strategetic [sic] laws" and a military expert who passes judgment on the performances of the combatants, this male civilian embraces war as part of his trivial domestic life, a harmless, frivolous subject that takes place over "tea" and "household chat."

---

<sup>105</sup> "The Due of the Dead," *Punch* (October 28 1854), 173.

However, in the next section, Taylor shifts the scene from home to the battlefield and presents a different perspective of war:

Meanwhile o'er Alma's bloody plain

The scathe of battle has rolled by—

The wounded writhe and groan—the slain

Lie naked staring to the sky. (II. 17-20)<sup>106</sup>

Taylor's juxtaposition of domestic and military scenes is meant to make the reader pause and question his own mediated experience of war and emotional responses to suffering. For Taylor, war as depicted in this passage is a solemn subject that involves death and bodily sufferings, one that civilians cannot comprehend simply through their reading of newspapers and participation in their idle gossip. This message marks the crucial difference between the political implication of Chenery's report and Taylor's poem. In the case of the former, the correspondent makes it apparent that the government should be held responsible for the plight of the wounded as a result of a deficiency of the medical supplies and staff: "The Government that has omitted nurses and bandages from the requirements of the wounded is not likely to have treated them to luxuries."<sup>107</sup> In making his appeal to the public for donations, Chenery hints at the government failure: "The best and most thoughtful Government in the world cannot do everything, and there will always be much left to private kindness."<sup>108</sup>

The establishment of the Patriotic fund was the government's immediate response to Chenery's criticism of the neglect of the wounded. There was thus a tension between the two public subscriptions proposed by *The Times* and the government; for instance, in an article of October 21 1854, *The Illustrated London*

---

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> [Thomas Chenery], *The Times*, October 12 1854, 6.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



*News*, which aligned itself with the government, wrote: “the public [...] has been simultaneously called upon for its patriotic subscriptions, by two separate and distinct agencies.”<sup>109</sup> While praising the government’s patriotic effort, the critic decried: “the second appeal has been issued without authority or warrant of any kind by a few newspapers [...] one of which pretends to be better informed than Privy Councillors and Generals.”<sup>110</sup> Reminding civilians that they should refrain from criticizing the government’s military campaign and promoting the subscription of the Patriotic fund, Taylor’s poem was an attempt to endorse the official account of the war and to mitigate *The Times*’ criticism of the authorities. Insofar as Taylor’s poem differs from Chenery’s report in lending support to the government’s prosecution of war and sanctioning the sacrifices of the soldiers as a necessary means to protect the homeland—“Those noble swords; though drawn afar,/Are guarding English homesteads still” (II. 39-40) — the poem is a conventional patriotic response.

In the last two sections, however, Taylor embraces the *Times* correspondent’s call for philanthropic action and incorporates an ethical concern for the welfare of the suffering into the function of patriotic poetry. As Pye observed in his preface to the life and poems of Tyrtaeus, “all the consolation and reward that Tyrtaeus holds out to the patriotic youth whom he encourages to fall in battle, are a public funeral, and to have their names immortalized in the memory of their grateful country.”<sup>111</sup> Taylor directly addresses his readers, asking them to reflect upon this Tyrtaean notion of reward given to the fallen soldiers:

But they, who meet a soldier’s doom—

Think you, it is enough, good friend,

---

<sup>109</sup> “The Patriotic Fund,” *Illustrated London Times*, October 21 1854, 14.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> See Pye, pp. 14-15.

To plant the laurel at their tomb,

And carve their names—and there an end? (II. 49-52)

Repudiating the traditional abstract reward of glory for warriors in Tyrtaeus' war songs and in conventional patriotic poetry, Taylor asserts that as "[t]hey are gone," it is more imperative to look after "those who they loved best while they were here" so that "the dead maybe be at rest,/knowing those cared for whom they love" (II. 54, 63-64). The title of the poem, "The Due of the Dead," suggests that civilians who have done nothing at home and benefited from the bodily sufferings of combatants are morally obliged to subscribe to the Patriotic Fund to help the widows and orphans of those who died in the war. This ethical concern for the welfare of the families of the soldiers also highlighted social concerns such as that of the imprisoned woman killing her baby in Fawcett's anti-Tyrtaean poem.

Significantly, Taylor was the first civilian poet of the Crimean War, who through the medium of poetry, called on the wealthy middle-class to direct their financial resources toward the war effort. Taylor's poem introduced a new economic consideration to conventional patriotic poetry. During the parliamentary debates on the question of peace and war in early 1854, those who opposed war were worried that it would put an end to the "Pax Britannica," affecting the nation's commercial prosperity.<sup>112</sup> Many were the members of the so-called Peace Society represented by John Bright and Richard Cobden. In contrast, civilian poets and critics who were staunch advocates of the war dismissed the commercial consideration and often

---

<sup>112</sup> For instance, in the House of Lords, the Earl of Clarendon stated on January 1854 that "the maintenance of peace was the great object to which our efforts were directed" on account of "the great social, political and commercial interests which have grown up in the country and have extended themselves into every part of the world during a period of unexampled peace and prosperity." See HL Debates January 31 1854, vol. 130, cols 36, *Hansard Online 1803-2005* <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1854/jan/31/address-in-answer-to-tee-speech>> [accessed December 2012].

pilloried the peace-party.<sup>113</sup> Again, to use Lushington's "The Muster of the Guards" as an example, in the latter part of the poem, the poet expresses his contempt for "calculations of the profit and the loss," refuting the claim of the peace party in economic terms: "War, with its agonies, its horrors, and its crimes,/Is cheaper if discounted and taken up betimes" (II. 46, 51-52).<sup>114</sup> This distaste for commerce could also be seen in critics' reviews of war poetry. We may use as an example of *The Leader's* comment about a war volume published by "a retired Liverpool merchant" in January 1855. The critic of *The Leader* satirized the strange phenomenon that any person inspired by patriotic sentiment felt qualified to become a war poet: "The Agamemnons of the present siege of Troy are not likely to perish unwept for want of poets, when a 'retired Liverpool merchant' bursts into ballads as the Tyrtæus of Balaklava and Inkerman."<sup>115</sup> The writer mocked the perceived ineligibility of a "retired Liverpool merchant" to be a war poet by underscoring the incompatibility between a merchant implicated with the pursuit of individual self-interest and Tyrtæus singing of the soldiers' self-sacrifices for the nation. Commerce was thus constructed by early pro-war civilian poets as detrimental to the government's war effort and the critic's invocation of Tyrtæus became a means to oppose the economic pursuit of merchants and their political economy that judged the cause of the war on the gain or loss of profits.

---

<sup>113</sup> See "The Right Side of the Question, and the 'Bright Side of the Question,'" *Punch* (April 15 1854), 153.

<sup>114</sup> This argument was later echoed and reinforced by Franklin and Henry Lushington's joint volume *La Nation Boutiquière*, published in June 1855. Henry Lushington employs the phrase, "the nation of shopkeepers," deriving from Napoleon Bonaparte's taunt to England during the Napoleonic wars, to draw historical parallels between the last and current war to provide a social critique of the industrialized and commercialized England's materialism. See Henry and Franklin Lushington, *La Nation Boutiquière & Other Poems Chiefly Political and Points of War* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1855); Michael C.C. Adams has argued that the outbreak of the Crimean War was conceived "as a rejuvenating force for the "prosperous commercial-industrial" England. See Michael C.C. Adams, "Tennyson's Crimean War Poetry: a Cross-Cultural Approach," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40.3 (1979), 405-22.

<sup>115</sup> "Poets of the War," *The Leader* (January 6 1855), 16.

Nonetheless, both Chenery's report and Taylor's poem offer the new view that the middle-class civilian engagement with commercial activities can be reconstructed as an act of patriotism. When Chenery first mentioned the involvement of public money in the war, he intimated that the only sacrifice civilians had made for the war effort was paying "a double income tax."<sup>116</sup> By contending that actually donating materials and money to the wounded soldiers was the best means to ease their suffering, he presented this financial sacrifice which carried a negative connotation as a patriotic action. Similarly, by employing patriotic rhetoric to foreground the economic relief civilians owed to the families of the dead, Taylor turned commerce, denounced by Lushington and later Tennyson as a corruptive, demoralizing force, into a constructive, ethical one related to middle-class civilian philanthropy. Following Taylor's poem, many civilian poets proclaimed in the title page of their volumes or in prefaces to their poetic works that the proceeds would go to the Patriotic Fund.<sup>117</sup> Donating the profits of their war volumes thus becomes a means of displaying civilian poets' sympathy for the suffering of soldiers and showcasing their contributions to the national crisis.

## V

Taylor's criticism of the middle-class paterfamilias— that because civilians are exempt from the horrors of war and do not have direct experience of warfare, they should approach the subject of war with deference and restrain themselves from making personal comments—had profound implications for later civilian poets

---

<sup>116</sup> [Thomas Chenery], *The Times*, October 12 1854, 6; this view was echoed by Goldwin Smith's 1855 review of Tennyson's *Maud* in which the critic wrote: "To most of us, the self-sacrifice involved in war with an enemy who cannot get at us consists in paying rather more taxes." [Goldwin Smith], "The War Passages in *Maud*," *Saturday Review* (November 3 1855), 14.

<sup>117</sup> For instance, in his notice to *Alma: And Other Poems*, first published in December 1854, Richard Chenevix Trench indicates that "if any profits should be derived from this publication, they will be devoted to one of the funds in connection with the army, at present being raised." Richard Chenevix Trench, *Alma: And Other Poems* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 1855), p. vi.

composing poetry. They were self-conscious about their roles as passive consumers of newspapers and spectators of the suffering soldiers at home and betrayed their anxiety about the effects of their war poems in various ways. Richard Chenevix Trench, a clergyman friend of Tennyson, published a war volume entitled *Alma: And Other Poems* in December 1854. Trench begins his first poem “What Though Yet the Spirit Slumbers” with the assurance that “Mightier Voices soon will sound,/Which should ring through all the ages”(II. 6-7) and ends with the hope that his readers will “pardon one for singing/while so many do and die” (II. 71-72).<sup>118</sup> The phrase “do and die” is also the famous phrase Tennyson employed to define the profession of soldiering in “The Charge”: “Theirs but to do and die” (I. 19; the newspaper version).<sup>119</sup> Trench’s apology to sing of the war makes explicit his guilt for soldiers’ sufferings in the Crimea. Trench’s volume marked by his religious and solemn tone actually makes a departure from the traditions of Tyrtæus: the war poems collected in this volume are not intended to advocate the government’s military campaign but to commemorate the sacrifices of soldiers and mourn the losses of the British families.

In early 1855, James Hain Friswell published *Songs of the War* (1855), the first anthology of poetry addressed to the Crimean War.<sup>120</sup> As the subtitle “by the best writers” makes clear, Friswell, as editor as well as contributor of this anthology, selected what he considered to be the finest verses which had appeared in the press. The anthology include poetic responses published from the outbreak of the war to the aftermath of the battle of Alma and the verses range from the exhortative lyrics of Franklin Lushington (including “The Muster of the Guards” and “Laissez Aller!”) to

---

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>119</sup> [A.T.], “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” *The Examiner*, December 9 1854, 780. Further references to this poem in this edition will be internally cited by line number.

<sup>120</sup> James Hain Friswell, ed., *Songs of the War: By the Best Writers* (London: Ward and Lock, 1855). The copy of this volume collected in the British library was stamped on February 1855, but Laura Friswell noted that his father had edited and published it around late December. See Laura Hans Friswell, *James Hans Friswell: A Memoir* (London: George Redway, 1898), pp. 40-41.

the more reflective, less jingoistic pieces such as Tom Taylor's "The Due of the Dead."<sup>121</sup> In his preface Friswell proclaimed: "The reader will find some effusions; which are of themselves contributions, not alone to the Patriotic fund, but also to that fund of patriotism which is the safeguard of any kingdom, however mismanaged or misgoverned."<sup>122</sup> In this quotation, Friswell plays with the phrase "The Patriotic Fund" to stress the dual function of patriotic poetry. Insisting that the publication of these war songs would evoke readers' patriotic sentiment (as suggested by the word "effusions") and thereby help defend the nation, Friswell sought to reaffirm the poetic traditions of Tyrtaeus' war songs. He went on to endorse the role of civilian poets composing patriotic work by claiming that "surely, the literary men of this country who have come so nobly forward in her cause, are worthy of as much honour as the soldiers who have fought heroically."<sup>123</sup>

One can compare Friswell's defence of the role of "the literary men" with Louisa Shore's reconfiguration of the role of civilian poets as seen in "War Music," first published in *The Spectator* on November 25 1854.<sup>124</sup> According to her sister Arabella Shore's memoir, Louisa first wrote the poem as an "impromptu" in a letter addressed to Arbella, who in turn "equipped it with the title 'War Music,' and without a hint to Louisa, sent it to *The Spectator*, where the authoress read it with great astonishment."<sup>125</sup> It was reprinted in local newspapers and *The London Journal* between December 1854 and January 1855 and a revised version of the poem was published in Shore's joint volume with her sister *War Lyrics* in 1855, which "reached

---

<sup>121</sup> It should be noted that the more well-known war poems such as Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (December 1854) and Sydney Dobell and Alexander Smiths' *Sonnets on the War* (January 1855) probably appeared in the press too late to be included in this anthology.

<sup>122</sup> Friswell, *Songs of the War*, p. ii.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> "War Music," *The Spectator*, November 25 1854, 8.

<sup>125</sup> Louisa Shore, *Poems, with a Memoir by Her Sister Arabella Shore and an Appreciation by Frederick Harrison* (London: John Lane, 1897), p. 16.

a second edition in a fortnight.”<sup>126</sup> Shore begins by declaring:

The merest soldier is today

The poet of his art

Though he should neither sing nor say

The transports of his heart.

*His* genius writes in words of steel,

And utters them in thunder,—

Whilst *we* want speech for what we feel,

And sit at home and wonder. (II. 1-8, final version)<sup>127</sup>

Unlike Friswell, Shore concedes that that any ordinary soldier has supplanted the role of the civilian poet. For Shore, it is precisely because a soldier performs action on the battlefield and makes no effort to convey his emotion (“The transports of his heart”) that he embodies “today/The poet of his art.” Perhaps because Shore was a female poet, she did not experience as much anxiety about her domestic role as her male counterparts. Her rhyme of “his heart” and “his art” can be regarded as Shore’s critique of male civilian poets’ exaggerated patriotic feelings. In the next stanza, Shore’s rhyming of “thunder” with “wonder” alludes to Michael Drayton’s poem “To the Cambro-Britons, and Their Harp, his Ballad of Agincourt” (1606) in which the same rhyme is used: “To hear, was wonder” and “Thunder to Thunder” (II. 60, 64).<sup>128</sup> In Drayton’s poem, the effects of the rhyme are onomatopoeic, corresponding to the sounds of drum and trumpet prior to the battle of Agincourt. In Shore’s case, her use

---

“War Music,” *The Bristol Mercury*, December 2, 1854, 6; “War Music,” *The Derby Mercury*, December 6, 1854, 7; “War Music,” *The London Journal* (January 13 1855), 295. See Louisa Shore, *Poems*, p. 31.

<sup>127</sup> “War Music,” lines 1-8, in A. and L. [Arabella and Louisa Shore], *War Lyrics* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1855), p. 11.

<sup>128</sup> “To the Cambro-Britons, and their harp, his Ballad of Agincourt,” in *The Oxford Book of War Poetry*, ed. Jon Stallworthy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 38. References to the lines are internally cited by line number.

of the rhyme points to not only the gulf between the acts of the soldier on the battlefield and those who learn of the war at home but also the reverberation of the “war music” heard by civilian poets. In her identification with civilian poets through the italicized “we” in line 7, Shore replaces the satirical phrase “at ease” with the more positive word “wonder,” suggesting a mixture of surprise and admiration for the soldier. Thus, in her refashioning of the trope, the emotional reactions of civilian poets to the soldiers’ sacrifices are not the excessive, self-indulgent or uncritical ones satirized by Chenery and Taylor; rather, “we want speech for what we feel” simply acknowledges a lack of experience of war on the part of civilian poets and the difficulty of representing it from a distance. In the rest of the poem, to illustrate her point that the art of war poetry should be guided by action rather than words, Shore conjures up two of the most memorable figures of the Crimean War, the cavalrymen in the charge of the Light Brigade, who “ere well the word had gone, into the smoke were hurled,” and Florence Nightingale, who “[n]o longer reads and hears,/But, laying down the dumb-death list,/Gives help instead of tears” (II. 13-14, 26-28; the newspaper version).<sup>129</sup>

Finally, we return to Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” published only two weeks after the publication of Shore’s “War Music” and subsequently belittled by Kingsley in his letter to Hughes. According to Hallam Tennyson, his father “wrote” the poem “in a few minutes after reading the description in *The Times*.” Hallam’s account of Tennyson’s creative process of “The Charge” gives readers the impression that the Laureate completed the poem under the inspiration of *The Times*’ reports at one go.<sup>130</sup> But as Edgar Shannon and Christopher Ricks observe in their

---

<sup>129</sup> “War Music,” *The Spectator*, November 25 1854, 8. In her final version of the poem, Shore separates the lines describing Nightingale into another poem entitled “When She Went Forth.” See *War Lyrics*, p. 13.

<sup>130</sup> Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1897), I: 381.



analysis of the composition of the poem, “the text went through some twenty states before it reached its nearly final form.”<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, Tennyson was not only deeply concerned about the accuracy of the number of cavalrymen described in *The Times* but also greatly troubled by whether he should include the line “Someone had blundered,” a phrase originating from *The Times*.<sup>132</sup> Despite the great lengths to which Tennyson went to revise the poem, he insisted that “it is not a poem on which I pique myself.”<sup>133</sup>

Tennyson, like Shore, employed the rhyme “thunder” and “wonder” to depict the reading public’s ambivalent emotional response to the heroic yet disastrous charge of the cavalry at the battle of Balaclava: “Volley’d and thunder’d” and “All the world wondered” (II. 25, 35, 44, 54; the newspaper version). And yet, while Shore’s line “sit at home and wonder” highlights civilian poets’ emotional responses and the epistemological gap between home and battlefield, Tennyson’s line “All the World Wondered” closes the distance between home and battlefield, treating the charge as a public spectacle taking place both abroad and at home in front of readers’ eyes.<sup>134</sup> In doing so, Tennyson effaced the presence of the civilian poet and subsumed his emotional reaction to the charge into the phrase “All the World.”

In August 1855, an army chaplain requested copies of “The Charge” be sent to soldiers in the Crimea, informing Tennyson that this is “[t]he greatest service you can

---

<sup>131</sup> Ricks, “The Charge,” in *Tennyson*, p. 324.

<sup>132</sup> “The Charge” was first published in *Examiner* on December 9 1854, but Tennyson deleted the line “Someone had blundered” in the version printed in the volume *Maud and Other Poems* in July 1855. He reinstated the line, when he sent copies of the poem to the soldiers in the Crimea in August 1855. See Ricks, “The Charge,” in *Tennyson*.

<sup>133</sup> Tennyson, letter to Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, July 8, 1855, *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), II: 114.

<sup>134</sup> In McGann’s well-known reading of the poem, the phrase “All the World” specifically refers to the French ally. He quotes the *Morning Chronicle*’s accounts of the French soldiers’ astonishment at the Charge and the French general Bosquet’s famous comment: “C’est magnifique, mais ce n’est pas la guerre! (It is magnificent but it is not war!).” See McGann, “Tennyson and the Histories of Criticism,” pp. 198-99.

do just now” and that the poem “is the greatest favorite of the soldiers, half are singing it all want to have it,” and it is here that the Poet Laureate’s private opinions as a civilian poet become of interest. Tennyson urged John Forster: “For Heaven’s sake get this copy fairly printed at once at once [sic]—and sent out.”<sup>135</sup> The urgency of Tennyson’s message and the appeal of sending out what he called “the soldier’s version of my ballad” were obvious. It provided him a rare opportunity to address the soldiers directly and of asserting the agency and authority of a male civilian poet’s voice, a voice Kingsley and other contemporary reviewers had found lacking. In a note printed on the pamphlet, Tennyson wrote: “No writing of mine can add to the glory you have acquired in the Crimea, but I send you a thousand copies of my ballad because I am told you like it and you may know that those who sit at home love and honour you.”<sup>136</sup> By invoking the loaded phrase “those who sit at home” and inscribing the words “love and honour you,” Tennyson not only alluded to civilians who paid tribute to soldiers, but self-consciously affirmed his diminished role as a civilian poet singing of their honour.

One month later, Kingsley reviewed Tennyson’s “The Charge” in an article published by *Fraser’s Magazine* in September 1855. In this review, Kingsley remained critical of the poem in terms of its meter and reiterated the importance of a poet’s corporeal experience of war: “To have sung that charge perfectly, it seems to us one must have ridden it, or at least one not unlike it.”<sup>137</sup> Yet Kingsley softened his earlier satirical tone, realizing that, as a civilian himself, he was not in a position to criticize: “It is hardly right perhaps to sit critically picking to pieces poetry written in

---

<sup>135</sup> Benedict Lawrence Chapman, letter to Tennyson, August 3, 1855, in *Letters* II: 117; Tennyson, letter to John Forster, August 6, 1855, in *Letters* II: 117.

<sup>136</sup> For Tennyson’s note, see letter to John Foster, August 6, 1855, in *Letters* II: 118.

<sup>137</sup> [Charles Kingsley], review of Tennyson’s *Maud*, *Fraser’s Magazine* 52 (September 1855), 272.

love and earnestness by a true poet, on such a theme.”<sup>138</sup> More importantly, he eventually gave Tennyson credit for his intellectual labour, acknowledging that the poem had made an impact upon those fighting at the front: “it is admired and approved by the men best able to judge of it, namely the soldiery, among whom it has been widely circulated.”<sup>139</sup>

As this chapter has shown, in the wake of the battle of Alma, the civilian poet’s consciousness of a spectatorship of the suffering of soldiers, and the ineffectuality of trumpeting battle cries from home led them to refashion the model of warrior poet descending from Tyrtæus and transform the traditional function of war songs. As a result, regardless of some critics’ sustained questioning of civilians’ poetical reactions to the war, and the publication of vociferously patriotic poetry in the course of the war,<sup>140</sup> a new identity for the civilian poet was being forged, one that had to achieve a critical detachment from his or her patriotic sentiment and attend to the ethical issues emerging from newspaper reports.

The question raised by Chenery, Taylor and Shore in their respective critiques of civilian engagement in this war is basically this: if civilian poets are not allowed to emulate the role of Tyrtæus, how should they respond to the ethical and political dimensions of the war? I will show that one solution to “the problem of sympathy,” to borrow a phrase from Markovits, lay in civilian poets’ experimentation with poetic forms. These poets could, as we will discover in the following chapters, adopt more sophisticated forms other than that of the war song, reworking established motifs of

---

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> For instance, in an 1855 review of war poetry, the commentator for *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* wrote of W. C. Bennett’s jingoistic war songs: “These poets are bad politicians; and if they will reproduce in August ’55, ballads that were timely enough in our first flush of faith and hope, they cannot but suffer neglect, even if they escape rebuke.” *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* (September 1855), 565.

earlier war poetry. The sonnet, satire, and dramatic monologue would all be employed to ventriloquize both the voices of the soldiers on the battlefield and their families at home, and to commemorate, evaluate, or even subvert the voice of patriotic poetry.

## Chapter 2

### “[T]he People’s War”: Challenging the Governing Classes

With the outbreak of the war in early 1854, the leader-writers of *The Times* coined the catchphrase “the People’s War” and repeatedly employed it throughout the Crimean conflict to foreground the role of public opinion in checking ministers’ war policies. On April 6 1854, one week after England’s declaration of war, having proclaimed that “the whole British nation must never forget that this is pre-eminently a *popular* war” and that “[t]he people themselves have insisted on it,” a leader in *The Times* asserted: “had a Minister been found who could connive at the aggression of Russia [...] he could not have stood against the unanimous resolution of the people to allow no such outrage on the order and the peace of the world.”<sup>141</sup> One month later, on May 5 1854, in addressing the new financial policy inaugurated by the government to cope with the war budget, a leader remarked: “The Present war is a People’s war, and the people will not object to pay for it.”<sup>142</sup> “[W]ill not object to” implies that general people had a decisive role in affecting financial policies, and that in this case the government had the support of public opinion. Toward the end of the war, on November 2 1855, contrasting the present war with that of Battle of Waterloo, *The Times* declared:

It was the House of Commons, aided by the aristocracy, that did the work then, –not the people whom it professed to represent; at least, had it been left to that people, it is hard to see how the work would ever have been done. Such a statement would be not only false, but utterly ridiculous, if applied to the present war. It is pre-eminently the people’s war, and, if there is any difficulty, it is in the

---

<sup>141</sup> Leader, *The Times*, April 6 1854, 8.

<sup>142</sup> Leader, *The Times*, May 5 1854, 8. Markovits also cites this leader as an example of the catchphrase “the people’s war.” Where she discusses the implications of the phrase in relation to the dominant role of *The Times*, and how public opinions often precluded private judgments as seen in Smith and Dobell’s war sonnets, this chapter will explore its connections with the civilian poet’s responses to the class conflict at home. See Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, pp. 15, 136-37, 222.

House of Commons; if there is any unsoundness, it is in the aristocracy. The people are the great moving power—the pressure from without, which no Minister, no Parliament, would dare to resist.<sup>143</sup>

It was not the aristocratic ministers but the people leading the military campaign. Given that *The Times*, the largest circulating newspaper, was known as the organ of the middle-class reading public and played a vital role in shaping public opinion of the military campaign, one must read the newspaper's claim that the war was "the people's war" with caution.<sup>144</sup> As Markovits has argued, "'Public Opinion' itself was a contested idea" during the Crimean War.<sup>145</sup> The catchphrase "the people's war" was also a contentious one: to invoke it was to oppose the governing classes and raise questions about "which people's war."<sup>146</sup> Recognizing the middle-class bias of the *Times* editorial, however, does not undermine the validity of its claims about the Crimean War being "the People's War." To a large extent, *The Times* had waved the banner of "a people's war" in order to subject the government's military campaign to public scrutiny and the Crimean War saw the unprecedented power of the people to impinge upon the government's conduct of war. In Linda Colley's discussion of the British elite during the Napoleonic wars, she argues that paintings depicting the death of aristocratic military heroes such as Arthur William Devis' "Death of Nelson" (1805) helped buttress the prestige of the aristocracy and promote "a cult of elite heroism," from which the common soldier was excluded.<sup>147</sup> By way of contrast, Matthew

Lalumia's study of Crimean paintings and illustrations maintains that "art forsook the

---

<sup>143</sup> Leader, *The Times*, November 2 1855, 6.

<sup>144</sup> For a detailed discussion of *The Times*' role in shaping public opinion of the war, see Olive Anderson, *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 70-100; Markovits, pp. 12-62.

<sup>145</sup> Markovits, p. 138.

<sup>146</sup> The slogan "the People's War" was also frequently used during the Second World War. See Angus Calder, *The People's War* (London: Pimlico, 1993), p. 17; Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>147</sup> See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 1994), p. 180.

traditions of depicting military events just as British society at large renounced its traditional deference to the ‘ruling classes.’”<sup>148</sup> Compared with previous wars, the Crimean War can be credited as “the people’s war” due to increased participation by the reading public both at home and abroad. It was a war in which every newspaper reader could engage in public debates about governmental war policies and the performance of the army via the press columns. It was also “the people’s war” in that it was common soldiers rather than the aristocratic military officers or political leaders with whom the public came to identify and who emerged as the true war heroes.

Whilst critics have long identified class conflict as an integral theme of Crimean War poetry, most have concentrated on the works of middle-class poets who praise the imperial war efforts and of soldiers’ sacrifices as a means to unite men on the home-front, and to maintain the aristocratic status quo. Notable poetic responses in this vein are understood to include Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (1854) and *Maud* (1855) and Adelaide Ann Procter’s “Waiting” and “The Lesson of the War” (1855). For instance, Jerome McGann’s 1985 article on Tennyson’s “Charge” maintains that the Poet Laureate appropriated the heroic traditions of French painting to affirm the threatened role of the British aristocracy.<sup>149</sup> Later in a 2003 article exploring Tennyson’s “Charge” in light of the conflict between the middle class and the aristocracy, Trudi Tate asserts that the poem registers ambivalence toward the power and values of the aristocracy: “it cherishes the aristocratic elements even as in some sense it shares *The Times*’ desire to destroy them.”<sup>150</sup> In his essay on *Maud*, Joseph Bristow points out that the speaker’s belief that fighting a just war overseas

---

<sup>148</sup> Matthew Paul Lalumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Ann Arbor, MI: MUI Research Press, 1984), p. xxi.

<sup>149</sup> McGann, “Tennyson and the Histories of Criticism.”

<sup>150</sup> Tate, “On Not Knowing Why: Memorializing the Light Brigade,” p. 174.

would unite people at home echoes a conservative pro-war argument.<sup>151</sup> In a succinct summary, he declares: “A war abroad should rightly make for peace at home [...]. Patriotism always served conservatives with a just cause to minimize class (and related) differences in the name of uniting the nation under one banner.”<sup>152</sup> Following Bristow’s argument, Markovits also claims that Procter’s poems “express a commonplace theme of the war literature in theorizing how the conflict might unite a nation that had been divided by class distinction.”<sup>153</sup> For Cynthia Dereli this theme finds expression in the majority of Crimean War poems. Her chapter on the poetry of 1855 argues that with the two important exceptions of John Prince and Robert Brough, “the common discourse of war” was “working to circumvent contentious issues and to build images of unity.”<sup>154</sup> This theme can also be seen in Joseph Phelan’s discussion of the use of the sonnet form by civilian poet during the war. He argues that this technique was adopted by Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell in their war sonnets, by Tennyson in Part III of *Maud* and by Gerald Massey in *War Waits* to publicise “their ‘conversion’ from self-absorption to collective purpose.”<sup>155</sup>

This chapter will demonstrate that the use of war poems to rally people behind the government and to defend the nation does not tell the whole story of the civilian poets’ political engagements. It will examine the ways in which working and middle-class civilians deployed poetry to give voice to the people in order to challenge the aristocratic government before, during and after the ministerial crisis in

---

<sup>151</sup> Joseph Bristow, “Nation, Class, and Gender: Tennyson’s *Maud* and War,” *Gender* 9 (1990), 93-111, Rpt. in *Tennyson*, ed. Rebecca Stott (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 127-47. An often-cited article in critics’ discussion of the speaker’s attitude to war is entitled “Peace and War,” published by *Blackwood’s* in November 1854, wherein Telepolemus, a staunch advocate of war, addresses Irenaeus, a pacifist, in a dialogue, asserting that “war unites us... makes us feel we are countrymen, brothers, friends, and neighbors, all of us (not Quakers only).” [G. C. Swayne], “Peace and War: A Dialogue,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 76 (November 1854), 595.

<sup>152</sup> Bristow, p. 131.

<sup>153</sup> Markovits, p. 92.

<sup>154</sup> Cynthia Dereli, *A War Culture in Action: A Study of the Literature of the Crimean War Period* (Oxford: Pater Lang, 2003), p. 126.

<sup>155</sup> Joseph P. Phelan, *The Nineteenth-Century Sonnet* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 72.



early 1855. The focus will be on the early and late war poems of the Chartist poet Gerald Massey, “Balaclava,” published by the middle-class *Punch* contributor Tom Taylor on 17 February 1855, and *Songs of the Governing Classes*, published by the radical satirist Robert Brough in June 1855. At first glance Massey, Taylor and Brough who seemed to come from diverse class backgrounds remained committed to various political agendas but, as we shall see, they all sought to arouse the discontent and indignation of their target readers in order to challenge the governing classes at specific moments of the war. This chapter will argue that their responses to the governing elite constituted a “people’s war” in poetry: they each abandoned the traditional mode of war songs and deployed distinctive poetic strategies in order to exhort readers to critique the ruling classes and to advance specific interests of social classes or political groups. Innovations included Massey’s reworking of Chartist rhetoric, Taylor’s invocation of a phantom soldier, and Brough’s parody of popular war songs. While often categorized under the rubric of patriotic poetry and rarely discussed as part of the Victorian canon, these poetic responses should be considered as part of a significant corpus of important Crimean War poetry that help us understand the ways in which civilian poets critically engaged with the politics of war.

## II

The year 1854 marked a crucial transition in Gerald Massey’s literary career: he moved from championing the struggle of the working class as a Chartist poet after the dissolution of Chartism in 1848 to singing about England’s conflict with Russia as a freedom fighter.<sup>156</sup> In recent years, while critics have given increasing attention to

---

<sup>156</sup> I have borrowed the phrase “freedom fighter” from Ulrike Schwab’s discussion of Chartist poetry. *The Poetry of The Chartist Movement: A Literary and Historical Study* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987), p. 120. According to Mike Sanders, Massey was “between 1849 and 1851... the most published Chartist poet in the *Northern Star*’s poetry columns.” Mike Sanders, *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 204.

Massey's poetry they have focused mainly on his Chartist rather than his Crimean War poetry, tending to treat the latter as a somewhat embarrassing post-script.<sup>157</sup> Isobel Armstrong claims that Massey's political conversion "exemplifies the plight of the self-taught artisan poet in particular once Chartism dissolved as a political movement."<sup>158</sup> However, jingoistic Massey's war poems may seem, the significance of their popularity amongst his contemporaries should give us pause. In a review of a wide variety of war volumes published in January 1855, the radical journal the *Leader* lauded Massey "as a fit interpreter of the people's voice and will."<sup>159</sup> In February 1855, the *Athenaeum* wrote: "First among those who seek to give a public voice to the feelings of the multitude [...] is Gerald Massey."<sup>160</sup> Three of Massey's early 1854 war poems—"The Lilies of France and Old England's Red Rose," "After Alma" and "Before Sebastopol"—were selected in James Friswell's pro-war anthology *Songs of the War* (1855).<sup>161</sup> Moreover, his *War Waits* was perhaps the most popular Crimean War volume remembered by late Victorians before the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>162</sup> Given the critiques by mid-Victorian commentators of the civilian poets' knowledge and bodily experience of the war at home (as discussed in Chapter 1), how do we account for the popularity and emotional impact of Massey's war poems on his

---

<sup>157</sup> For Massey's Chartist poetry, see Sanders, pp. 203, 229. Massey's *War Waits* is one of Matthew Bevis' examples when he notes: "The progress of the Crimean War was marked by much poetry that sang of arms and the man in a less equivocal fashion." See Bevis, "Fighting Talk," p. 16. Markovits does not give attention to Massey's war poems in her recent study.

<sup>158</sup> See Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 196.

<sup>159</sup> "Poets of the War," *The Leader* (January 20 1855), 65

<sup>160</sup> *The Athenaeum* (February 3 1855), 138-39.

<sup>161</sup> See Massey's three war poems in *Songs of the War*, ed. James Hain Friswell (London: Ward and Lock, 1855), pp. 2, 14, 38.

<sup>162</sup> Alfred H. Miles remarked: "of all the verses fired by the Russian war," Massey's "forms, perhaps, the most compact and powerful body [...] it is difficult to believe that anyone could read the poems entitled *War Waits* without being thrilled with national ardour, or fired with patriotic pride." In a similar vein, Churton Collins praised Massey as "the veritable Tyrtaeus" during the Crimean War, stating: "It is impossible even now to read" his war poems "without emotions recalling those that thrilled in that iron time." Alfred H. Miles, *The Poets and the Poetry of Nineteenth-Century: Charles Kingsley to James Thomson*, ed. Alfred H. Miles (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1905), p. 350; John Churton Collins, *Studies in Poetry and Criticism* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905), p. 146.

readers and his credentials to represent “the people’s voice and will”? A complicating factor, as Timothy Randall observes, is that Massey draws heavily on his Chartist rhetoric and imagery in depicting the Crimean conflict. Randall notes that while Massey altered his political commitments during the war, “[i]mages which had previously been used in the fiery Chartist verse were retained in his later jingoistic verse.”<sup>163</sup> He claims that “[t]he role of the Crimean War in reorienting the object of these images, and thereby articulating a much more moderated political radicalism in Britain, appears to have been immense, and so far under-estimated.”<sup>164</sup> In this section, I will first consider the impact of Massey’s war poems on his readers by examining his self-representation in his public role as a people’s poet in early 1854, and then discuss Massey’s early and late Crimean War poems in the context of a radical protest against the governing body of Newcastle. I will show that Massey reworks Chartist rhetoric to enact a radical patriotism which promotes England’s military campaign as a war of liberating the oppressed nations, and questions the ministerial policies undermining the more radical interests and expectations of the war.

Massey’s best-known Crimean War volume is *War Waits* (January 1855), but the majority of his poetic responses to the war had appeared in the third and fourth editions of *The Ballad of Babe Christabel: With Other Lyrical Poems* (published in April and November 1854), wherein he also reprinted some of his Chartist verse.<sup>165</sup> Hence, in its later manifestations, *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* represents a mixture of Massey’s old and new poems articulating two apparently divergent political

---

<sup>163</sup> Timothy Randall, “Chartist Poetry and Song,” *The Chartist Legacy*, eds. Owen Ashton, Robert Fyson and Stephen Roberts (Rendlesham: Merlin, 1999), p. 189.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190-91.

<sup>165</sup> “Old England” and “England Goes to Battle” first appeared in the third edition and Massey added “Down in Australia” “The Lilies of France, and Old England’s Red Rose,” “The Fleet Before Sebastopol” and “An Exile’s Song to his Country” in the fourth edition.

projects.<sup>166</sup> In his preface to the third edition of the volume written in April 1854, instead of bidding farewell to his Chartist verse, Massey sought to explicate and defend the position of his Chartist poetry. He wrote that “Before printing, I was advised not to include the political pieces, as, it was urged, they would prove an obstacle to the success of my Poetry, and close the drawing room door against me.”<sup>167</sup> In this quotation, those who “close the drawing room door” are implicitly potential middle-or upper-class readers. Undaunted by losing favour among them, Massey asserted:

I keep my political verses as memorials of my past [...] nothing doubting that in the future they will prove my passport to the hearts and homes of thousands of the poor, when the minstrel comes to their door with something better to bring them.<sup>168</sup>

As this passage shows it is the poor, not the middle and upper-class readers to whom Massey pledged his allegiance. He embraced his “political verses” as “memorials” of his involvement with Chartism and his identity as a working-class minstrel. Moreover, appended to the volume is a biography of Massey written by Samuel Smiles, originally published in *Eliza Cook’s Journal* in 1851. It gives readers a glimpse of the hardship Massey underwent; the son of a canal boatman, he worked in a silk factory during his childhood and subsequently as an errand-boy in London before learning how to read and compose poetry. The biography, when read alongside his Chartist

---

<sup>166</sup> Massey first published *The Ballad of Babe Christabel: With Other Lyrical Poems* in February 1854. As the volume proved to be an immensely popular one and went through five editions within a year, Massey gradually added his war poems to the third, fourth, and fifth editions of the volume (published in April, November 1854 and February 1855 respectively). David Shaw notes that the volume “sold 5,000 copies.” The publication dates of Massey’s *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* are drawn from David Shaw’s on-line edition of *Gerald Massey: Chartist, Poet, Radical and Freethinker* < [http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog\\_part\\_03.htm](http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog_part_03.htm) > [accessed March 2014].

<sup>167</sup> Gerald Massey, “Preface to the Third Edition,” *The Ballad of Babe Christabel: With Other Lyrical Poems* (London: David Bogue, 1854; published in April 1854), p. iii.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iv.

verse, gives Massey a “passport” to speak for the working class. As he reminded his readers in the preface: “I have suffered their sufferings, wept their tears, thought their thoughts, and felt their feelings; and they will trust me.”<sup>169</sup>

Contemporary reviewers welcomed Massey’s volume with both encouragement and acclaim. Significantly, many hailed him as “the people’s poet,” or “the Poet Laureate of the working class.”<sup>170</sup> It is precisely Massey’s claim to represent the voice of the poor that distinguished him from the middle-class poets and shaped critics’ opinions of his war poems. On August 24 1854, a review in *The Times* introduced Massey’s *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* as “the production of a young man who has fought his way to the Temple-gate sword in hand.”<sup>171</sup> In this passage, the battle refers to Massey’s struggle against poverty in becoming a rising working-class poet. On January 27 1855, the reviewer for *The Lady’s Newspaper* wrote of his *War Waits*:

They [...] have come straight from the people’s heart. He has not sat down to deliberately compose poems on the war, but has evidently written these songs in order to give vent to his feelings—to his love of the ‘motherland,’ to his hatred of oppression.<sup>172</sup>

In contrast to the middle-class civilian poets frequently criticized for “sit[ting] at home at ease,” Massey, the critic claims, “has not sat down to deliberately compose poems on the war.” Because of Massey’s working-class background, the critic does

---

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> In April 1854, *The New Quarterly Review* declared that “Gerald Massey is one of ‘the people’s poets’; and strange to say, the people’s poets have a great deal more poetry in them than those who find favour in the drawing room.” *The New Quarterly Review* (April 1854), 227-28; *Reynold’s Miscellany* announced that “Mr. Massey is the Poet Laureate of the working-classes—the bard who best, at the present day, proclaims their wrongs and sings their hopes.” See “Gerald Massey’s Poems,” *Reynold’s Miscellany* (April 1 1854), p. 149. Massey collated a large number of positive reviews which he had appended to the volume. For more examples of references to Massey as “the people’s poet,” see Gerald Massey, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. *The Ballad of Babe Christabel: With Other Lyrical Poems* (London: David Bogue, 1854).

<sup>171</sup> *The Times*, August 24 1854, 5.

<sup>172</sup> *The Lady’s Newspaper*, January 27 1855, 53.

not question the poet's knowledge and bodily experience of war at home. As this quotation and the reviews of *the Leader* and *the Athenaeum* cited above suggest, Massey had earned himself the epithet people's poet and his war poems were widely interpreted as a manifestation of the voice of the people during the Crimean War.

In his early responses to the war, Massey represents England's fight against Russia as a battle fought between liberty and freedom on the one side and tyranny and despotism on the other. His first war poem "War Rumours" (first published in the third edition of *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* under the title "Old England" and reprinted in *War Waits* as the opening piece) begins by personifying a female nation.

There she sits in her Island-home,  
Peerless among her Peers!  
And Liberty oft to her arms doth come,  
To ease its poor heart of tears.  
Old England still throbs with the muffled fire  
Of a Past she can never forget:  
And again shall she banner the world up higher;  
For there's life in the Old Land yet.<sup>173</sup>

Contrasting the opening lines of this stanza with that of Massey's Chartist poem "The Red Banner" (1850), Randall notes that not only is Britain transformed into a "haven of liberty" but also the red banner, a recurrent symbol of "militant class warfare" in his Chartist verse, becomes a symbol of national warfare.<sup>174</sup> The first two lines of this passage appear to eulogize Britain as an exemplary nation among her European peers, but the next two suggest that it is not always the case that Britain is a land of liberty.

---

<sup>173</sup> "War Rumours," lines 1-8, in *War Waits* (London: David Bogue, 1855), p. 1. Further references to this poem in this edition will be internally cited by line number.

<sup>174</sup> Randall, p. 188.

What is the “Past” of “Old England” that Massey evokes for his readers’ remembrance in lines 5-6 but never make explicit? His depiction of the advent of “Liberty” assuaging the Old Land’s “poor heart of tears” alludes to the struggle of the working class to foreground the cause of England’s military intervention. This collective memory of the “Old Land” is invoked in his Chartist poem “Our Land” (first published in Massey’s first volume *Voices of Freedom and Lyrics of Love* in 1851 and reprinted in *The Ballad of Christabel*). The opening stanza runs as follows:

’Tis the Land that our stalwart fore-sires trode,  
Where the brave and the heroic-soul’d  
Implanted our freedom with their best blood  
In the martyr-days of old.  
The huts of the lowly gave Liberty birth,  
Their hearts were her cradle glorious,  
And whenever her foot-prints lettered the earth,  
Great spirits up-sprang victorious,  
In our rare old Land, our dear old Land,  
With its memories bright and brave,  
And sing hey for the hour its sons shall band  
To free it of Tyrant and Slave. (II. 1-12)<sup>175</sup>

By recounting the sacrifices of “our stalwart fore-sires” who “Implanted our freedom with their best blood” and of “the lowly” who “gave Liberty birth,” Massey constructs a collective memory of the land for the oppressed working class. The refrain “In our rare old Land, our dear old Land/With its memories bright and brave” stresses the ownership of the land by the poor and their duty to follow in these martyrs’ footsteps

---

<sup>175</sup> Massey, “Our Land,” lines 1-12, in 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. *The Ballad of Babe Christabel*, pp. 117-18.

“To free it of Tyrant and Slave.” By implicitly evoking this memory of the old land in his first Crimean War poem, Massey infuses the history of the working class’s struggle into his patriotic rhetoric to exhort England to “fight as she fought” and “dash Freedom’s foes” (II. 27-31).

This reworking of Chartist rhetoric in the specific political context of the Crimean War is further expanded in another early war poem “Liberty’s Bridal Wreath,” a celebration of the Anglo-Franco alliance.<sup>176</sup> In the fourth and last stanza of the poem, Massey calls upon readers to liberate “each suffering land” abroad

Till the last fetter’d nation that calls us is free,

Let us fall upon Tyranny’s horde!

Brave Italy, Poland, and Hungary, see,

With their praying hands seek for a Sword!

Till the Storm-God is roused in each suffering land,

Let us march thro’ the welcoming world. (II. 37-42)<sup>177</sup>

In this passage, Massey extends his political agenda to advocate the emancipation of the “fetter’d nation[s],” which underwent the failed 1848 revolutions that took place throughout Europe. While 1848 was typically regarded as the year in which Chartism collapsed, it marked the beginning of Massey’s involvement with Chartism.<sup>178</sup> For Massey, the uprisings in Continental Europe served both as a political and poetic inspiration to which he alludes frequently in his Chartist poetry. In 1851, the arrival of the Hungarian nationalist Louis Kossuth in England spawned a number of enthusiastic responses from Chartist poets including Massey’s “A Welcome to Louis Kossuth”

---

<sup>176</sup> It was first published under the title “The Lilies of France and Old England’s Red Rose” in the fourth edition of *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* in November 1854 and reprinted in *War Waits*.

<sup>177</sup> “Liberty’s Bridal Wreath,” lines 37-48, in *War Waits*, p. 11.

<sup>178</sup> “The French Revolution of 1848 had the greatest effect on me of any circumstance connected with my life” remarked Massey. See “A Biographical Sketch,” in the fourth edition of *The Ballad of Babe Christabel*, p. 167. For a discussion of post- 1848 Chartist poetry, see Sanders’ chapter “‘The future-hastening storm’: Chartist poetry in 1848,” in *The Poetry of Chartism*, pp. 166-202.



(first published in *Voice of Freedom* and reprinted in *The Ballad of Babe Christabel*). Massey also sent a copy of his *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* to Kossuth, who replied “Thanks, many thanks for your gift, which I value very much indeed. It will do good to my chilled heart, to warm at the fire of your genius.”<sup>179</sup> During the Crimean War, Kossuth exerted his influence by giving lectures on Poland and Hungary in various cities around England and publishing his letters in newspapers. His writings contended that “the solution to the war lay in Hungary and Poland not in the Crimea.”<sup>180</sup> The passage quoted above shows that Massey perceived the allies’ military campaign not simply as an imperial contest but a continuation of the 1848 revolutions, urging readers to give international support for the independence of “each suffering land.”

In the third stanza of “War Rumours,” Massey imagines “Old England” (I. 5) as an “old nursing Mother,” drawing attention to the “sap in her Saxon tree” (II. 16-17). The implication of the land, mother and tree imagery is that it is not just England that will carry the banner of liberty and independence but the descendants of the mother will also rise to join it. This perception of the relationship between England and her colonies is also seen in “Down in Australia” (first published in the fourth edition of *The Ballad of Babe Christabel*, and reprinted in *War Waits*), a response to the public discussion of the political position of Australia.<sup>181</sup> Consider the second stanza of the poem:

We are with you in your battles, brave and bold Land!

---

<sup>179</sup> Quoted in David Shaw’s on-line edition of *Gerald Massey: Chartist, Poet, Radical and Freethinker* <[http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog\\_part\\_03.htm](http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog_part_03.htm)> [accessed March 2014].

<sup>180</sup> Quoted in Miles Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 240.

<sup>181</sup> For instance, on March 13 1854, commenting that “Since the last war [...] our Australian colonies have risen from penal settlements to wealthy, populous, and self-governing communities” a leader of *The Times* asked: “How will they fare in the event of a war?” Leader, *The Times*, March 13 1854, 8.

For the old ancestral tree  
 Striketh root beneath the sea,  
 And it beareth fruit of Freedom in the Gold Land!  
 We shall come, too, if you call,  
 We shall fight on if you fall;

Cromwell's land must never be a bought and sold Land. (II. 9-15)

In this passage, Massey ventriloquizes the voice of the Australian people responding to England's battle-cry. Tracing the antipodean roots of the Australian colonies back to "the old ancestral tree" as seen in "War Rumours," Massey reconfigures the Old Land that faces an external threat as the "brave and bold Land" before proclaiming that "Cromwell's land must never be a bought and sold Land." For Massey and other Chartist poets, Oliver Cromwell serves as the archetypal freedom fighter, a common trope in Chartist poetry.<sup>182</sup> As Ulrike Schwab has noted, "Chartism joins together a tradition of native heroes of freedom. Oliver Cromwell...fills the front position."<sup>183</sup> Both W. J. Linton and Ernest Jones invoked Cromwell to express their dissatisfaction with the inequality of the political system and the ruling classes.<sup>184</sup> While "the Gold Land" alludes to the recent discoveries of gold in Australia,<sup>185</sup> Massey's invocation of Cromwell reinforces the notion that the real gold the Australian people should be

---

<sup>182</sup> Invoking Cromwell to oppose the monarchy or the ruling classes was not confined to the Chartist poets, it was a wider radical nineteenth-century tradition. As Roger Howell Jr. notes, in the nineteenth-century "the cry that we need another Oliver [...] was almost invariably a form of radical protest." See *Images of Oliver Cromwell: Essays for and by Roger Howell Jr.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 99.

<sup>183</sup> Schwab, *The Poetry of The Chartist Movement*, p. 119

<sup>184</sup> See Roger Howell Jr., *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, pp. 99-101. In Linton's "The Place for Cromwell's Statue" (1850), he calls Cromwell "England's Victor Rebel." See Spartacus (William James Linton), "The Place for Cromwell's Statue," *The Red Republican* 1 (1850), 48. In an 1854 article on Oliver Cromwell, Linton wrote that he "was the first man to draw the sword on the people's side." See *Northern Tribune* 1 (November 1854), 410.

<sup>185</sup> For instance, in January 1854, a letter sent to *The Times* indicated that "the discoveries in our Australian colonies of late years render them such desirable countries for old soldiers to settle in." See "Troops for Australia," *The Times*, January 7 1854, 7; "Australian Gold," January 12 1854, 10.

defending is the “fruit of Freedom” which the motherland “bear [s].”

As seen in his early war poems including “War Rumours,” “Liberty’s Bridal Wreath” and “Down in Australia,” Massey relies heavily on the rhetoric and imagery of Chartist poetry in depicting the Crimean conflict. His particular brand of war poetry at once acknowledges the past struggle of the working class at home and promotes the independence of oppressed nations abroad. While these early poetic responses seem to circumvent the conflict between the working class and the aristocracy foregrounded in his Chartist poetry, this does not mean that Massey depicts the motherland as one without discordant voices and division or that his war poems endorse the governmental policies. Contrary to the critical consensus that *War Waits* is an overtly jingoistic volume, Massey deliberately ends it with two late war poems “Certain Ministers and the People” and “Austrian Alliance” in which he aligns himself with a Newcastle radical group to denounce the British government’s negotiation with Austria.

“Certain Ministers and the People” is a poem of twenty-four lines which emphasizes the difference between the responses of the ministers and the people to the war.

With faces turn’d from Battle, they went forth:

We marcht with ours set stern against the North.

They shuffled lest their feet might rouse the dead:

We went with martial triumph in our tread.

They trembled lest the world might come to blows:

We quiver’d for the tug and mortal close.

They only meant a mild hint for the Czar:

We would have bled him through a sumptuous war. (II. 1-8)

The juxtaposition between “They” and “We” in each rhyming couplet underscores Massey’s criticism of the government’s failure to meet the people’s expectations of the war. “[T]heir feet” recalls Lushington’s “War’s feet” and the tradition of the lamed poet Tyrtaeus. Yet Massey employs the imagery of the marching army to show that whereas the ministers retreat from the war zone and hesitate about starting a military conflict, the people are determined to sail for the Crimea (as suggested by their march against “The North”), wage “a sumptuous war” (referring not only to the glorious side of the war but the financial cost people are willing to pay) and strike a blow at “the Czar.” Significantly, these couplets articulate the voice of the people embittered by the inaction of the allies and the Aberdeen government’s negotiation with Austria in August 1854.

Although England declared war on March 30 1854, the fighting did not take place until six months later when the allies landed in the Crimea in September 1854. The delay of the military operation was due, amongst other factors, to the allies’ uncertainty about Austria’s position in the war.<sup>186</sup> On June 22 1854, *Punch* printed a full-page cartoon depicting Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell as two washerwomen (George-Ena and Johanna) in a laundry room full of steam (Figure 1). Below the caption of the cartoon “A Home and Foreign Question,” Johanna, a small woman, who is taking the clothes out of the water of a tub looks up to the tall woman, and asks: “When’s the fighting goin’ to begin, George-Ena?” The cartoon satirizes Aberdeen’s prosecution of the war, suggesting that the prime minister whose hands are deep in the tub is still trying to resolve the divided opinions of the war aims in the cabinet and engaged in secret diplomacies with Austria.

---

<sup>186</sup> As Alan Palmer notes, Lord Aberdeen “believed that the war would be shortened—perhaps, even at this late hour, avoided—if Austria joined Britain and France in putting pressure on the Tsar.” See Alan Palmer, *The Banner of Battle*, p. 48.



Figure 1 "A Home and Foreign Question," *Punch* (June 24 1854), 260.

The protracted negotiations led to the "Four points" signed by the western powers in Vienna on August 8 1854. Drafted by Austria and agreed by the governments of England and France, the "Four points" were intended as an ultimatum to Russia and a means to induce Austria to join the western alliance.<sup>187</sup> The second point, free navigation of the Danube, allowed the Austrian troops to occupy the principalities following the Russians' evacuation. On August 22 1854, a leader in *The Times* gave full coverage to "the Four Points" and two days later, highlighting the strategic advantage of Austria's involvement in the war, a leader remarked that

<sup>187</sup> For an overview of the background and political implications of the "Four Points," see Palmer, p. 78.

“Austria will keep the Russians out of the Principalities during the war, and will evacuate the Turkish territory herself upon the restoration of peace.”<sup>188</sup> However, the Austrian alliance compromised the war efforts of Kossuth, Massey and other radicals who intended that the war should contribute to the emancipation of Poland and other oppressed nations. For them, Austria, aided by Russia to suppress the Hungarian revolution of 1848, was implicated in the latter’s despotism.

On August 30 in an article entitled “Mismanagement of the war,” the *Daily News* recorded a public meeting in Newcastle attended by “an assemblage comprising between one and two thousand of the commercial, trading and industrial classes of the town and neighbourhood.” According to this article the aim of the meeting was to

consider and adopt measures to enforce upon government the effective and *bona fide* prosecution of the war with Russia, which [...] can be neither trifled with, neglected, nor delayed, by any government without betrayal of its trust, nor such delay be suffered by the people without a most grave and perilous dereliction of its duty.<sup>189</sup>

The key word “mismanagement” in the title of the article, like the slogan “The People’s War,” is one of the catchphrases that gained currency during the Crimean War.<sup>190</sup> In the context of the Newcastle public meeting, the writer used the word to condemn government ministers for betraying the trust and interests of the people. According to *DNB*, the leading speaker of the meeting, George Crawshay, was “an avowed radical” who “supported Chartism in 1848” and was actively engaged “in the nationalist struggle of the Poles, the Italians, and the Danes.”<sup>191</sup> In his speech

---

<sup>188</sup> Leader, *The Times*, August 22 1854, 8; Leader, *The Times*, August 24 1854, 6.

<sup>189</sup> *Daily News*, August 31 1854, 5.

<sup>190</sup> See Markovits, p. 21.

<sup>191</sup> Joan Allen, “Crawshay, George (1821–1896),” in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford University Press, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/46851>> [accessed August 29 2014].

reprinted by the *Daily News*, Crawshay exclaimed:

what had the government done? [...] they have sold the hopes of Poland and the sympathies of England [...] they have sold them to Austria [...] they have so completely separated themselves from us, and from the great body of the English public, by this unhappy Austrian Alliance.<sup>192</sup>

The motion read out by Crawshay and approved in the meeting stated that “we are unable to place confidence in the present administration for the conduct of the war; and we humbly entreat your Majesty graciously to consider whether we have assigned just grounds for such want of confidence.”<sup>193</sup> The signed requisition which demanded that the Queen reform the Aberdeen coalition provoked a variety of public responses.

On September 9 1854, commenting on the requisition, *John Bull* warned:

it would be a mistake [...] while endeavouring to give effect to the feeling of national indignation against Lord Aberdeen and his mismanagement of the Eastern question, for Conservatives to identify themselves with Radicals, and to sink their principles for the sake of getting rid of the common enemy.<sup>194</sup>

While sharing “the feeling of national indignation against” the government, the writer dismissed the petition on the grounds that it conflicted with the position upheld by conservative ministers. However, on the same day, the *Leader* advocated the requisition by printing a letter entitled “The War and the People” from an Old Reformer.”<sup>195</sup> The letter insisted that the speakers of the public meeting “declared the sentiments of nine-tenths of her majesty’s subjects” and that members of the meeting consist of “men of all parties, Tories, Whigs, Liberals, Radicals, Neutrals [...]. But all are of one heart and mind with regard to the mismanagement which has so far marked

---

<sup>192</sup> *Daily News*, August 31 1854, 5.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *John Bull*, September 9 1854, 566.

<sup>195</sup> [An Old Reformer] “The War and the People,” letter to the editor of *the Leader*, (September 9 1854), 850.

the wretched proceedings of Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues in this matter.”<sup>196</sup>

Evidently, Massey aligned himself with the requisition of the public meeting in Newcastle, for the *Leader*'s 1855 review of Massey's *War Waits* mentioned earlier quoted his "Certain Ministers and the People," claiming "We believe the bitter indignation of these verses to be a message from thousands of inarticulate heroic hearts of Englishmen. Ministers may be aware of the spirit they have raised but cannot quell."<sup>197</sup> Significantly, Massey deployed his Chartist rhetoric and imagery to articulate the radicals' indignation at the government's mismanagement of the war. In line 9-10 of the poem, Massey weighs the ministers "quenching Freedom's scatter'd fires" against the people who "kindled memories of heroic Sires." In line 14, Massey invokes again the name of "Cromwell" as an exemplar of "heroic Sires" to protest against the ministers. In lines 17-18, Massey suggests that as the Austrian alliance turned the ministers into tyrants, people must rebel against the government's tyranny: "To crown'd Bloodsuckers they would bind us slaves:/We would be free, or sleep in glorious graves." In this couplet, Massey employs the imagery of vampires sucking the blood of others to depict Austria's enslavement of the oppressed, so that he may valorize the enslaved people as martyrs sacrificing their blood and fighting against the tyranny of the parliament.<sup>198</sup> Massey's use of the vampire and blood imagery also echoes his depiction of the people's will to slay the vampire Czar: "We would have bled him through a sumptuous war" (I. 8). He concludes the poem by asking the people to impeach the government.

The Dwarfs trail our great Banner in the mire:

---

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> "Poets of the War," *The Leader* (January 20 1855), 65.

<sup>198</sup> This vampire imagery also appears in Sydney Dobell's "Austrian Alliance," published also in January 1855: "Vampyre! we wrench thee from the breathing throat/Of living Man, and he leaps up and flings They rotten carcase at the heads of Kings" (II. 12-14). See "Austrian Alliance," in *Sonnets on the War* (London: David Bogue), p. 35.



We ask for men to bear it higher and higher.

O, stop their fiddling over War's grim revel;

And pitch them from their dream-land to—the Devil. (21-24)

In this quatrain “The Dwarfs” may refer to the ministers who failed to prosecute the war efficiently, or to the military leaders caught up in the siege of Sebastopol in late 1854. “[T]he Devil” may allude to Austria or Russia; the ambiguities of such epithets avoid directly naming politicians and military personnel and allow for readers’ own political critiques of the war. What is clear is that the fiddler in the coalition who bore the brunt of Massey’s censure is Lord Aberdeen. In Crawshay’s speech at the public meeting of Newcastle, he had called for discharging Aberdeen from the coalition: “I do feel it is time to break up this coalition [...] and as long as it is presided over by Aberdeen we have no option but to go at it at once.”<sup>199</sup> Following its satirical attack on Aberdeen as the washerwoman in June 1854, *Punch* printed another full-page cartoon on December 2 1854 with the caption “Austria still plays on the Scotch Fiddle” (Figure 2). In this cartoon, Austria (represented by Francis Joseph emperor of Austria) is playing a fiddle with Aberdeen’s face on it; the sheet music sitting on a music stand contains a picture of the Czar and the title of the song reads “Vive Le Czar.” The cartoon satirizes the failure of Aberdeen’s diplomacy with Austria, suggesting that the Scottish Prime Minister is being deceived by Austria’s false neutrality while she is publicly recognized as an ally of Russia.<sup>200</sup> Significantly, Massey’s allusion to the proverb “fiddling while Rome burns” reverses Kingsley’s critique of the ineffectuality of home-front poetry. His reworking of the proverb features the people’s role in the national crisis and stresses the ministers’ lack of

---

<sup>199</sup> *Daily News*, August 31 1854, 5.

<sup>200</sup> Palmer notes that on December 2 1854, Austria “formally joined the Anglo-French alliance” but “there was still no guarantee that the Austrians would declare war on Russia and fight alongside their allies.” See Palmer, p. 169.



Figure 2 “Austria still plays on the Scotch Fiddle,” *Punch* (December 2 1854), 222.

sympathy for the suffering of the people, a recurrent claim to which I will return in my discussion of Brough’s satirical poems.

“Austrian Alliance” is the title of the final poem in *War Waits*, a sonnet revealing the poet’s disillusion with his political aim of championing England’s military campaign as a crusade for liberty. “How shall I help thee, Mother, in thy need? (II. 1) pleads the speaker. While the previous poem utilizes the radicals’ voice of “we,” this final poem reverts to the singular “I.” In his early war poems, Massey employs land imagery to negotiate the relationship between the Motherland (England), her colonies (Australia) and the suffering lands (Poland and Hungary). In the opening line of the

last poem, Massey directly addresses England as his “Mother.” It is interesting to note that the question (“How shall I help thee?”) of Massey’s responsibility as a people’s poet in a time of national crisis is raised not in the first but the final poem of his volume. In this respect, the question is definitively rhetorical, and can thus be interpreted as Massey’s introspection regarding his evolving poetic responses to the war. He asserts that he intends to “strike my harp” and “[s]ing how the Glory of our land hath risen; and “[s]ing midnight paeans by the Martyr’s graves” (II. 6, 8-9). In line 8, “the Glory of our land” echoes back to the past of the “Old Land” in the first poem of the volume, the memory of the fore-sires of the working class; in line 9, Massey again conjures up the imagery of “the Martyr’s graves.” As Sanders elaborates, “the image of the martyr’s grave recurs frequently in Massey’s Chartist poetry” and “is simultaneously a sign of past political defeat (as a focus for ‘remembrance’) and a source of present political inspiration.”<sup>201</sup> Here, the martyrs Massey eulogizes in his songs include not only the British soldiers who died in the Crimea but also patriots who opposed tyrants back on English soil, or those who engaged with the 1848 revolution in Europe. Massey’s persistent use of the imagery of the land and of Martyrs’ graves shows clearly that he has subsumed the key elements of his Chartist rhetoric into his war poetry to construct a radical patriotism: it acknowledges the struggle of the working class, advocates England’s intervention as a libertarian crusade and opposes the government’s pusillanimous war policies as compromising the will of people. Nevertheless, the poem’s final couplet announces the poet’s consternation and sense of betrayal when he learns of the news of the Austrian alliance: “No! England waves her Minstrels forth to find/Our Lion Heart again in Austria’s prison” (II. 13-14). In a sense, the twist in the poem does not so

---

<sup>201</sup> Sanders, p. 217.

much convey Massey's denunciation of the Austrian alliance as his disappointment at the collapse of his political aspirations.

Massey's disillusionment with England's military campaign is further manifest in his subsequent revision of "Certain Ministers and the People." In 1856, Massey added eight more lines to the opening of the 1855 version published in *War Waits*.<sup>202</sup>

O SUFFERING people, this is not our fight,  
Who called a holy crusade for the right.  
The Despot's bloody game our tricksters play,  
And stake our future, chance by chance, away.  
O darkened hearts in desolate home-stead!  
O wasted bravery of our mighty dead!  
The flower of men fall stricken from behind:

The Knaves and Cowards stab us bound and blind. (1-8)<sup>203</sup>

This newly added passage conveys Massey's acceptance of the defeat of his political hopes. Noticeably, he uses the rhyming couplets not to heighten the internal conflict between the ministers and the people, but to stress the latter's unnecessary sacrifices and agony. In the opening couplet, despite his rhyming of "fight" and "right," he addresses "the suffering people," proclaiming that "this is not our fight." In lines 5 and 6 his lament for "darkened hearts in desolate home-stead" and "wasted bravery of our mighty dead" presses home a charge of government mismanagement different from that discussed above. It points not only to the ministers' betrayal of the people's expectations of the war but the governmental maladministration that cost the deaths of so many common soldiers. It is to this theme I shall turn in the next section.

---

<sup>202</sup> In 1856, Massey published his *Craigcrook Castle* a collection of poems in which he revises his cycle of Crimean War poems under the title *Glimpses of the War*.

<sup>203</sup> Gerald Massey, *Craigcrook Castle* (London: David Bogue, 1856), p. 151.

### III

Better known in studies of Victorian literature and culture as a dramatist and a life-long contributor to *Punch*, Tom Taylor (1817-1880) composed three war poems for *Punch* during the Crimean War— “The Due of the Dead” (October 28 1854), “The Battle of Balaklava” (December 2 1854) and “Balaklava” (February 17 1855).”<sup>204</sup> As noted in Chapter 1, for all the anonymity of Taylor’s *Punch* poems, his “The Due of the Dead” is not only one of the few Crimean War poems anthologized in Jon Stallworthy’s *The Oxford Book of War Poetry* (1978) but also one of the most frequently discussed war poems in studies of Crimean War poetry. By contrast, Taylor’s “Balaklava” has hitherto received little attention. Patrick Waddington is the only critic I have encountered who argues for the cultural importance of the poem. In his anthology of the poetry of the Charge of the Light Brigade, he posits that it “is one of the finest and best-argued evocations of those ethical, economic and political shortcomings which lay behind the charge.”<sup>205</sup> In this section, before examining Taylor’s “Balaklava,” I will first highlight the civilian poet’s response to newspaper accounts of government mismanagement in 1854 as seen in Taylor’s “The Due of the Dead” as well as Tennyson’s “Charge” and provide a brief history of the changing public discourse concerning the role of the political elite from the battle of Alma to the ministerial crisis of early 1855.

As discussed in Chapter 1, *The Times*’ accounts of the aftermath of the battle of Alma, especially Thomas Chenery’s report of October 12 1854, played a crucial part in reshaping the Tyrtæan mode of poetic response to war. Inspired by Chenery’s account of the suffering soldiers at the Scutari hospitals, Taylor’s “The Due of the

---

<sup>204</sup> See Winton Tolles, *Tom Taylor and The Victorian Drama* (New York: Columbia Press, 1940); see Patrick Waddington’s Introduction to Tom Taylor’s poem “Balaclava” and Bibliography of Crimean War Poetry. Waddington, “Theirs But To Do and Die,” pp. 87-89, 212.

<sup>205</sup> Waddington, p. 87.

Dead” is significantly different from Franklin Lushington’s bellicose lyrics, in the sense that it is not an exhortative piece but a political critique of middle-class civilians’ attitude to and responsibilities for combatants who fell on the battlefield. However, in his response to Chenery’s claims of the government’s negligence of medical supplies and staff for the wounded soldiers, Taylor’s poem backed the official philanthropic project the Patriotic Fund and cautioned civilians against merely gossiping about the war.

Later, in the immediate context of the battle of Balaclava, Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade” reveals the Laureate’s effort to honour the “Noble Six Hundred” and to gloss over the aristocratic military officers’ contribution to the mismanagement of the war. The key line “Someone had blundered,” which famously originated from the phrase “some hideous blunder” in a leader of *The Times* (November 13 1854), makes explicit that the disastrous charge was a strategic mistake.<sup>206</sup> The rhyme “blunder’d/hundred,” (II. 8, 12; the newspaper version) which was censured by Kingsley (as discussed in Chapter 1), creates dissonant rather than melodious voices that draw readers’ attention to the blunder of the charge as they read through the poem and encounter the rhyme “thunder’d/wondered” (II. 25, 35; the newspaper version). However, the ambiguity or evasiveness of the word “Someone” suggests that either Tennyson’s official position as Laureate did not allow him to point his finger at the government or that he was not able to pinpoint exactly which military officer was responsible for the catastrophic actions of the Light Brigade.<sup>207</sup> When Tennyson reprinted the poem in *Maud and Other Poems* (July 1855), his revision of the lines relating who gave the order and his deletion of the line “Someone had

---

<sup>206</sup> Leader, *The Times*, November 13 1854, 6.

<sup>207</sup> Tate writes: “Precisely who said what and what it meant has never been fully established [...]. The Charge raised questions of knowledge and interpretation that were to trouble both the literature and the politics of the 1850s.” See Tate’s “On Not Knowing Why,” p. 169.

blunder'd" suggest, alongside a concern for the sound effects of the rhyme "blunder'd/hundred, a reluctance to criticize the military authorities and attribute blame.<sup>208</sup> In general, while poetic responses arising from the three major battles fought at Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman began to register ambivalence toward the suffering of the soldiers, they still tended to implicitly uphold the Aberdeen coalition's prosecution of the war.

However, from mid-December onwards, William Russell's appalling descriptions of the miserable condition of the rank and file during the winter siege of Sebastopol shattered any national complacency about the army and dramatically altered the political stance both of *The Times* and subsequent poetic reactions to the war.<sup>209</sup> It was on December 23 1854, two days before Christmas when British families were united at home, that John Delane the editor of *The Times* launched an all-out attack on the Aberdeen coalition:

the noblest army England ever sent from these shores has been sacrificed to the grossest mismanagement. Incompetency, lethargy, aristocratic hauteur, official indifference, favour, routine, perverseness, and stupidity reign, revel, and riot in the camp before Sebastopol, in the harbour of Balaklava, in the hospitals of Scutari, and how much nearer home we do not venture to say.<sup>210</sup>

For readers who had followed news of the army through the columns of *The Times*,

---

<sup>208</sup> Compare the newspaper version with the one printed in book form. In the former, Tennyson wrote "Someone had blunder'd" and "'Take the guns,' Nolan said." In the latter, in addition to removing the key line and the reference to Nolan's name, he rendered the order of the charge more ambiguous: "'Charge,' was the captain's cry." See "The Charge of the Light Brigade," *The Examiner*, December 9 1854, 780; "The Charge of the Light Brigade," in *Maud and Other Poems* (London: Edward Moxon, 1855), p. 151.

<sup>209</sup> For instance, on December 18 1854, Russell wrote: "It is now pouring rain...the trenches are turned into dykes—in the tents the water is sometimes a foot deep—our men have not either warm or waterproof clothing—they are out for twelve hours at a time in the trenches—they are plunged into the inevitable miseries of a winter campaign—and not a soul seems to care for their comfort or even for their lives." *The Times*, December 18 1854, 8. For a detailed account of William Howard Russell's role in the war, see Alan Hankinson, *Man of Wars: William Howard Russell of The Times* (London: Heinemann, 1982).

<sup>210</sup> Leader, *The Times*, December 23 1854, 9.

this passage constitutes an “irony of situation” regarding the public’s expectations of the army’s military procedures in at least two respects.<sup>211</sup> First, it represents the newspaper’s radical rewriting of its earlier celebration of the army; in February 1854, *The Times* had declared its confidence in the British army and predicted an easy, quick victory: “An Army in all respects so perfectly equipped has never left our shores, and should unfortunately its service be required in the field, the country may look forward with confidence to the result.”<sup>212</sup> Delane’s critique is ironic because the decimation of the army was not occasioned by military confrontation with the Russian enemies but by the incompetence, routine and bureaucracy of aristocratic leaders at home and in the Crimea. The consequences of Russell’s dispatches detailing the plight of the rank and file in the Crimea and the leader-writers’ scathing criticism of the failure of the Aberdeen coalition were twofold: they aroused public sympathy for the common soldiers and generated a national debate about the survival of a military system based on aristocratic rather than meritocratic principles. The outcry against political leaders’ responsibilities for the losses of the army led to the disintegration of the Aberdeen government in late January 1855. On January 26 1855, the radical MP John Arthur Roebuck put a motion before the House of Commons that those departments of the government responsible for the losses of the army be investigated by a Select Committee.<sup>213</sup> When the House passed the motion by a majority, Lord Aberdeen viewed the result as a vote of no confidence, resigned, and was succeeded by Lord Palmerston.

---

<sup>211</sup> The phrase “irony of situation” is borrowed from Paul Fussell’s seminal book *The Great War and Modern Memory* in which he writes: “Every war is ironic because every war is worse than expected. Every war constitutes an irony of situation because its means are so melodramatically disproportionate to its presumed ends.” See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; first published in 1975), p. 8.

<sup>212</sup> *The Times*, February 21 1854, 10.

<sup>213</sup> HC Debates, January 26 1855, vol. 136, cols 979, *Hansard Online 1803-2005* <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1855/jan/26/army-crimea>> [accessed January 2014].



If in the aftermath of the battle of Alma Chenery's article relating the medical crisis at the Scutari hospitals awakened the public to the suffering of the wounded and constituted the first major shift in the civilian poet's responses to the war, Russell's accounts of the plight of the rank and file during the winter siege of Sebastopol precipitated another. They made every civilian at home aware of the military fiascos occurring in the Crimea and the political responsibilities of the government and its officers for the suffering of the troops. In 1855, a few poets began to take the Aberdeen coalition to task, though they tended to gloss over the military crisis by martyring the soldiers' bodily sufferings or by calling on God for help. In a popular broadside ballad entitled "Sufferings of the British Army in the camp at Sebastopol," for instance, the anonymous balladeer sings: "The Franch [sic] are well provided for, their wants into are seen,/They have a friend, a Bonaparte, and not a Aberdeen;/But Britons are neglected, are doomed in youth and bloom."<sup>214</sup> The balladeer reiterates the already common view circulating in the press that the French troops fared far better than the English in the Crimea due to the bungling of the Aberdeen coalition. The anonymous poet goes on to eulogize the British soldiers' stoical endurance in the face of suffering: "Endured the greatest misery before Sebastopol;/Crushed with fatigue and hunger, they braved danger with a smile/No Nation in the world can match the sons of Britain's Isle."<sup>215</sup> The poet's point is that despite the incompetence of the government, the ill-equipped British soldiers still outshone their French counterparts. In so doing, the poet takes a conventionally patriotic stance and rationalizes soldiers' bodily sufferings. At the end of the poem, the poet attempts to

---

<sup>214</sup> This ballad is mentioned and quoted by the reviewer of *Chamber's Journal of Popular Literature*. See "Street-Ballads of the War," *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature* 124 (May 1856), 305. "Sufferings of the British Army in the Camp at Sebastopol," quoted in *English Ballads* through National Library of Scotland,

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* <<http://digital.nls.uk/english-ballads/pageturner.cfm?id=74891311>> [accessed January 2014].

impose a sense of national unity on the current political crisis by claiming favour and protection from God: “O God Protect Our soldiers with thy mighty hand/Grant them a victory, and guide them to their native land.”<sup>216</sup>

What renders Taylor’s “Balaklava” a more interrogative, revisionary political critique is that it refuses the traditional heroic portrayal of the suffering soldiers and confronts readers with their role in the current political crisis. Instead of simply arousing sympathy for the suffering soldiers, Taylor attempts to provoke the guilt of wealthy middle-class readers and engage them in reforming the political system. Published two weeks after the ministerial crisis on February 17 1855, Taylor’s “Balaclava” can be read as a sequel to “The Due of the Dead,” which illustrates the poet’s re-evaluation of a middle-class civilian’s responsibilities for the plight of common soldiers. It opens by asking three inter-related questions:

What master hand shall set on the right path

These our blind guides, that wander to and fro?

What pen shall write the nation’s helpless wrath?

What cry shall speak its woe? (II. 1-4)<sup>217</sup>

The imagery of a powerful guiding hand appears both at the end of the broadside ballad “Sufferings of the British Army in the camp at Sebastopol” and the beginning of Taylor’s poem. The crucial difference between the two is that Taylor renders ambiguous and problematic the subject of his questions. As seen in the ballad, the “master hand” can refer to God’s “mighty hand” from a religious perspective. It can also be considered a synecdoche for the powerful male hands of new cabinet members or military leaders ready to handle the current national crisis or carry the sword to

---

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> “Balaklava,” *Punch* (February 17 1855), 67.

defend the nation.<sup>218</sup> The “blind guides” might allude to the political and military leaders who had lost control of the military campaign. The ambiguity of the subject of the first question at once directs the reader to reflect upon the problems of the current crisis and spurs the reader to confront them. As readers reach line 3 Taylor complicates the possibilities of the subjects discussed above by linking “master hand” and “pen,” suggesting that he is not only speaking of the new ministry in the current political crisis but of poets. Again, in the ballad, in arousing readers’ sympathy for the suffering solders, the poet stresses the impossibility of depicting their bodily pain: “No pen can write or tongue ran [sic] tell the hardships they endure.” Waddington claims that “Taylor, in calling here for someone greater than himself to say in poetry the things that he himself feels so deeply, must be alluding to Tennyson.”<sup>219</sup> While this might be the case, Taylor’s questions can also be read as interrogative ones that challenge existing poetic efforts: poets had hitherto not given voice to the suffering solders in the Crimea. The ambiguity of the second question also suggests that he will take up the pen to “write the nation’s helpless wrath.”

In the next two stanzas, Taylor introduces the voice of a middle-class paterfamilias reading newspaper reports of the destruction of the British army. The persona learns that “That noble army, that so stirred our pride—So stout, so well-equipped, so trim—arrayed—Melts like a snow wreath from a warm hill-side” (II. 5-7). Here, the civilian’s description of how the army “Melts like a snow wreath” echoes Russell’s alarming report of January 24 1855— “our army is rapidly melting

---

<sup>218</sup> An example of the hand synecdoche referring to the ministers can be seen in Matthew Arnold’s “Haworth Churchyard,” written in April 1855 and first published in *Fraser’s Magazine* in May 1855 as a tribute to Charlotte Brontë, who had died on March 31 1855. In this elegy, Arnold records the humiliation the people suffered because of the ministers’ bungling of the war, lamenting that “She will behold no more/This ignominious spectacle/Power dropping from the hand.” See [Matthew Arnold], “Haworth Churchyard,” *Fraser’s Magazine* 51 (May 1855), 527-30.

<sup>219</sup> Waddington, p. 87.

away—dissolved in rain. It is the rain and the melting snow we have to dread.”<sup>220</sup>

Lamenting that “we can give no aid!” the civilian is haunted by the suffering army:

“That starving army haunts us night and day;/Clouding our gladness, deepening our care” (ll. 8, 9-10). In the fourth stanza, he is visited by the ghost of a Crimean soldier; unable to “chase the phantom” away, the wealthy middle-class civilian confronts him:

“Why hauntest thou *us*, grim spectre? ’Twas not we

Who brought thee to this miserable end.

As flowed thy blood for us, our gold for thee

We, without stint, did spend.

All art we had, all industry, all skill,

To feed and clothe, and lodge thee, was bestowed.” (ll. 17-22)

This passage can be interpreted as Taylor’s satire of a middle-class civilian’s response to the suffering soldiers. “Why hauntest thou *us*, grim spectre?” ask the perplexed “we” of the poem. Here, the voice of the “we” protesting that the ghost should not haunt them is distinctly different from that of the “we” lamenting the condition of the army. Taylor’s emphasis on the italicized “us” serves as a double critique of the middle-class civilian speakers and readers outside the poem. In the poem, Taylor satirises the complacency of the middle-class civilians as they contemplate their war efforts. As an example of such complacency, on April 6 1854, speaking of the financial support every citizen should give, a leader of *The Times* wrote: “people [...] will not be so light, so base, and so false as to shrink from their own share in the struggle, if they have to pay a little more for their sugar and tea, and even for their soup, to feed the soldier [...]. We are a great people [...] we are also a very rich people.”<sup>221</sup> As the wealthy middle-class had paid a double income tax to cover the war expenses and

---

<sup>220</sup> See *The Times*, January 24 1855, 7.

<sup>221</sup> Leader, *The Times*, April 6 1854, 8.

responded to the philanthropic projects such as the Patriotic Fund—as the speaker of “The Due of the Dead” suggested—they feel that they can remain detached from the horror of war and should be immune from ghostly apparitions.

What is most striking in the next scene is that the ghost points his accusatory finger at the middle-class civilian rather than the aristocratic political and military leaders (who are the standard target of criticism in the press). In the last eight stanzas, the ghost states plainly that it is the rich, influential middle-class readers who are to blame:

“My blood is on your heads!” My blood, not spilt

As soldiers’ blood should be, upon the field.

Oh! that I had but fallen, hilt to hilt,

Like Spartan on his shield. (II. 25-28)

The rhyme “field/shield” and the phantom’s regret that he had not fallen in Spartan fashion recalls Polwhele’s translation of Tyrtæus’ war song: “If his soul thirst not for the martial field;/Meet not the fury of the rushing host,/Nor bear o’er hills of slain the untrembling shield” (II. 14-16).<sup>222</sup> The ghost laments that he has not “met the soldier’s death” but has been abused as “beasts [...].Uncared for, over-driven” (II. 29, 31-32). Through the reproachful voice of the phantom and a grotesque depiction of the bodies of the soldiers “[r]otting in our own filth, like mangy hounds,/cramped, frost, and hunger-bitten to the bones,” Taylor debunks the heroic construction of the suffering soldiers as silent, uncomplaining martyrs familiar from “Sufferings of the British army in the camp at Sebastopol” and other poems.<sup>223</sup>

---

<sup>222</sup> See note 58 in Chapter 1.

<sup>223</sup> Another example is Mary Jane Tomkins’ “Before Sebastopol,” published in *Household Words* on February 24 1855, just six days after Taylor’s poem. Acknowledging that the Crimean war “is a harder conflict ye are bearing,/A bitt’rer struggle now ye undergo,/Than any outer act of gallant daring,” the speaker takes note of “The winter in inhospitable regions,/The toil by day, the ceaseless watch by night,/Rain, frost and cold advance resistless legions,” (II. 4-6, 9-11). Clearly

In response to the interlocutor's claim that they have donated food and clothing for him, the phantom reveals that the efforts of the British public to alleviate the hardships of the soldiers through philanthropy and fund-raising have failed.

“To die for very lack of clothes and food,

Of shelter, bedding, medicine, and fire:

While six miles off lay, piled up many a rood,

All we did so require! (II. 37-40)

The ghost's allusion to the “six miles” that “all we did so require” allows Taylor to draw attention to the most infamous administrative blunder that took place at the harbour of Balaklava: the medical and food supplies sent from England to Balaklava could not reach the starving armies on account of transportation difficulties, ending up six miles from the military encampment. On January 24 1855, Russell first reported this bungle in *The Times*; two days later, a letter entitled “The Slough of Despond” in *The Times* stated that “the timely construction of six miles of road might have averted or alleviated the misery of thousands and prevented the disgrace of Britain in the eyes of the world.”<sup>224</sup> On January 26 1855, in response to John Roebuck in the parliament, Sydney Herbert, the Secretary at the War, also referred to this incident and cited an insider's opinion: “Your Government has sent out plenty of everything; they have sent it 3,000 miles; but the distance is 3,006; and the last six miles are more difficult than the first 3,000.”<sup>225</sup> Later in June 1855 an anonymous writer published, under the pseudonym “Nemo,” a political satire entitled “The Seven Mile Cabinet: Or, The

---

based on Russell's reports of the sufferings of the soldiers, Tomkins pays tribute to the Crimean soldiers by arguing that their sufferings in the winter siege bring forth a new conception of masculinity: “To bear such hardships nobly uncomplaining” (II. 29). See [Mary Jane Tomkins], “Before Sebastopol,” *Household Words* 11 (1855), 85.

<sup>224</sup> *The Times*, January 24, 1855, 7; *The Times*, January 26 1855, 7.

<sup>225</sup> See HC Debates, January 26 1855, vol. 136, cols. 988, *Hansards Online 1803-2005* <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1855/jan/26/army-crimea>> [accessed January 2014].

Doleful Story of the Russian War,” stating plainly “the cause of mighty England’s fall: Her army sunk into their last abode/Because she could not make seven miles of road.”<sup>226</sup> As Russell’s newspaper reports, readers’ letters, parliamentary debates, and satirical poetic responses cumulatively make clear, this military gaffe in Balaclava came to epitomize the less than professional bureaucracy dictating military policy and the ineptness of the aristocratic cabinet. It is the political implication of the disastrous campaign in Balaclava to which the title of Taylor’s poem “Balaclava” alludes. By recounting this disaster through the indignant voice of a ghostly fatality, Taylor’s point is not so much to condemn the ministers as to emphasize the point that despite middle-class civilian war efforts, only a logistically efficient military will make a difference. This view was subsequently echoed and reinforced by Elizabeth Barrett Browning in a letter of June 12 1855:

I do not doubt that the Aberdeen side of the Cabinet has been greatly to blame, but the system is the root of the whole evil; if they don’t tear up the system they may tear up the Aberdeens ‘world without end,’ and not better the matter; if they do tear up the system, then shall we all have reason to rejoice at these disasters, apart from our sympathy with individual sufferings.<sup>227</sup>

Robert and Elizabeth Browning resided in Italy during the war, and while none of their poetic output at this time addressed the war directly, they paid close attention to any news of the war they received. Browning’s critique of “the system” as “the root of the whole evil” also raises the question of “how” to reform it. Whilst pinpointing the deep-rooted problems existing in the current system in the last stanzas, Taylor’s ghost reminds civilians of the power they unwittingly possess and calls on them to reform

---

<sup>226</sup> Quoted in *The Gentleman Magazine and Historical Review* (June 1855), 616.

<sup>227</sup> Elizabeth Barrett Browning, letter to Sarianna Browning, June 12 1855, in *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1897), II: 453.

the system.

“This guilt lies at your door. You wear no crown

But what is She who wears it unto *you*?

You raise up ministers and pluck them down:

What *you* will, they must do.

“If they put leadership in baby hands,

’Tis that *you* wink, or slumber, or approve,

If, like an iron wall, Routine still stands:

*You* will, and it must move?

“If Aristocracy’s cold shadow fall

Across the soldier’s path, to you is given

The might to rend away that ancient pall,

And let in light of Heaven!

“I was the People’s soldier. In their name

I stood against the Czar in battle’s hour.

If I, not he, be baffled, rest the shame

With *you*, that have the power!” (II. 41-56)

Foregrounding the power of the middle class to intervene politically and to demolish the outdated, inefficient aristocratic regime, this passage can be seen as the ghost’s own answer to the ambiguous questions raised at the beginning of the poem. The final question put by the apparition to the middle-class civilian is—what is the relationship between you and the nation? The “She” in line 42 can refer to the Queen who wears



the crown literally but also the nation symbolically. According to the phantom soldier if the system remains as it is, it is only because the recently enfranchised male middle classes have failed to exercise their “will” in politics. In foregrounding the power the male middle class possess, Taylor first cites the collapse of the Aberdeen coalition as an example of the political intervention of the middle class, and then consolidates a sense of middle-class identity and agency through the pronoun “you,” blurring the distinction between the civilians in the poem and those reading it. While there are eight instances of “you” contained within this passage, only three are not italicised. The interplay between the italicised and unitalicised “you” draws the readers’ attention to the act of invocation and accusation on the part of both the ghost and the printed page, forcing the reader to identify with the disparaged “we” of the earlier section. Hence Taylor’s solution to transforming a deeply entrenched military and political system is to exhort his readers to raise their voices in dissent and to put pressure on the government in its role as citizens of the nation. The poem reinforces *The Times*’ claim that the Crimean War is a “People’s war.” In the final stanza, by calling the phantom soldier “the People’s soldier,” Taylor appears to empower the common soldier by aligning him with a public of distinctively middle-class readers. It is important to note that although Taylor’s “Balaklava” differs from most patriotic poems of the time in allowing the suffering soldiers a voice of their own, it is a predominantly middle-class poem. Taylor utilizes the ghost’s haunting voice not so much to elevate the conditions of the working classes as to endorse the political intervention of the newly enfranchised middle classes.

#### IV

Of all the Crimean War poets, no one challenged the upper classes more forcefully and radically than Robert Brough (1828-1860) in his satirical volume *Songs*

*of the Governing Classes, and Other Lyrics* (June 1855). In his preface to the volume Brough wrote: “to the institution of aristocracy in this country [...] is mainly attributable all the political injustice, and more especially the grovelling moral debasement, we have to deplore.”<sup>228</sup> He explained that this is

a feeling by no means recently implanted or even greatly developed in the writer’s heart, but one which the preparation of the public mind by recent events and disclosures has afforded him the opportunity of spreading to the best of his ability, and by such means of utterance as he had at his disposal.<sup>229</sup>

Unlike Massey and Taylor, Brough did not attack the aristocracy only for the disastrous military campaign in the Crimea. Rather the newspapers’ revelation of a failing leadership offered him an opportunity to articulate his deep-seated antagonism toward the ruling classes.<sup>230</sup>

The difference between Brough’s radical response to, and the prevailing middle-class critique of, the aristocracy is made explicit; on February 14 1855, a leader of *The Times* argued that as the elite had failed to secure national pride or to perform the tasks required of them, “the system which excludes plebian talent from high office shall henceforth be discontinued, and that in the army, at the desk, and in the council, those men shall be called to the public service, who are best to serve the public.”<sup>231</sup> In the meantime the writer remarked that this reform should be enacted “in no spirit of wild and theoretical levelling, in no spirit of hatred or animosity to any portion of the community, but in the spirit of practical reform of an urgent and

---

<sup>228</sup> See Robert Barnabas Brough, *Songs of the Governing Classes, And Other Lyrics* (London: Henry Vizetelly, 1855), pp. 6-7. References to the poems in this edition are cited internally by the line number.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>230</sup> Edmund Yates penned an account of Brough in his *Recollections and Experiences* (1885). It was printed in the second edition of Robert Brough’s volume: “I have often wondered what gave Robert Brough that deep vindictive hatred of wealth and rank and respectability which permeated his life. It was probably innate; it was certainly engrained. It was largely increased by poverty, by ill health.” See Brough, *Songs of the Governing Classes* (London: Vizetelly and Co., 1890), p. vi.

<sup>231</sup> Leader, *The Times*, February 14 1855, 6.

intolerable grievance.”<sup>232</sup> By contrast, under the title page of his volume, Brough emphasized that it was “written in a seasonable spirit of “Vulgar Declamation,” a term Lord Palmerston had coined in a speech to the House of Commons on February 19 1855,

But, Sir, I do protest against the language we have heard this evening from the Hon. Member for Aylesbury, who, while he performs what he thinks a public duty in pointing out old errors and instances of mismanagement in regard to the army, must needs tell me that this country has become the laughing stock of Europe, and has thought proper to mingle with his observations and comments a deal of what I must call vulgar declamation against the aristocracy of this country.<sup>233</sup>

The “Vulgar Declamation” Palmerstone decried was that of MP Austen Henry Layard, who had linked the military tragedies in the Crimean War and the humiliation the nation suffered to the aristocratic monopoly: “you [the aristocracy] have sacrificed its dearest interests because you will not allow men of talent to come between you and your nobility.”<sup>234</sup> Brough printed Palmerston’s response and parodied this scene in a poem bearing the title ““Vulgar Declamation’: A Lesson for the Young” in which a father warns his son against the use of vulgar declamation in the parliament:

And then when common soldiers claim

---

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> Brough quotes this passage at the top of a poem bearing the title “Vulgar Declamation.” See *Ibid.*, p. 87; HC Debates, February 19 1855, vol. 136, col. 1534, *Hansard Online 1803-2005* <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1855/feb/19/the-new-administration>> [accessed January 2014].

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, cols 1528. Layard, already famous as the excavator of Nineveh, was lauded by *Punch* as an aspiring politician associated with the reform-minded middle-class members on Roebuck’s committee to inquire into the conduct of the government responsible for the military disasters. On April 7 1855, *Punch* supported Layard’s investigation of the conduct of the government by publishing a poem “Ode to Mr. Layard,” eulogizing Layard as a hard-working manful digger defying the authorities and unearthing the official blunders. See “The Member for Nineveh digs out of the British Bull,” *Punch* (April 7 1855), 134; “Ode to Mr. Layard,” *Punch* (April 7 1855), 138.

Their share of wealth and glory,  
And grudge the lions all the prize,  
    Don't *you* take up the story.  
And as for giving working men  
    Ideas above their station,  
'Tis positively wrong, as well

As VULGAR DECLAMATION. (II. 33-40)

Brough satirises Palmerstone's use of the phrase by showing that moves to promote the welfare of the "common soldiers" or the "working men" will be repudiated as vulgar declamation because they infringe upon the prerogatives of the aristocracy. Palmerston used the term "vulgar declamation" to suggest that Layard's speech against the aristocracy was offensive, coarse and ill-bred, but Brough's deployment of the term "vulgar" stresses its earlier, primary association with the ordinary language used by the common people. By "written in the spirit of Vulgar Declamation," Brough implies that his volume of war poetry is both a satirical attack on the aristocracy through the language which they despise and an attempt to reclaim the term "vulgar" for the common people.

Brough's radical response to the aristocracy has been largely ignored in recent studies of Crimean War poetry. One of the only critics to recognize Brough's contribution to Crimean War poetry is Cynthia Dereli. She argues that Brough's "exposure of the mechanisms of propaganda constitutes a potential indictment of those other poets who were busy building their positive images of the conflict for whatever ostensibly good motives."<sup>235</sup> In my view Brough's use of satire as a weapon with which to attack the aristocracy not only subverts the traditional *form* but also the

---

<sup>235</sup> Dereli, *A War Culture in Action*, p. 126.

political *function* of patriotic poetry. In Laura Friswell's memoir of her father, she recorded that around December 1854 Brough sent a letter to James Hain Friswell in reply to the latter's invitation to contribute poems to *The Patriotic Fund Journal* (the first number of which appeared on December 16 1854).<sup>236</sup> In his reply, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the formal restraint of the genre of war song and its political function:

*I don't like war songs [...] because I don't see how any variety is to be got out of it. One battle is exactly like another, and a song about it can only be a list of killed and wounded done into verse. Look at the people who have ever tried it—you find they can only say the same thing over and over again [...]. If you could find a revolutionary war of people fighting for liberty, that would be worth writing about, as involving a higher question than cutting throats and supporting kings, queens, and emperors. This war does it, and the people who fall in it are only to be deplored as having been sacrificed to the old original swindle with its face painted in new colours.*<sup>237</sup>

Brough's critique of the form of war song and its political function is clearly expressed in the above passage. He points out that war songs' normative connection with patriotism often deprives it of its variety: readers can dissociate war songs written in earlier wars from their socio-historical contexts and find "the same matchless individual gifted with precisely the same attributes[...] with only the proper name changed" because they all convey the same sentiment and political views. More importantly, he loathes war songs' espousal of the ruling classes ("supporting kings, queens and emperors"), noting that writing about "a revolutionary war of people

---

<sup>236</sup> See Laura Hain Friswell, *James Hain Friswell: A Memoir* (London: George Redway, 1898), pp. 40-41.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

fighting for liberty” entailed “a higher question.” His emphasis on “*This war* does it” suggests that the publicity surrounding the poor leadership and military incompetence of the aristocracy in the press might contribute to a revolution of the class system in England.<sup>238</sup> For him, the real conflict of the Crimean War lies not in the imperial competitiveness between England and Russia but in the class conflict between the working-classes and the aristocracy. As the conclusion of the passage cited above suggests, the sacrifices of the soldiers mismanaged by the government only serves to highlight “the old original swindle with its face painted in new colours”: the aristocracy’s exploitation of the poor and weak. I posit that Brough’s response to this ideological predicament is to parody patriotic songs that uncritically underpin the institution of the elite from within. In what follows, I will substantiate these claims by exploring two of his satirical war poems “The Return from Syria” and “A Word For Nero,” both from *Songs of the Governing Classes*.

The French patriotic song “Partant Pour La Syrie,” first composed by Queen Hortense of Holland during her reign (1806-1810), was frequently performed alongside other national songs such as “God Save the Queen” during musical performances at home and by military bands in the Crimea.<sup>239</sup> The first English translator of the French song was Sir Walter Scott, who claimed in a note to his rendition “Romance of Dunois” (1815) that it was based on a French manuscript he

---

<sup>238</sup> Brough was not alone in feeling that the military blunders abroad might give rise to a revolutionary war at home. On February 10 1855, a writer for *The Leader* exclaimed: “How the times alter! In 1848 the Government feared a revolution—a petty, cabalistic imaginary revolution of a few artisans. In 1855 the Government itself makes half-a-dozen revolutions—radical, subversive, universal.” See “Revolutionary by the Aristocracy,” *The Leader* (February 10 1855), 132.

<sup>239</sup> In October 1854, *The Times* wrote of the popularity and effects of the French song in a concert: “At the conclusion of the quadrille of the National Anthem was again demanded amid a veritable uproar; and this bequest complied with, “Partant Pour La Syrie” was called for with even greater vehemence. The transport of enthusiasm created by the well known French melody beggars description;” A poetic version entitled “A Warrior Bound for Palestine,” was written by W.H. Bellamy in December 1854. See “M. Jullien’s concerts,” *The Times*, October 31, 1854 7; “Partant Pour La Syrie,” *John Bull*, December 9 1854, 776.

found on the field of Waterloo and that it was “strictly literal.”<sup>240</sup> In Scott’s translation of the French song, Dunois, “the young and brave,” before going to Palestine for a holy war, prays at St. Mary’s shrine that he “may prove the bravest knight/And love the fairest fair” (I. 4). Having fulfilled his promise, he is recognized as the bravest knight abroad and is rewarded with the fairest lady Isobel at home.

Expanding Scott’s verse of sixteen lines into a parody of forty-four lines, Brough begins his poem when the knight is returning home to receive his rewards:

It was Dunois, the young and brave, returning from the wars,  
In glory, over head and ears, but wholly free from scars:  
He sung a variation of his old conceited air—  
“I’ve prov’d the bravest brave, and means to wed the fairest fair!”  
“Now that’s a lie!” a voice exclaim’d. The Warrior turn’d him round,  
But seeing but a Palmer gray, contemptuously he frown’d. (II. 1-6)

Brough echoes Scott’s opening phrase “It was Dubois, the young and brave” but immediately problematizes the epithet by presenting a knight so self-absorbed in his own “glory, over head and ears” that he is singing “a variation of his old conceited air.” Brough suggests that the knight is using the established tradition of Chivalric romance to enact his prestige at home. He calls into question both this tradition and the knight’s claim to have proved “the bravest brave” by pointing out that the knight is unfeasibly “wholly free from scars.” In doing so, Brough exposes the knight’s claim as “a lie” through the voice of a Palmer.

In the original French song and Scott’s “Romance of Dunois,” there is no such character as the Palmer challenging the knight’s claim; Brough draws on another

---

<sup>240</sup> See Sir Walter Scott, *The Bridal of Triermain, Harold the Dauntless, Field of Waterloo, and Other Poems* (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1836) [Sir Walter Scott], “Romance of Dunois,” *The Edinburgh Annual Register* 6 (January 1813), 339.

tradition Scott established for English medieval romance to create this confrontation scene as the focus of his parody. As Jerome Mitchell notes, that the hero disguises himself as a palmer is a recurrent motif in the medieval romances in Scott's historical novels and poems.<sup>241</sup> At the start of Scott's *Ivanhoe*, for example, the eponymous hero who has just returned from the Holy Land is disguised as a Palmer and acting as a travel guide to Prior Aymer and the Knight Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert to Rotherwood, the ancestral home of his father Cedric the Saxon. In Brough's parody of the French song, the Palmer is cast as the real, undisguised hero who has first-hand knowledge of the war in which the knight was engaged, and is used by Brough as a mouthpiece for the common soldiers victimized by the class system and thereby deprived of recognition for their service. He encourages the knight to speak of the acts of bravery he has performed: "Say—by what doings rare/You've earn'd...the fairest of the fair?" (II. 11-12); as the poem progresses, each time the knight attempts to claim credit for his gallantry, the Palmer immediately cuts him short and discredits him with an alternative account of the war. At the poem's conclusion, despite the Palmer's undermining of Dunois' credentials, the knight returns to the city to receive his reward, leaving the Palmer to conclude that it is the "race's birthright share" that entitles the knight to "be held the bravest of the brave" and to "enjoy the fairest far!" (II. 40, 43). Brough's point is explicit. The young Dunois epitomizes aristocratic military leaders who are born with titles, privileges, and who are able to buy commissions into the army. Regardless of any qualifications Dunois may lack, he will always be a member of the ruling elite.

Through his satirical reworking of the French song discussed above, Brough

---

<sup>241</sup> Jerome Mitchell, *Scott, Chaucer, and Medieval Romance: A Study in Sir Walter Scott's Indebtedness to the Literature of the Middle Ages* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1987), p. 127



suggests that both the language and the romance form may collude with existing discourses, making them seem inevitable and in the process obscuring key relationships of power. When confronted by the Palmer, Dunois simply cites the songs of troubadours as proof of his bravery:

Superbly smil'd the young Dunois: —“the Troubadours have told,  
Methinks—” “The troubadours be damn'd!” struck in the Vagrant bold,  
“At Prince’s board, in Baron’s tent they glean their news, ’tis known;  
My fancy pictures their accounts—I want to hear your own.” (II. 13-16)

This passage simultaneously satirises the traditions of chivalric romance by which troubadours composed panegyrics for their patrons, the knight who relied on this tradition to validate his bravery, and the Crimean War poets who deployed the language of romance or the conventions of war songs to celebrate the achievements of the ruling classes. In the poem, the Palmer refutes the lyrics of troubadours both for their embeddedness within the conventions of patronage and their absence of personal experience of warfare, and challenges Dunois to give an eyewitness account of his participation in the war.

The confrontation between Brough’s knight and the Palmer in this scene can also be read as a parody of the parliamentary debate between Lord Palmerston and MP. Austen Layard mentioned above. When being questioned by Layard, Palmerston singled out the high-ranking officers who had led the charge of the Light Brigade to affirm the privileged role of the aristocracy:

Talk to me of the aristocracy of England! Why, look to that glorious  
charge of the cavalry at Balaklava —look to that charge, where the  
noblest and the wealthiest of the land rode foremost, followed by

heroic men from the lowest classes of the community.<sup>242</sup>

For Palmerston, aristocratic leaders such as the Earl of Cardigan, who led the charge of the Light Brigade, endorse the prevailing class system of the society demonstrating that the ruling elite were indeed perfectly capable of governing the country in a time of national crisis. However, by satirizing the knight's chivalric narratives as refracted through *The Times*' accounts of the sufferings of the common soldiers, Brough undermines Palmerston's romanticized assumptions of the inherited privileged role of the aristocracy. "[P]iqu'd into language plain" by the Palmer, the Knight tries to make the case for his own heroism: "[a] man, who all the hardships of last winter's fierce campaign/Has known, is surely somebody," the Palmer asks in return: "How many of those hardships, pray, were undergone by you?" Here Brough is alluding to the sufferings of the common soldiers during the winter siege of the Crimea. The Palmer goes on to expose the fact that the knight did not suffer from the severe weather and had privileged access to better clothing because of his aristocratic status: "Your lady mother sent out furs to warm you while you slept:/To forage fuel for your tent, two freezing hinds were kept (II. 23-24). According to the Palmer, the knight not only wears luxurious cloaks and furs but also exploits "two freezing hinds" in order to sleep in a warm tent. In the next stanza, when the knight boasts that he is the only one who "alone unscathed returned" from a night attack, the Palmer retorts: "Those men-at-arms wore tatter'd vests, with naked head and limb; /The leader who return'd was clad, from head to heel,/ In spear and dart-proof armour, of the hardest Milan steel" (II. 34-36). Brough's argument here is that young aristocratic leaders were able to survive the harsh Crimean winter and ferocious battles, returning home to be

---

<sup>242</sup> HC Debates, February 19 1855, vol. 136, col. 1535, *Hansard Online 1803-2005* <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1855/feb/19/the-new-administration>> [accessed January 2014].

welcomed as war heroes due to their exploitation of the labours of the common men, who also had to endure the inequality of military clothing and equipment. This appears to be the reason why the young knight is able to return from battle “wholly free from scars.”

In “A Word for Nero,” Brough reworks the maxim “fiddling while Rome is burning” to draw satirical parallels not only between the notorious Roman emperor Nero and the British political leaders but also between Roman and Victorian poets. As discussed earlier, in “Certain Ministers and the People,” Massey wrote the line— “O, stop their fiddling over War’s grim revel” (I. 23)—to articulate the radical group’s discontent with the Aberdeen government’s earlier mismanagement of war. The phrase was even more widely used to attack the government during the ministerial crisis in January 1855. For example, in late January 1855, both the *Standard* and *Reynold’s* printed a letter sent from the Crimea in which an army officer used the phrase to criticize Lord Raglan: “as he never visits the camp or the men it is impossible he can know the wretched state of the soldiery. Nero fiddled while Rome was burning—the marshal revels whilst the army starve.”<sup>243</sup> On January 22, speaking of Roebuck’s committee’s investigation of government officers at the time, a writer for *The Standard* commented:

“Nero fiddled while Rome was burning.” Luckily our complex fiddler or complex incendiary owes a responsibility that could not be exacted from the Roman tyrant: and to-morrow will open that solemn inquisition— an inquisition for the blood of tens of thousands of Englishmen sacrificed by the blundering of charlatans and fribbles, and for the honour of the country exposed to the most

---

<sup>243</sup> See *The Standard*, January 17, 1855, n.page and “Correspondence from the Crimea,” *Reynolds’ Newspaper*, January 21 1855, 11.

serious danger.<sup>244</sup>

In this passage the writer confidently remarks that unlike the Roman tyrant, the British political and military leaders could not escape from their responsibility for the disgrace the nation has suffered and the deaths of the common soldiers. The writer's use of the words "charlatans" and "fribbles" suggest that Roebuck's committee would expose the incompetent and unqualified politicians and military officers. In "A Word For Nero," Brough provides three different versions of Nero's story; he reiterates his contemporary's attack on the military and the indifference of political leaders to the suffering soldiers in the Crimea. His main satirical attack, however, is reserved not for the governing classes, but for the civilian poet's responses to the fiddlers. He shows how easy it is for aristocratic politicians to appease the public's demands for reforms. In doing so, he suggests that patriotic poets are implicated in resolving the ministerial crisis and maintaining the hegemony of the ruling classes.

Brough first introduces the popular version of Nero's story with: "There is a tale, devoid of proof,/That, for a lark, he set Rome burning,/And fiddled on his palace roof" (II. 5-7). In this version, Nero is a tyrant who plays havoc with the nation and takes sadistic pleasure in watching people's sufferings. Having established this historical precedent, Brough attacks the British military leaders of the Crimea by drawing a striking parallel between Nero's self-indulgence and that of the privileged lives of the officers in the camp.

Now I would credit just as lief  
The vulgar malcontent palaver,  
Which hints that our Crimean Chief  
Last winter out at Balaklava,

---

<sup>244</sup> *The Standard*, January 22, 1855, n.page.

Gay crowds, with music, jellies, soups,  
 Regal'd—within his quarter's crush rooms,  
 While starv'd, and frozen, round him, troops  
 Unburied lay, as thick as mushrooms (II. 17-25)

“The vulgar malcontent palaver” is likely to refer to the anonymous military officer who had likened Lord Raglan to Nero: “the marshal revels whilst the army starve.” Yet from the association of the word “vulgar” with the working classes, the phrase “vulgar malcontent palaver” can allude to anyone undermining the institution of the aristocracy and speaking for the common soldiers. The felicitous chiming of the word “palaver” that rhymes with “Balaclava” seems to have been in the air: witness Thomas Carlyle’s reply to Gerald Massey in a letter written on March 23 1855.

I have not anything to say on these sorrowful times through which we are now passing. To my mind the greatest fountain of them all is [...] precisely excess of “saying” and talking and palavering,—which the English Nation, for a great while past, has grown to consider as the chief function of man, and the substitute for silent hard work in all kinds. I believe the cure of Balaclava,—and of the universal “Balaclava,” which that small Crimean one is but a symbol of,—lies far beyond the dominion of speech: at any rate my sad ominous thoughts upon it are better to be kept silent than spoken, if they were even speakable.<sup>245</sup>

In early 1854, in trying to establish his position within literary society, Massey had sent his volume *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* to a number of authors including Tennyson, Carlyle and John Ruskin.<sup>246</sup> Markovits has discussed Carlyle’s letter in the

---

<sup>245</sup> Quoted in Shaw’s on-line edition of *Gerald Massey: Chartist, Poet, Radical and Freethinker* <[http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog\\_part\\_03.htm](http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog_part_03.htm)> [accessed January 2014]; see Carlyle, letter to Gerald Massey, March 23, 1855, in *The Collected Letters*, XXIX: 276.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

context of the Charge of the Light Brigade.<sup>247</sup> Although Markovits has explored Carlyle's claim about the cure of "the universal 'Balaklava'" and the connection between speech and "silent hard work" in the wider context of responses to the charge of the Light Brigade, the "sorrowful times through which we are now passing" Carlyle alludes to are the military disasters resulting from the government's mismanagement of the war. As Taylor's poem "Balaklava" suggests, in the later stage of the conflict, the word "Balaklava" came to symbolize the underlying problems of the British political and military systems. In a manner that recalls Charles Kingsley's criticism of composing home-front poetry, Carlyle performed a self-censoring act of his responses to the government's mismanagement of the war. He believed that "silent hard work" rather than "excess of 'saying,' and talking and palavering" was "the cure of Balaklava." However, for both Taylor and Brough, speaking out and providing a voice for the common soldier was the antidote to the problems of the current political and class system. In depicting Lord Raglan as a type of Nero presiding over the suffering soldiers, he combined the ridiculous with the serious to achieve the desired satirical effects. At first, the lines "Gay crowds, with music, jellies, soups/ Regal'd—within his quarter's crush rooms" seem inappropriate to the setting. The word "Regal'd" hints at the name Raglan but also suggests amusing someone with a form of entertainment. Yet in the next two lines, Brough satirises the alternatively lavish and miserable lives of the two different classes of men through words that rhyme with those in the previous lines. The first "soups/troops" reiterates to readers what the aristocratic leaders have is precisely what the common soldiers find lacking. In contrast to the anonymous balladeer's heroic and Taylor's grotesque representation of the soldiers, Brough portrays them as passive victims of the class system. The

---

<sup>247</sup> See Markovits, pp. 147-48.

second rhyme “crush room/mushroom” deploys the theatrical term “crush room” alongside the culinary term “mushroom,” a metaphor for the piles of soldiers’ corpses, to suggest that Lord Raglan and “Gay crowds” treat the suffering of the troops as part of a theatrical spectacle.

In Brough’s third retelling of Nero’s story, when an uprising against the patricians is about to break out and they are at a loss how to deal with the political crisis (“What’s to be done? We’re lost” I. 58), “Nero stepped forth: —‘Leave that to me./I’ll calm them.’ ‘How?’ ‘I’ll play the fiddle!’” (II. 60-62).

Next morn, on ev’ry gate and wall,  
’Stead of seditious squibs ill blooded,  
A poster thus:—*Minerva Hall,*  
*Lectures and Concert?’*” Romans studied—  
*National Song and Minstrelsy,*  
*Enlarg’d, in chapter and in verse, on.*  
*Full Band and Chorus! Entrance Free!!*

THE EMP’ROR WILL CONDUCT IN PERSON!!!” (II. 67-74).

This musical performance ironically helps the Roman patricians appease the potential uprising:

The hall was throng’d—each air encor’d:  
Delighted by the condescension,  
The mob at each *facetiae* roared—  
(Those on the Christians, past all mention!)  
They cheered the Emp’ror to his door—  
The nobles all, good, bad, and middling; (II. 77-84)

As Dereli observes, “With this sop to the people the position of the ruling class is

maintained, paralleling the present situation where Brough believes small concessions and the power of propaganda are being used to control the people.”<sup>248</sup> While I am in agreement with Dereli’s analysis, it is important to note that Brough’s satirical attack lies in the means through which Nero suppresses the plebeians’ uprising. This concert orchestrated by Nero features “*National Song and Minstrelsy, Enlarg’d, in chapter and in verse.*” In other words, patriotic songs sung by minstrels have been staged and manipulated by the governing classes to arouse emotional identification between people of all classes with the nation in order to ease class antagonism.

Friswell’s poetic response to the government’s mismanagement of the war—to mobilize poets and poetry in support of the government—was exactly the kind of reaction Brough opposed. As mentioned previously, around December 1854, Friswell was involved with the publication of *The Patriotic Fund Journal*. Around the same time Friswell was editing *Songs of the War*, a collection of works which had appeared in newspapers, journals, and pamphlets from February to December 1854. In Friswell’s preface to *Songs of the War*, he declared that the poems selected were not only “contributions [...] to the Patriotic Fund, but also to the fund of patriotism which is the safeguard of any kingdom, however mismanaged or misgoverned.”<sup>249</sup> Despite all the controversy surrounding the government’s infamous conduct of war, Friswell chose to publish what would become the first Crimean War anthology in order to arouse readers’ patriotic sentiment and advocate the government’s war effort. Crucially, this anthology was released at the height of the ministerial crisis in February 1855. Brough’s third retelling of Nero’s story satirises civilian poets such as Friswell who considered themselves as patriots and glorified the nation while not realising that such uncritical mode of poetic responses became complicit with

---

<sup>248</sup> Dereli, p. 64.

<sup>249</sup> Friswell, *Songs of the War*, p. ii.



sidestepping the real political issues and supporting the existing class system at the expense of the poor.

Brough borrowed the phrase “the governing classes” in the title of his volume from Edward M. Whitty’s *The Governing Classes of Great Britain*, a collection of satirical portraits of British aristocratic politicians (originally published serially in the *Leader* from September 1853 to January 1854 and subsequently reprinted in book form in December 1854).<sup>250</sup> Brough acknowledged his debt to Whitty by prefixing a dedication to his volume:

I believe in the Revolution you have said is coming—however slowly—  
and with precocious eagerness seize this opportunity of tacking my name on  
to the skirts of one, that will be revered...by future reapers in the open  
field, as that of one of the first and bravest pioneers to bring an axe into the  
forest.

My modest song book [...] aspires to be no more than the fiddle that  
plays while the majestic panorama is unrolling; still, if the fiddle plays well,  
it may contribute its share to the general popularity of “the entertainment.”  
Should a single one of my tunes arrive at the dignity of being whistled in  
the streets, I shall grudge neither resin nor elbow.<sup>251</sup>

For Brough, Whitty’s political satire served as both a poetic inspiration and a precursor to his own volume. By dedicating his volume to Whitty, Brough was clearly participating in and seeking to establish a mode of satirical writing that challenged the institution of the aristocracy with a view to bringing about a revolution in the existing class system. Interestingly enough, Brough describes his “modest song book” as “the

---

<sup>250</sup> Edward M. Whitty, *The Governing Classes of Great Britain: Political Portraits*, (London: Trübner & Co, 1854); and “The Governing Classes,” *The Leader* (February 17 1855), 162.

<sup>251</sup> Brough, *Songs*, 1855, pp. 9-10.

fiddle that plays while the majestic panorama is unrolling,” an image which has been used by commentators of the war to dismiss the impact of civilian poetry as well as the political leader’s prosecution of the war. Brough’s use of the image of fiddling to describe both the effect of his volume and his contribution to the war thus underlines the satirist’s awareness of the difficulties of engaging with the reading public with his radical songs at the time.

The final question to be addressed is to what extent Brough’s satirical songs achieved any effect during and after the Crimean War. In view of the fact that Brough’s volume was rarely reviewed in the mid-century and Edmund Yates’ observation that “it had scarcely any sale, and has been unprocurable for many years,” one can assume that commentators of Crimean War poetry regarded his attack on the aristocracy as too radical to be acknowledged within literary circles.<sup>252</sup> Thus it is difficult to ascertain how mid-century Victorians responded to his parody of traditional war songs. In the long term, however, the cultural impact of his satirical poetry was undeniable. By the time the second edition of Brough’s volume was released in 1890, the late Victorians, who had reaped the rewards of political reforms (such as the passing of the second reform act in 1867) and witnessed the decline of the aristocracy, resurrected Brough as a forerunner of mid-century political satirists such as Charles Dickens, and as a pioneer in recognizing the injustices of the political system and giving voice to the working class and the poor. An 1890 review of his poems in *Daily News* esteemed it as “one of many in which the classes were sung by and for the masses, and sung with a bitterness of derision against which the victims were for a long time without defence.”<sup>253</sup> And only one year before Yates claimed

---

<sup>252</sup> Brough, *Songs*, 1890, p. viii. The only mid-century review of Brough’s volume I have found is *The Critic* (December 1 1855), 582-583.

<sup>253</sup> “Masses v. Classes,” *Daily News*, May 30 1890, 5.

that Brough's volume "had scarcely any sale" in his *Recollections and Experiences* (1885), in a reply to the editor of *Reynolds's Newspaper*, a reader, citing Brough's satirical songs, declared that: "None but hopeless asses and idiots would propose in our time the constitution of a newly-formed assembly on the hereditary principles."<sup>254</sup> Whether or not Brough's satirical poetry had indeed made an impact on the class-consciousness of his contemporaries in the mid-century, these belated responses suggest that his fiddling had been heard by some.

As this chapter has shown, from early January 1855, while Massey, Taylor and Brough all participated in "the People's War" campaign launched by *The Times*, they drew on different poetic resources to undermine the institution of the governing classes in order to speak for their targeted groups and to promote the political interests of the middle and working classes. Their poetic output democratizes the outlook of the civilian poetry of the Crimean War and the traditions of war songs and chivalric romance; alongside the dominant mode of patriotic poetry which united the people in supporting the government's military campaign, there emerged a more diverse, questioning and subversive political critique of the war. The civilian poet's knowledge of soldiers' sufferings and the ruling elite's responsibilities for them encouraged Massey, Taylor and Brough to rewrite traditional patriotic verse so as to articulate their political discontent and advocate social change.

---

<sup>254</sup> "Hereditary Curses," letter to the editor, *Reynolds's Newspaper*, December 21 1884, 3.

### Chapter 3

“[H]ome-reflections of that blazing affair in the East”:

Commemorating suffering from a distance

In an 1857 article entitled “Little Lessons for Little Poets,” the critic and essayist George Brimley commented upon civilian poets’ representation of the Crimean conflict, observing that

generally the newspaper correspondents gave a far more vivid and life-like picture of the battles—far more spirited representations of all ‘the pride, pomp, circumstances of glorious war’—far more appalling photographs of the misery and suffering of the camp and of the trenches, of the hospital and the field of death.<sup>255</sup>

Brimley’s critique of home-front poetry was based on the impact of recent technological innovations upon representation of the conflict abroad, including telegraphic dispatches and war photography. The phrase “the pride, pomp, circumstances of glorious war,” which originated with Shakespeare’s *Othello*<sup>256</sup> was frequently deployed by commentators of the Crimean War, especially during the early months of 1854, to describe the public’s obsession with current military affairs.<sup>257</sup> To rouse readers’ spirits and to celebrate the glory of war was the traditional role of the war poets, but, according to Brimley, this role was superseded by that of the civilian

---

<sup>255</sup> [George Brimley], “Little Lessons for Little Poets,” *Fraser’s Magazine* 326 (February 1857), 223.

<sup>256</sup> When destroyed by his ill-found suspicion of Desdemona’s infidelity, Othello bids farewell to his career as a military general: “Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,/The spirit-stirring drum, th’ear-piercing fife,/The royal banner, and all quality,/Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!” (3.3 354-357). See *Othello*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson, 1997), p. 231.

<sup>257</sup> For instance, an editorial of *The Times* stated: “Preoccupied as the public mind is with the pride, pomp and circumstances of war, domestic politics, however important, have slipped almost entirely out of sight.” See *The Times*, March 3 1854, 8; *The Morning Chronicle* commented on Queen Victoria’s visit to a military display at Spithead: “Never perhaps, were the “pride, pomp, and circumstances of war” more superbly set forth than in the assembling of the first division of the greatest naval armament which ever left our shores.” See *The Morning Chronicle*, March 11 1854, 4.

correspondent. For him, civilian poets could not compete with correspondents and other commentators who were reporting from the actual site of the war in portraying the harsh realities of the war. His use of such descriptive terms as “a [...] vivid and life-like picture of the battles” and “appalling photographs of the misery and suffering of the camp” served to conjoin the new verbal with the new visual media. An overriding emphasis on the accuracy and authenticity of war representation, which only the immediacy of photography seemed able to achieve is reflected in the poetic principle he imparts to “little poets”—“that the phrases and rhymes they write down upon paper must be [...] the imperfect transcript of bright living pictures photographed direct from nature upon their brains.”<sup>258</sup> Thus, whilst praising Henry and Franklin Lushington’s *La Nation Boutiquière* as a volume of “genuine poetry,” “a few of” Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell’s war sonnets “as specimens of high merit” and indicating that Tennyson’s “poem on the Balaclava is not unworthy of him,” Brimley dismisses civilian poets’ capacity to delineate both the heroic and horrifying aspects of the war.<sup>259</sup>

Brimley’s critique has been largely echoed by literary scholars addressing the civilian poet’s depiction of the physical violence and horror of the Crimean War. In her well-known article “On not Knowing Why: Memorializing the Light Brigade” (2003), Trudi Tate examines the power of Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade” to evoke readers’ war fantasies and has elucidated the ways in which the poem “expresses the ambivalent cultural significance of the event, which generated pleasure and excitement [...] as well as fear and sorrow.”<sup>260</sup> However, even Tate

---

<sup>258</sup> Brimley, p. 222.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>260</sup> Tate notes that “The popularity of Tennyson’s ‘Charge’ tells us something about the power of representation in wartime. At its best, poetry can speak of, and appeal to, the fantasy investment in war.” Trudi Tate, “On Not Knowing Why: Memorializing the Light Brigade,” in *Literature, Science, Psychoanalysis, 1830-1970: Essays in Honour of Gillian Beer*, ed. Helen Small and

acknowledges Tennyson's failure to capitalize on the existing newspaper sources to portray soldiers' sufferings. Commenting on his lines "Then they rode back, but not/Not the six hundred," Tate remarks that the Poet Laureate "is unable to describe precisely what happened to those who fell, even though some of the newspaper reports are surprisingly explicit about the physical effects of the war."<sup>261</sup> She then sums up the contrast between journalistic and literary representations of the war: "In the 1850s, the British newspapers, which are uncensored, give detailed accounts of the bodily sufferings of war, while the literature says very little about it."<sup>262</sup> Similarly, in Thomas Rommel's 2002 article concerned with "the role of the individual soldier" in Crimean War poetry, he argues: "very rarely does an individual soldier feature prominently. Death and suffering are almost universally portrayed from a distance, and the only individual in sight is an angelic Victorian nurse."<sup>263</sup>

In Chapter 1, I demonstrated how the civilian poets' knowledge of the calamities in the Crimea in the wake of Alma enabled them to reformulate their poetic responses. Given that the deplorable physical condition of the soldiers was perhaps one of the most pressing and controversial issues emerging from contemporary newspaper reports, it is difficult to understand why the violence of war had not manifested itself in the poetry of the home-front and why had the civilian poets chosen to ignore it. To a large extent, the civilian poet's response to the plight of the troops was characterized by a patriotic impulse to forge reassuring images that boosted the nation's morale. This is evidenced by the proliferation of verses which concentrated upon the Charge of the Light Brigade (the most influential being Tennyson's piece) and the attention

---

Trudi Tate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 165-66.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> Thomas Rommel, "'Lines Suggested by the War in the Crimea': Florence Nightingale and the Role of the Individual Soldier," in *War and the Cultural Construction of Identities in Britain*, ed. Barbara Korte and Ralf Schneider (New York: Rodopi, 2002), p. 110.

given to Florence Nightingale.<sup>264</sup> These two iconic images perpetuate the myth of the “noble six hundred” rushing into the valley of death without regard for possible injury or death and of Florence Nightingale as a ministering angel healing the wounded at the hospital in Scutari.

Behind civilian poets’ wish to transform journalistic accounts into idealized versions of the war are the various epistemological, poetic, political and ethical challenges of depicting soldiers’ sufferings. Without personal experience, civilians could only imagine the combatants’ physical injuries through the mediation of newspaper reports. In addition, in the tradition of Tyrtaeus, a war poet’s conventional role was to exhort soldiers to fight and exalt in the glory of sacrificing one’s life for the nation rather than to portray their sufferings and reveal their emotional vulnerabilities. Finally, as discussed in both Chapter 1 and 2, between the period of October 1854 and February 1855 news of soldiers’ suffering had profound implications for the class struggle at home. To give voice to the plight of common soldiers is not only to rewrite the role of war poets and the function of war poetry but to challenge the governing classes and spur readers into investigating with whom lay the responsibility for the victims of the war.

This chapter will consider how Sydney Dobell, the self-educated invalid poet, rebelled against the dominant self-congratulatory tone and established traditions of the war poetry of his contemporaries in his portrayals of the trials of soldiers abroad. In literary criticism of Dobell’s works, critics of Victorian poetry have concentrated mainly on his connection with the Spasmodic Controversy and the ways in which his poems, especially *Balder* (1853), engaged with debates concerning Victorian poetry

---

<sup>264</sup> For poetry commemorating both the Charge of the Light Brigade and Florence Nightingale, see Waddington’s anthology “*Theirs But To Do and Die*” and Dereli’s book chapter “Gender Issues and the Crimean War: Creating Roles for Women,” in *A War Culture in Action*, pp. 173-90.

and poetics in the 1850s.<sup>265</sup> Natalie Houston is the first commentator to draw attention to Smith and Dobell's distinctive use of the sonnet form in their joint volume *Sonnets on the War* (1855). In a 2001 article, Houston dissociates their use of the sonnet from "its traditional literary history (Shakespeare—Milton—Wordsworth)" and compares their sonnets to Roger Fenton's Crimean War photography as "analogous technologies of representation."<sup>266</sup> Houston argues that the main function of their use of the sonnet form was to memorialize and document the public events of the war for private consumption. She also observes that one of the distinguishing features of "Smith and Dobell's book as a self-conscious document of cultural attitudes towards the war is the range of opinions included."<sup>267</sup> In her reading of Smith and Dobell's war sonnets, Markovits stresses the "bewilderment" springing from readers' difficulties of interpreting the multiple yet contradictory voices. Situating their works in the context of England's first media war, she contends that the collective experiences of war documented by the volume often render it difficult for readers to pass "private judgment."<sup>268</sup> In another recent study Ralph Pordzik, who has examined the theme of apocalypse in Crimean War poetry, discusses Dobell's apocalyptic vision of the conflict. In Pordzik's analysis of "Prefatory," Dobell's first sonnet in the volume, he points out that "Dobell refrains from joining in the patriotic

---

<sup>265</sup> For accessible accounts of the Spasmodic Controversy, see Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 41-65 and Richard Cronin, "The Spasmodics," in *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman and Anthony H. Harrison (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 291-304. On biographical studies of William E. Aytoun, the main detractor of the Spasmodic School, and Dobell, see Mark A. Weinstein, *William Edmondstoune Aytoun and The Spasmodic Controversy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Martha Westwater, *The Spasmodic Career of Sydney Dobell* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1992); the *Victorian Poetry* special issue, titled *Spasmodic Poetry and Poetics* (Winter 2004), ed. Charles Laporte and Jason R. Rudy; and Jason R. Rudy's book chapter "Rhythms of Spasm: Dobell, Aytoun, and the Crisis of Form," in *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009), pp. 76-110.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354. On Fenton's photographs, see Roger Fenton, *Photographer of the Crimean War: His Photographs and his Letters from the Crimea*, ed. And intro. Helmut and Alison Gernsheim (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954).

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>268</sup> Markovits, p. 135.



clamour of domestic war campaigners, rendering the whole event in terms of a cosmic occurrence related to diffuse eschatological hopes and anxieties more than to actual politics.”<sup>269</sup>

This chapter will demonstrate that Dobell experimented with the sonnet form and radically rewrote the lyrical tradition of war poetry, composing a group of thematically-related war poems dealing explicitly with the suffering of the Crimean soldiers. These include: “The Army Surgeon,” a pair of poems entitled “The Wounded” and “Home” from his joint volume with Alexander Smith *Sonnets on the War* (1855), and “Home, Wounded,” a dramatic monologue in *England in Time of War* (1856). In what follows I will first provide a brief discussion of Dobell’s literary career in 1854 and then focus on his reworking of three iconic Crimean War scenes— a woman waiting for her military man at home, an army doctor tending the wounded, and an invalid soldier returning home. I argue that in taking these disquieting scenes for his subject, Dobell challenges readers to rethink their perceptions of the physical experience undergone by the common soldier, and how such experiences were defined by specific moments during the conflict while also calling into question an arm-chair spectatorship of the slaughter in which both the press and poetry aestheticized war, insisting upon lionising the real participants into patriotic heroes and heroines.

## II

Before working on *Sonnets on the War* in 1854, Smith and Dobell had sparked heated debates within the literary establishment. Smith’s *A Life Drama* (1853) and Dobell’s *Balder* (1854) were targets of severe criticism. Both verse dramas feature the monologues of a protagonist who is also a poet trying to achieve fame and social

---

<sup>269</sup> Ralph Pordzik, *Victorian Wastelands: An Apocalyptic Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2012), p. 146. For a discussion of Dobell’s religious background and his war poetry, see Emma Major, “Rhythmic Numinousness: Sydney Dobell and ‘The Church,’” *Victorian Poetry* 42.4 (2004), 537-58.

influence through his writing. In a review of November 1853, Charles Kingsley, writing for *Fraser's Magazine*, lamented the influence of Shelley and Byron on his contemporaries, deploring the emergence of “a spasmodic, vague, extravagant, effeminate, school of poetry.”<sup>270</sup> The main detractor of Smith and Dobell's works was William. E. Aytoun, a regular contributor to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and professor of Rhetoric at the University of Edinburgh. In May 1854 Aytoun satirized the style and subject matter of the Spasmodic School, especially Smith's *A Life Drama* and Dobell's *Balder*, in a parody entitled *Firmilian*.<sup>271</sup> As critics have noted, Aytoun's satire, later called *A Spasmodic Tragedy*, made a direct and negative impact upon the reception of the two poets' subsequent works. It at once popularized the terms “Spasmodic” or “Spasm” as a synonym for poetry of questionable merit and served to dismiss Smith and Dobell as Spasmodic poets.<sup>272</sup>

According to Dobell, even before Aytoun's parody appeared in May 1854, the castigation by reviewers of their work had drawn the two poets closer, cementing a literary camaraderie. In a letter of April 27 1854, Dobell told his parents

Alexander and I seem fated to appear together. There is hardly a week now in which we are not either abused or praised side by side, in some magazine or newspaper. Curiously enough, while our public epiphany has been of this twin character, our private union has been more and more complete.<sup>273</sup>

The “private union” alludes to the beginning of their collaborative project *Sonnets on*

---

<sup>270</sup> [Charles Kingsley], “Thoughts on Shelley and Byron,” *Fraser's Magazine* 287 (November 1853), 574.

<sup>271</sup> [W. E. Aytoun], “Firmilian: A Tragedy,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 463 (May 1854), 533-51.

<sup>272</sup> Buckley indicates that “as the Spasmodic label gained currency, it seemed more and more difficult to approach with proper gravity any future work of either poet.” Westwater argues that Dobell's career was blighted by Aytoun's malicious satire. See Buckley, *The Victorian Temper*, p.59; Westwater, *The Spasmodic Career of Sydney Dobell*.

<sup>273</sup> *The Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell*, ed. Emily Jolly, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1878), I: 351-52. Hereafter cited as Jolly.

*the War*, composed between April and December 1854.<sup>274</sup> In early 1854, shortly after moving to Edinburgh to seek medical treatment for his wife Emily, Dobell met Alexander. Smith wrote the first two sonnets of the volume for Dobell and his wife; Dobell returned the favour by dedicating the last one, “Good Night” to Smith.<sup>275</sup> Whilst their volume celebrates the friendship and literary alliance of two Spasmodics, it also embodies their patriotic reaction to the present national crisis. As an advertisement in December 21 1854 for their forthcoming volume made explicit they sold it at a cheap price in order to place it within the reach of everyone and donated the profits to the Patriotic Fund.<sup>276</sup> They also presented the thirty-nine sonnets in the volume without attributing individual authorship in an act of self-effacement at a time of national crisis.<sup>277</sup>

When their volume appeared in January 1855, several reviewers immediately perceived the originality of Smith and Dobell’s war sonnets. Having asserted that “these Sonnets are the only pieces we have yet seen in which the topics of the war are rendered into true poetry, as distinct from mere sounding and stirring stanzas,” the reviewer of *The Leader* explained:

A true poem on any incident is not the direct statement of that incident never so spiritually; it is the putting forth of those images that arise in the mind contemporaneously with the apprehension of the incident—these images [...] being the poetical equivalent of the incident, and the *language* in which it is to

---

<sup>274</sup> Dobell’s sonnets were “chiefly written at Clermiston; where he remained till the approach of winter made ‘the windy hill’ untenable.” See Jolly, I: 371.

<sup>275</sup> These biographical allusions to the sonnets are discussed in an 1855 review. See “Sonnets,” *Chambers’s Journal* 57 (February 1855), 80. Alexander Smith and the Author of *Balder and The Roman* [Sydney Dobell], “Prefatory,” in *Sonnets on the War* (London: David Bogue, 1855), p. 9.

<sup>276</sup> In a Scottish newspaper, an advertisement of Smith and Dobell’s forthcoming volume *Sonnets on the War* reads: “The publication is intended as the contribution of the two poets to the Patriotic Fund, and will be sold at such a price as to place it within the reach of everyone.” See *The Stirling Observer*, December 21 1854, 3.

<sup>277</sup> The authorship of Dobell’s sonnets can be seen in his 1875 volume. *The Poetical Works of Sydney Dobell*, ed. John Nichol, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1875).

be expressed by the poet.<sup>278</sup>

For this particular reviewer, it is the capacity to exploit “images” and “the *language*” to elicit in readers “phantasies and imaginations” of the incident as they occur that makes Smith and Dobell’s sonnets true war poems.<sup>279</sup> A reviewer from *Sharpe’s London Magazine* distinguished their war sonnets from earlier war poems, praising the former’s power to conjure up readers’ reflections of the war:

Full of noble imagery, of deep, searching thoughtfulness, and almost wholly exempt from the brawling cant and noisome ribaldry which are but too much the fashion just now, these *Sonnets* will attain a popularity not transient, but stable and permanent.<sup>280</sup>

As the comments of these contemporary reviewers suggest, Smith and Dobell’s *Sonnets on the War* made a radical departure from the jingoistic verses published earlier in 1854; it was also the first volume written exclusively in sonnet form during the Crimean War.<sup>281</sup>

The germ of *Sonnets on the War*, according to Emily Jolly, editor of *The Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell* (1878), was Smith and Dobell’s experience of watching “some tableaux” in “a crowded assembly” of Edinburgh in April 1854, after which Smith wrote a prologue and Dobell an epilogue.<sup>282</sup> Smith’s “Fire-Light” his first sonnet in the volume is a revised version of this prologue concluding with the

---

<sup>278</sup> *The Leader* (January 6 1855), 16.

<sup>279</sup> The reviewer for *Athenaeum* also indicated that their sonnets “do not aspire to tell the story of the war; but merely to deal musically and pictorially with such scenes and incidents as appeal most strongly to the poetic instinct.” “The War,” *The Athenaeum* (January 13 1855), 45.

<sup>280</sup> “Literary Notes,” *Sharpe’s London Magazine* 6 (January 1855), 127.

<sup>281</sup> This shift is already evident in Richard Chenevix Trench’s *Alma: And Other Poems*, published in December 1854, in which four sonnets are included. While Trench’s volume can still be considered as a patriotic war volume that advocates England’s military intervention in the Crimea, it is distinct from earlier poetic output in the ways in which it does not seek to arouse readers’ patriotic emotion but reflects upon on the sacrifices of the soldiers and the losses undergone by British families using a much more solemn tone.

<sup>282</sup> Although Jolly does not mention the type of tableaux the two poets watched, it is clear that they were concerned with the war for Dobell mentioned that “Archer and Drummond” were used. See Jolly, I: 345-48.

following lines

Even as we talk, over a stage of gloom,  
A curtain rises; calm and pale with hate,  
Two foes are closing in the tug of doom.  
On Fancy's stage 'twas but a mimic state,  
But on that other stands or falls the World. (II. 10-14)

This passage draws attention to the two poets' awareness of the problems arising from home-front representation of the conflict abroad and from civilian modes of spectatorship.<sup>283</sup> The "we" in line 10 of "Firelight" envisage the two poets witnessing a "tableau" of the Crimean conflict on stage while critiquing a public experience of the war in the Crimea which is viewed vicariously as a drama. As the first "but" in line 13 and the second in the final line make clear, instead of being drawn into the "Fancy's stage," the speaker is aware that it only provides a "mimic state" and that the real theatre of war is elsewhere and everywhere ("stands or falls the world"). By the same token, the contrast between the two representations of war stresses the two poets' consciousness of both the limitations and power of their war sonnets. The sonnet "Home," to be discussed in the following section is another poem in which Dobell targets the "Fancy's stage" in order to question the reading public's mediated experience of the war.

### III

"Home" is Dobell's rewriting of a popular theme in Crimean war poetry— a woman waiting for the return of her loved one in the Crimea. In her "Waiting" (1854), for instance, Adelaide Procter celebrates a working-class woman who declines a

---

<sup>283</sup> As the correspondent Thomas Chenery sardonically remarked in his critique of the public's experience of war, "To us, war is a spectacle, and, if we happen to have no friends engaged in it, a very amusing spectacle [...] the suffering is sadly vicarious." [Thomas Chenery], *The Times*, October 12 1854, 6.

noblewoman's invitation for her to reside in a castle instead insisting upon waiting for her husband at a cottage door: "I cannot do your will:/Where he left me, he must find me,/Waiting, watching, hoping, still!" (ll. 45-48).<sup>284</sup> In "The Maiden at Home" (1855) Arabella Shore portrays a woman who cannot rest from her daydreams of her lover in the Crimea. Envisaging him as a hero sacrificing himself for his country, she asks:

Still must dumb frozen distance prove

The blank 'twixt him and me?

I *will* be with thee, oh! my love,

Whate'er thy fate may be. (ll. 81-84)<sup>285</sup>

Markovits makes the comment "That 'blank' is partly filled by the words on the page, as the poet uses her art (as much as her love) to bridge the gap between her and her beloved."<sup>286</sup> As we shall see, Dobell's sonnet satirizes both the maiden's fantasy of her lover and the female poet's sentimental reading of the "dumb frozen distance."

"Home" begins with a woman indulging in her fantasy through the act of reading and touching.

She turned the fair page with her fairer hand—

More fair and frail than it was wont to be—

O'er each remembered thing he loved to see

She lingered, and as with a fairy's wand

Enchanted it to order. Oft she fanned

New motes into the sun; and as a bee

Sings thro' a break of bells, so murmured she,

And so her patient love did understand

---

<sup>284</sup> See [Adelaide Anne Procter] "Waiting," in *Household Worlds* (October 14 1854), 204-205  
<sup>285</sup> Arabella Shore, "The Maiden at Home," lines 81-84 in *War Lyrics* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1855), p. 30.  
<sup>286</sup> Markovits, p. 132.

The reliquary room. Upon the sill  
 She fed his favourite bird. “Ah, Robin, sing!  
 He loves thee.” Then she touches a sweet string  
 Of soft recall, and towards the Eastern hill  
 Smiles all her soul—for him who cannot hear  
 The raven croaking at his carrion ear.<sup>287</sup>

“[T]he fair page” alluded to above may be a letter sent from the Crimea, a column in the newspaper detailing the location of his regiment, the page of her diary or simply a written record that evokes her memories of a romantic relationship. That the woman’s white hand is “fairer” than the page suggests that she might be gazing at a blank page as does Shore’s maiden and fantasizing about her man’s heroic deeds on the battlefield. One can read Dobell’s satirical portrait of this seemingly self-indulgent woman as a female counterpart to several commentators’ critique of male civilians fantasizing about the war from the safe distance of their home—Chenery’s newspaper report of October 12 1854, for instance, or Tom Taylor’s “The Due of the Dead,” printed in *Punch* on October 25 1854, or even John Leech’s *Punch* cartoon which had been accompanied by the caption “Enthusiasm of Paterfamilias: On Reading the Report of the Grand Charge of British Cavalry on the 25<sup>th</sup>” published on November 25 1854 (Figure 3).<sup>288</sup> In Leech’s piece the father of a middle-class family is so excited by his reading of the charge of the Light Brigade that he has abandoned his chair and is standing brandishing a poker as though he were a soldier wielding a sword.<sup>289</sup> The woman in Dobell’s sonnet is carrying a “fairy’s wand” and imposing a sense of “order” upon the things over which she “lingered.” It is not until the last

---

<sup>287</sup> “Home,” in *Sonnets on the War*, p. 23.

<sup>288</sup> On Chenery’s article and Taylor’s poem, see Chapter 1, pp. 39-46. For a discussion of Leech’s *Punch* cartoon “Enthusiasm of Paterfamilias.” See Tate, pp. 165-66 and Markovits, pp. 186-92.

<sup>289</sup> *Punch* (November 25 1854), 210.

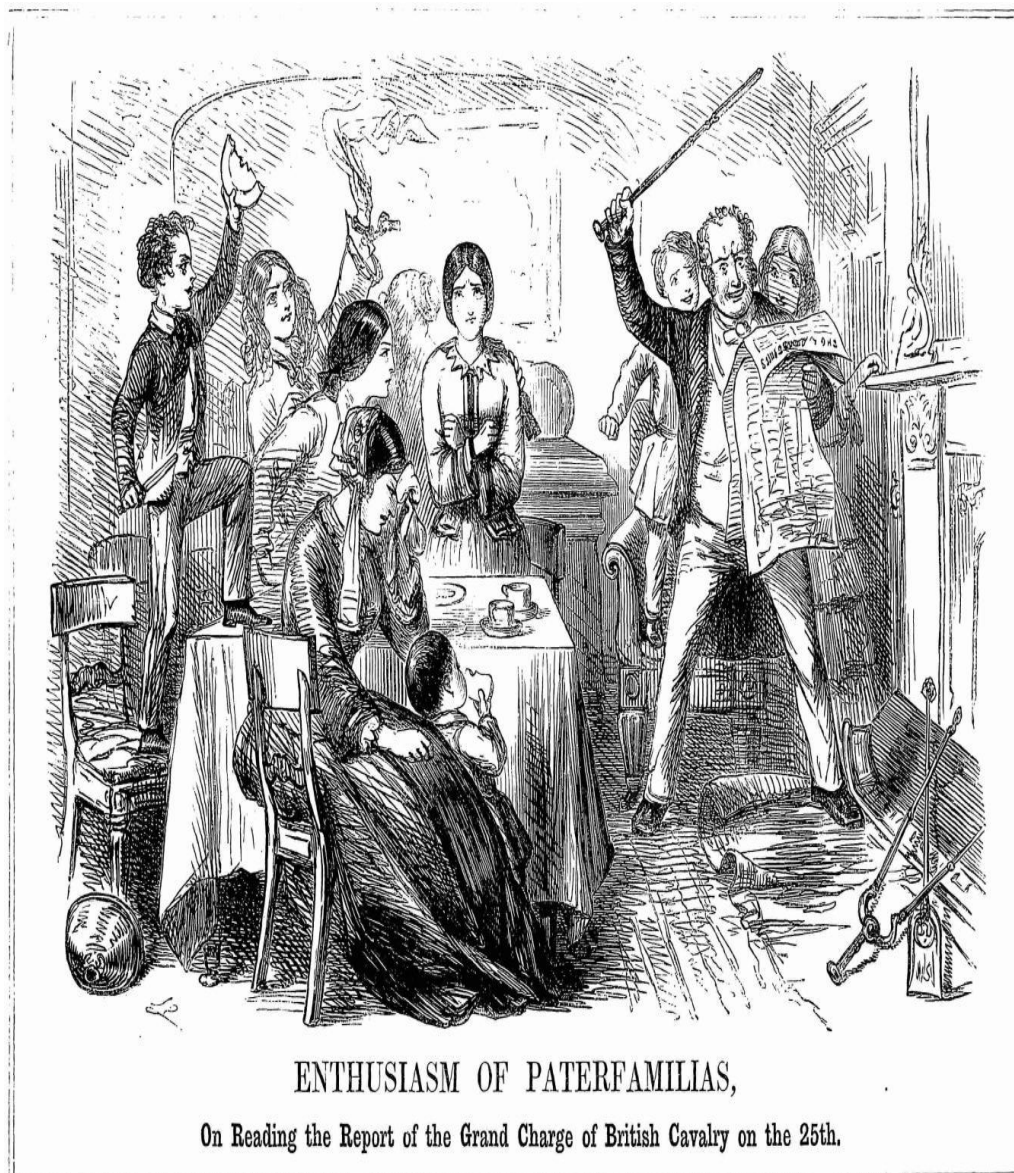


Figure 3 [John Leech], "Enthusiasm of Paterfamilias," *Punch* (November 25 1854), 213.

couplet that readers come to realize that the man who "cannot hear/ the raven croaking at his carrion ear" is already dead. The caesura in the middle of line 13 signifies a gulf, recalling the "blank" between home and the battlefield as well as the woman and her lover in Shore's poem. Here, Dobell juxtaposes domestic with military scenes (a poetic structure of Crimean War poetry we have seen previously in Taylor's "The Due of the Dead") to bring into sharp focus the disjunction between the affective and bodily experience of the domesticated woman and the morbid corporeality of the front line. In doing so, Dobell suggests that while the woman's



fantasy can certainly bridge the gap between home and battlefield, making her daily ritual of waiting more bearable, it also leads her to aestheticize the violence of war, however unwittingly.

In an 1855 review of *Sonnets on the War*, the critic for the *Stirling Observer* noted that “The ghastly close of the sonnet on Home haunts the reader like the memory of a hideous dream.”<sup>290</sup> Thirty years later or so the late Victorians were still struck by this sonnet. In his annotation to it, William Sharp, the editor of *Sonnets of This Century* (1884) indicates that

this sonnet has all the power of unexpectedness—but the transition from the peaceful home scene, and the wife’s loving hope and yearning, to the frightful battlefield where lies the decaying dead, though startlingly effective, is a cruelty to the reader having a powerful imagination.”<sup>291</sup>

The glimpse of the decaying body in the final line creates the dramatic irony that while the woman is ignorant of her lover’s death in the poem, readers who have been drawn to share her sentimentality are made painfully aware of the reality of the war and the false sense of order the woman has been lulled into by her patriotic fantasies. Rather than delineating the physicality of the decaying body, Dobell forces readers to envisage it by contrasting the image of the woman feeding a domesticated song bird “Robin” with a raven feeding on a decaying corpse. The melodious singing of Robin is juxtaposed with the alliterative cacophony associated with the raven’s sound (“cannot,” “croaking” and “carrion”). The powerful imagery contained within the final couplet serves to focus the reader upon the inward looking nature of the sonnet’s subject, returning them to the woman trapped in her war fantasy. It is only then that readers can begin to appreciate the irony of the speaker’s observations regarding how

---

<sup>290</sup> *The Stirling Observer*, January 18 1855, 4.

<sup>291</sup> *Sonnets of This Century*, ed. William Sharp (London: Walter Scott, 1884), p. 289.

little “her patient love did understand/The reliquary room.” Her touching of “each remembered thing he loved to see” actually becomes a ceremony of commemoration.

As the title of the sonnet “Home” suggests, the predicament of the female civilian is here meant to be representative of the experience of a typical Victorian household and thus function as a satirical portrait of readers’ fantasies about the sufferings of soldiers in a foreign land. Regarding Chenery’s article of October 12 in which he described the lack of medical staff caring for the wounded at the Scutari hospitals, a female reader responded on October 14 with a letter signed by “A Sufferer by the present war” proclaiming: “You cannot perhaps, adequately conceive the deep solicitude felt in the matter by mothers, wives, and children at home, in the humbler as well as in the higher classes.” She continued

We sit at home trying to picture the last moments of those dear to us, and our agony is increased by the fact that all was not done that might have been done to relieve their sufferings, or may be, to save their lives.”<sup>292</sup>

This letter also asked the famous question which ultimately lead to Nightingale’s expedition: “Why have we no sisters of Charity?” The writer observed: “The strongest men become helpless and dependent like a child in his hour of need, and we all know, in such a case, a humble nurse, with no other recommendations than a kind heart and skilful hands, appear to the sufferer as a saving angel.” As the quotations above illustrate, Chenery’s newspaper text served as a source of anxiety for the women at home about the condition of the troops abroad. In this sense, the creation of the legend of Florence Nightingale and her ministering angels, constructed by various home-front responses including poetry, emerged from the reading public’s fantasy about bringing succour to the dying soldiers. In the next section, I will turn to

---

<sup>292</sup> [A suffer by the present war?], “Hospitals Assistants in the East,” *The Times*, October 14 1854, 7.

Dobell's war sonnets featuring the civilian doctor to offer a very different perspective on the task of alleviating the pain of sufferers.

#### IV

Dobell's "The Army Surgeon" and the following two sonnets entitled "The Wounded" engage with public debates concerning the task faced by army surgeons in tending to the wounded and dying in the aftermath of the battle of Alma. In this series Dobell first provides readers with a panoramic view of the surgeon performing his duties amongst the fallen amongst the horrifying scenes of the battlefield, followed by an intimate view of the doctor's conversations with the fatally injured. In sharp contrast to those correspondents, contemporary poets and medical commentators who, as we shall see, exalted the civilian doctor as a "hero" or a "martyr," Dobell explores the difficulties and ultimately the failure of the doctor's mission whilst simultaneously commemorating his service and the voices of the dying soldiers.<sup>293</sup> In this section I will first identify the historical moment at which the public debate about the army medics emerged, I will then discuss Dobell's reworking of newspaper and literary sources in the sonnet for his sonnet "The Army Surgeon," and finally I will examine the conflicts and ironies inherent within the doctor's designated task as portrayed in "The Wounded."

After a period of phony war lasting nearly six months, the battle of Alma (begun on September 20 1854) was the first major battle the allies won that both newspapers and poetry celebrated with enthusiasm. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the battle, the revelations of correspondents describing the substandard care of wounded soldiers served to spotlight the inferiority of service provided by medical officers in the field. In an article of October 10 1854, a correspondent for *The Times* wrote "the wounded

---

<sup>293</sup> On the status of the army doctors, see note 303.

were left, some for two nights, the whole for one, on the field [...] there were no proper means for removing the wounded from the field.”<sup>294</sup> The correspondent then admonished the medical establishment with the following— “Yesterday afternoon ten medical officers arrived from England, and it is to be hoped that they will do something towards remedying the neglect which has hitherto distinguished our medical staff.”<sup>295</sup> Three days later, in a letter sent to the editor of *The Times* “A Daily Reader” defended the medical doctors currently stationed in the Crimea citing the testimonies of two overworked army surgeons.<sup>296</sup> Appended to this letter is a personal note from the editor of *The Times*, “None of our correspondents suggested the medical officers had neglected their duty. They only stated, what is notorious, that the number of surgeons is unequal to such an emergency.”<sup>297</sup>

What further triggered the public’s sympathy and indignation was the news of doctors who died whilst devoting themselves to the care of the wounded.<sup>298</sup> On October 24 1854, *The Times* printed an article about Dr. Thomson, assistant surgeon of the 44<sup>th</sup> regiment, who had succumbed to cholera. According to the correspondent Thomson was the only English doctor, who “volunteered to remain behind and endeavour to alleviate the sufferings of 700 wounded Russians who had been removed from the field of battle on the south bank of Alma to the deserted village on its north bank.”<sup>299</sup> Asserting that Thomson and his servant “deserve to be held up as heroes,” the correspondent remarked “surely, when the Humane Society rewards a

---

<sup>294</sup> *The Times*, October 10 1854, 7.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>296</sup> The testimonies are as follows: “I have been working all yesterday and to-day operating, &c. My hands are covered with blood, and I am only resting for a few minutes and writing”; “I am in good health, but very tired. We have had such hard work attending to the wounded and operating. Poor fellows! how they have suffered! Excuse these few words; I must off to begin again.” See *The Times*, October 13 1854, 6.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>298</sup> For a detailed account of the physicians, such as Thomson and Richard James Mackenzie, see John Shepherd, *The Crimean Doctors: A History of the British Medical Services in the Crimean War*, 2 vols (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991).

<sup>299</sup> *The Times*, October 24 1854, 8.

man who saves one single individual, society will not fail to do something for two men, who, under such dreadful trials, saved the lives of 340.”<sup>300</sup> Four days later, in an article entitled “Heroes and Martyrs,” a writer for the medical journal *Medical Times and Gazette* followed suit to pay tribute to Thomson and Richard James Mackenzie, another doctor who lost his life. This writer ended the article on an indignant note: “Why not give to those who serve their country well some public token of national gratitude?”<sup>301</sup> Whilst both the press correspondent and the medical commentator called for tributes to honour the unacknowledged service and sacrifices of the army doctors, the former’s comment that they “deserve to be held up as heroes” and the latter’s use of the words “Heroes and Martyrs” in the title of his article already anticipate the increasingly dominant poetic mode, the use of conventional military and religious rhetoric to valorize the role played by the medical staff during the conflict.

Both Louisa Shore and Henry Sewell Stokes adopted this approach in their war poems; in Shore’s “The Brave who have not Bled” (1855), she hails as “the brave physician,” the non-combatant military doctor.<sup>302</sup> Stokes ends “After the Battle” (1855) by panegyricizing Dr. Thomson as a “true-born Englishman/Kin to the good Samaritan,” declaring that his “homely Northern name/Shall place among the Martyrs claim.”<sup>303</sup> Dobell, however, is not interested in eulogizing the doctor; what distinguishes his sonnet portrait of the army surgeon from the others is that instead of

---

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> “Medical Heroes and Martyrs,” *Medical Times and Gazette* (October 28 1854), 446-47. The commentator’s indignation is due to the fact that Crimean doctors were treated as civilian officers who “were not entitled to the same conditions of service as their military colleagues,” an issue that had existed long before the outbreak of the war. As Michael Brown explains: “Until the formation of the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1898, neither the medical officers under the command of the Army Medical Department nor the surgeons and assistant surgeons of individual regiments were accorded the status of military personnel but were technically civil officers.” See Michael Brown, “‘Like a Devoted Army’: Medicine, Heroic Masculinity, and the Military paradigm in Victorian Britain,” *Journal of British Studies* 49.3 (July 2010), 611.

<sup>302</sup> Louisa Shore, “The Brave Who have not Bled,” line 11, in *War Lyrics* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1855), p. 46.

<sup>303</sup> Henry Sewell Stokes, “After The Battle,” in *Echoes of the War, and Other Poems* (London: Longman, 1855), p. 33.

relying on the rhetoric of military and religious heroism, the poet draws on Dr. Thomson's own account to allow readers a glimpse of the mutilated, dying bodies scattered around the battlefield while harking back to the traditions of Homer's *Iliad* to praise the army surgeon as a nursing, sacrificing and suffering figure. Through his use of imagery and epic simile, Dobell offers readers an alternative view of the aftermath of the battle of Alma, drawing their attention to the difficulties and ambivalent feelings of the doctor in fulfilling his duties.

One newspaper account which influenced Dobell's "The Army Surgeon" is Dr. Thomson's letter relating his experience of looking after the Russian wounded (written on September 25 1854 and printed in *The Times* on October 12). A comparison of Dobell's sonnet with Thomson's account shows that Dobell assimilated several of Thomson's phrases while employing a detached observer's perspective on the doctor's work.

For the past two days I have been literally in a sea of blood, as I have been employed attending on the wounded Russians on the battle-field of Alma. No description I could give would realize the horrors of war—the dead, the dying, horses, guns, carriages, *pêle-mêle*—headless trunks, bodies minus arms or legs, mutilations of every sort and kind,—that my blood almost freezes at the recollection. Every available hut was improvised into an operating theatre, and under every disadvantage we performed the most formidable surgical operations [...]. Our surgical bivouacs were readily known by the number of legs and arms strewn around the scene of our labours. Indeed, I cannot liken the field of battle for the two days after the fight to anything better than an *abattoir* [...]. Their supplications, as I passed through them, were heartrending—when I had attended one there were 20 unintelligible supplications from those around me to give them

my surgical aid.<sup>304</sup>

Here is Dobell's rendition,

Over that breathing waste of friends and foes,

The wounded and the dying, hour by hour, —

In will a thousand, yet but one in power, —

He labours thro' the red and groaning day.

The fearful moorland where the myriads lay

Moved as a moving field of mangled worms.

And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,

Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray

Above them, but when the bare branch performs

No sweet parental office, sink away

With hopeless chirp of woe, so as he goes

Around his feet in clamorous agony

They rise and fall; and all the seething plain

Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-coloured pain.<sup>305</sup>

Dobell renders Thomson's statement that "I have been literally in a sea of blood" as "He labours thro' the red and groaning day" in line 4. His depiction of the doctor hearing the voices of the wounded—the "hopeless chirp of woe" and "clamorous agony" in line 11 and 12—echoes Thomson's recollection of the "unintelligible supplications" of the Russian wounded. More obvious are Dobell's use of the words "labour" and "perform" in lines 4 and 9. The two verbs denoting the doctor's physical hardship to save lives can be found in Thomson's description—"we performed the most formidable surgical operations [...] around the scene of our labour." Yet the

---

<sup>304</sup> The emphasis is Dr. Thomson's. "A Medical Officer's Letter," *The Times*, October 12 1854, 8.  
<sup>305</sup> "The Army Surgeon," in *Sonnets on the War*, p. 14.

perspectives of the battlefield in Thomson's account and Dobell's sonnet contain striking differences. In the former, it is the experience of "I" that he conveys to the reader: "my blood almost freezes at the recollection" and "Their supplications as I passed them, were heartrending."<sup>306</sup> In the latter, Dobell adopts a third-person perspective to describe what happens after the battle of Alma, as an observer on the battlefield. In a way, his use of a more detached and omniscient view of the battlefield acts not to obscure the scene of suffering but to provide readers with a more objective vantage point from which to witness the doctor's work.

The speaker of Dobell's sonnet begins by stressing the urgency of the situation and announcing that there is only one person capable of saving the lives of a multitude of dying soldiers: "Over that breathing waste of friends and foes,/The wounded and the dying, hour by hour, —/In will a thousand, yet but one in power, —" (II. 2-3). In these lines, Dobell alludes to the traditions of Homer's *Iliad* to underline the privileged status of the military doctor. In an 1856 article entitled "The Military Surgeon," published in the *Lancet*, a critic constructed a genealogy of exemplary army surgeons in literature descending from Homer's *The Iliad* and culminating in Dobell's "The Army Surgeon."<sup>307</sup> According to this writer it was Homer who established the precedent for the surgeon's prominent role in the context of war. In Book XI, as the 'doctor' Machaon himself is wounded, Nestor treats him with the greatest respect: "Haste to your chariot: let Machaon ride by your side, and drive him to the fleet. His life is precious; *for one good physician* (and such is Machaon) is worth a whole army."<sup>308</sup> The writer maintained that "such men do not live only in the 'Iliad,' but that in every age there have been, and in the present day there are, many

---

<sup>306</sup> "A Medical Officer's Letter," *The Times*, October 12 1854, 8.

<sup>307</sup> "The Military Surgeon," *The London Lancet: A Journal of British and Foreign Medicine, Surgical and Chemical Science, Criticism, Literature and News*, 2 (1856), 221-22.

<sup>308</sup> The emphasis is the commentator's. *Ibid.*, 221.



who are equally skilful and equally brave.”<sup>309</sup> What Dobell emphasizes in these lines of “The Army Surgeon,” however, are neither the skills possessed by the surgeon with which he may heal the wounded, nor the doctor’s bravery, but the burden of his solitary mission.

Significantly, Dobell deploys the epic simile of “a raw brood, orphaned in the storm” (I.7)—which “Thrust up their heads” (8) “sink away” (9) and “rise and fall” (13)—to describe the motion of the wounded appealing to the doctor as he “performs/No sweet parental office” (I. 8-9). At first sight, Dobell’s simile appears only to refer to the wounded as young, hungry birds, but his implicit suggestion of the doctor as a bodiless mother bird is actually a rewriting of Achilles’ grievance at having been mistreated and exploited in the Greek army’s siege of Troy. In Book IX of the *Iliad* he explains to Ulysses in his camp why he refuses to fight for Agamemnon.

I after all my labours, who exposed  
My life continual in the field, have earn’d  
No very sumptuous prize. As the poor bird  
Gives to her unfledged brood a morsel gain’d  
After long search, though wanting it herself,  
So I have worn out many sleepless nights,  
And waded deep through many a bloody day  
In battle for their wives. (II. 394-491)<sup>310</sup>

Lamenting that he has run the risk of losing his life to save others on the battlefield without receiving credit for his action, Achilles compares him to a starving, sleepless

---

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>310</sup> William Cowper, *The Iliad of Homer*, in *The Works of William Cowper: Comprising His Poems, Correspondence, and Translations*, ed. Robert Southey, 8 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), VII: 165.

mother bird feeding “an unfledged brood,” echoed by Dobell’s “a raw brood, orphaned in the storm.” Like Achilles, the Crimean civilian doctor obtained little recognition for his high-risk work (as opposed to the fighting men). Dobell’s allusion to Achilles thus at once elevates the social status and humanitarian concern of the army surgeon and serves as a political critique of his underpraised role in the Crimean War. Additionally, the metaphor of the mother bird feeding her brood also acknowledges the army surgeon as a caring, nursing and self-sacrificing hero.

If “The Army Surgeon” serves as a testimony to the crucial yet largely neglected maternal role of the medical doctor, the next sonnet “The Wounded” renders problematic his service to the wounded during their private conversations.

“Thou canst not wish to live,” the surgeon said.

He clutched him, as a soul thrust forth from bliss

Clings to the ledge of Heaven! “Would’st thou keep this

Poor branchless trunk?” “But she would lean my head

Upon her breast; oh, let me live!” “Be wise.”

“I could be very happy; both these eyes

Are left me; I should see her; she would kiss

My forehead; only let me live.”—He dies

Even in the passionate prayer. “Good Doctor, say

If thou canst give more than another day

Of life?” “I think there maybe hope.” “Pass on.

I will not buy it with some widow’s son!”

“Help,” “help,” “help,” “help!” “God curse thee!” “Doctor, stay,

Yon Frenchman went down earlier in the day.”<sup>311</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> “The Wounded,” in *Sonnets on the War*, p. 15.

“The wounded” exemplifies Dobell’s experimentation with the sonnet form to memorialize the polyphonic voices of the wounded and dying soldiers. The fragmented quotations of irregular lengths ventriloquise the voices of “clamorous agony” and “many-coloured pain” described by Dobell in the last couplet of “The Army Surgeon.” In her analysis of Dobell’s two poems entitled “The wounded,” Markovits comments “We feel for the doctor who must perform his duties in the midst of this cacophony of individual demands. Yet even as he mediates events on the battlefield for the poems’ home front audience, the sonnets’ overall emphasis on sympathy also discourages readers from passing judgment.”<sup>312</sup> Whilst this is certainly true, I would add that the problems of passing judgment derive not only from the multiple, contradictory voices of the wounded but from Dobell’s exploration of the doctor’s duties. As Dobell’s use of the mother bird imagery in “The Army Surgeon” implies, he is not only concerned with recording the voices of the wounded but dramatizing the relationship between the doctor and the injured soldier and exploring the problems arising from the doctor’s responsibility for easing bodily pain.

The striking opening line of the sonnet “Thou canst not wish to live,” serves to unsettle the readers from the very beginning, as does the mortally wounded man’s response, the soldier “clutched him, as a soul thrust forth from bliss/Clings to the ledge of Heaven.” The opening phrase “Thou canst not [...]” with its wistful echo of the Decalogue, associates the medic, however peripherally, with God. “He dies/Even in the passionate prayer” in line 8 and 9 also implies that the wounded soldier sees the doctor as a godlike figure possessing the power to either preserve life or fulfil a dying wish. The enjambment between line 8 and 9, however, emphasizes the fact that the doctor does not respond to the wounded soldier’s prayer in the desired manner. As the

---

<sup>312</sup> Markovits, p. 136.

reader soon discovers the irony of the poem lies in the doctor having neither saved the wounded nor managing to ease their sufferings. The doctor's role reverses upon itself, he begins with a Godlike authority, only to end by having a soldier invoke God in order to be condemned, "God curse thee!"

The reader's capacity to pass judgment upon the Doctor is problematized by the non-specific attributes of quotations within the sonnet. Dobell does not make clear the identity of each speaker, and so the question contained within line 3 and 4—"Wouldst thou keep this/Poor branchless trunk?"—make readers pause so as to ascertain whom is being addressed, doctor or victim. In this case, the doctor reacts to the wounded soldier who "clutched him" by pointing out the futility of life as a "branchless trunk." What further complicates readers' perception of the doctor's role here is that Dobell never directly describes the physical condition of the wounded men. Rather, within the parameters of the poem, the likelihood of survival depends entirely on the doctor's judgment; as the wounded soldier implores the doctor to keep him alive, the latter only advises him to "Be wise." The dying soldier's initial emotional reaction to "clutch" at the doctor, and his invocation of a female figure who would "lean my head/Upon her breast" and "kiss/My forehead" all emphasize the importance of physical touch and intimacy. Yet the time-pressed, reticent doctor remains emotionally detached and is unable to offer either bodily or emotional comfort. In the last three lines, by silencing the voice of the doctor and focusing on the cries, curses and supplications of the wounded, Dobell implies a certain failure of duty on the part of the doctor.

According to the *Lancet* medical commentator cited above, the defining characteristic of an army surgeon in carrying out his duties is his emotional restraint, "He will be calm and reflective when all around him are agitated and distracted. He

denies himself emotion, for his hand must not tremble; his glance must be penetrating, and his judgment must be prompt and unerring.”<sup>313</sup> Although to a certain extent Dobell reinforces this idealized image of the army surgeon, he presents an emotionally ambiguous doctor unable to provide solace to the impassioned wounded. In the next sonnet bearing the same title “The Wounded,” he extends the suggestion of the powerless of the doctor: the wounded utter the word “Doctor” five times in their cries for his help (II. 1, 4, 6, 11, 12) but the doctor remains silent throughout the poem. At the end, the doctor is turned into a silent recorder of their dying wishes. As this series of sonnets reveal, instead of employing traditional heroic and religious rhetoric to apotheosize the figure of the doctor, Dobell dramatizes the tensions and conflicts between him and the wounded so as to underline his perceived failure in fulfilling his task. These sonnets full of irony and conflicting voices not only arouse ambivalent feelings toward both the wounded and the doctor but also force readers to try to make sense of the difficulties faced by the latter in his traumatic mission.

When Dobell completed his contribution to the volume of sonnets, he also felt a sense of futility as to what effects they would have on the reading public. In a letter of December 21 1854, he told a friend

The form of the Sonnet forbids anything like *adequacy*, though I think you will confess we have done more with that form, in some cases, than we had, perhaps, a right to anticipate. We preferred to confine ourselves to sonnet, from the feeling that till the great events of which we speak are toned down by time any mortal description of them would fall dead on the public ear.<sup>314</sup>

His emphasis on the word “adequacy” suggests the extent to which the limited scope

---

<sup>313</sup> The writer’s discussion of this image of the army surgeon is from a translation of Colonel Ambert’s account of the doctor. See “The Medical Surgeon,” *Lancet* 2 (1856), 221.

<sup>314</sup> Jolly, I: 385.

of the stringent rules governing the sonnet form “forbids” him to articulate his critique of the war. In a sense, his recourse to the sonnet can be regarded as a means of self-censorship for he believed that “the public ear” would not listen to his criticism while the conflict was going on. It is partly because he had yet to give a more thorough critique of the war that he embarked on another project immediately after the publication of *Sonnets on the War*. In a letter of January 12 1855, he told his sister “I followed a voice that was singing to me in this air and learned from it another lyric for that collection ‘Lyrics on the War.’”<sup>315</sup> This is his earliest mention of his inspiration for *England in Time of War*, a collection of anti-war lyrics which did not appear until July 1856. This time he worked alone and utilized the lyric form to depict not soldiers’ heroic deeds in the Crimea but a wide range of civilians’ emotional sufferings (such as the female civilian’s anxieties about her lover discussed above) during the war, another radical rewriting of the lyrical tradition of war poetry.

The sonnet “Home” discussed above is a centrepiece that anticipates the shifts Dobell made in his next volume. “Desolate” and “She Touches A Sad String of Soft Recall” the first and the last pieces of the new volume are both conceived as a continuation of the emotional responses of the woman in “Home,” now enlightened by news of the calamities in the Crimea. As we shall see in the final section, from “Home” to *England in Time of War* Dobell moves from recording the physical violence taking place in the Crimea to expressing civilians’ conflicting emotions about the war from the perspective of those left at the home front.

## V

In a letter of May 1855, Dobell expounded his conception of the new volume:

I fear that if all that is evil in warfare were religiously abstracted from the

---

<sup>315</sup> Jolly, I: 398.

war-song it would have to be sung on other than Crimean battle-fields [...]. I intend [...] to catch the various *home-reflections* of that blazing affair in the East so as to create quite a little ballad-literature on the subject, and surround it with an atmosphere of domestic interests and emotions.<sup>316</sup>

This passage, which serves as a manifesto for his *England in Time of War*, radically rewrites the traditional role of war poets and the function of war songs. Whereas, as we have seen, most civilian poets of 1854 followed the traditions of Tyrtæus' war songs to excite readers' enthusiasm for war and advocate England's military intervention, Dobell in his post-war volume employed the lyric to dramatize the "domestic interests and emotions" of those who suffer on the home-front, shifting the focus of the conflict from the "Crimean battle-fields" to the domestic sphere. In doing so Dobell legitimizes his war lyrics as "*home-reflections* of that blazing affair in the East," a domestication of the epic and a revisioning of the distant conflict.

It should be noted that contemporary reception of Dobell's new volume was profoundly affected by his reputation as a Spasmodic poet.<sup>317</sup> Some reviewers censured his experimentation with poetic forms and conventions of war poetry as another instance of emotional excess of the author of *Balder*. One critic for the *Saturday Review* for instance proclaimed that Dobell "neither sees, feels, nor thinks like ordinary men. There is not in his verses a trace of that simplicity and straightforward earnestness of sentiment and expression which are essentially requisite to portray *England in Time of War* in a poetic form."<sup>318</sup> Others, however, recognized that it was a volume that broke new ground in war poetry as can be seen in

---

<sup>316</sup> Jolly, I: 430

<sup>317</sup> Jason Rudy has discussed the context in which reviewers responded to Dobell's 1856 new volume and his experimentation with rhyme as seen in "The Evening Dream" (1856). See Rudy, *Electric Meters*, pp. 92-99.

<sup>318</sup> "Sydney Dobell," *The Saturday Review* (July 26 1856), 304; for another hostile review, see *The Athenaeum* (July 26 1856), 923-24.

a comment made by the reviewer for the *National Magazine*

We decline [...] to endorse these excesses, or to justify some other peculiarities in this author; but in spite of them, he has poured out for us such stores of imaginative wealth, that not to seize upon with eagerness would be an equal wrong to him.<sup>319</sup>

This critic continues: “The book discloses to us almost every phase of emotion that war can inspire in a civilised country [...]. So systematic a view of the moral and domestic effects of war has perhaps never been painted till now.”<sup>320</sup> Similarly, in her 1856 review George Eliot, while alluding to the controversy over Spasmodic Poetry, commented that

We are not enthusiastic admirers either of Mr. Dobell or of the school of poetry to which he belongs, but we can at least see that he is a man of deep thought and sensibility, essentially a poet, and earnest though aberrant in the pursuit of his art.<sup>321</sup>

She aptly summed up the innovation of Dobell’s war volume “It is the story of the war told, not in its outward events, but in the mental experience of the men and women who are actors and sufferers in it.”<sup>322</sup> For Eliot, one of the best war poems in the volume is “Home, Wounded,” which she considered “original and beautiful.”<sup>323</sup>

“Home, Wounded,” the dramatic monologue of a maimed hero within the context of post-war England, records Dobell’s “home-reflections” of the male body ravaged by war. Thematically the poem can be regarded as a sequel to the sonnets “Home” and “The Wounded”; the scenario is that the wounded soldier survives the war and is returning to his household to be reunited with the woman waiting for him. More

---

<sup>319</sup> *National Magazine* 1.2 (December 1856), 116.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>321</sup> [George Eliot], “Belles Lettres,” *Westminster Review* 66 (October 1856), 568.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 569.



importantly the poem is Dobell's response to a popular theme circulating in newspapers and art: the homecoming of invalid soldiers. From late January 1855 onward, as news of the return of the Crimean invalids began to be recorded in the press, there was a new increasing concern with their welfare.<sup>324</sup> Questions such as how they would be received and how treated in convalescent hospitals were frequently raised and discussed in newspapers.<sup>325</sup> Ceremonies welcoming the invalids also aroused the public's curiosity about these men and their battle wounds. Take for instance the description in *The Times* of the Queen's distribution of Crimean medals at the horse guards in May 1855:

It is impossible to describe the mingled sensations of admiration and pity which went like an electric thrill through the vast multitude as they saw that line of heroes, whose gaunt and pallid forms, sacred features, and maimed limbs, told the story of their bravery, and of their manly endurance of horrible and heartrending suffering and privation.<sup>326</sup>

As this passage shows, the soldiers' maimed bodies are viewed both as spectacle and as a legible sign of heroic status. However, the correspondent's description of these wounded bodies signifies the civilian crowd's perspective of their bodily sufferings. That they aroused "the mingled sensations of admiration and pity" and "told of the story of their bravery, and of their manly endurance of horrible and heartrending suffering and privation" is more revealing of the civilian's fantasy of combatants' wounds rather than the soldiers' own articulation of their situation. In paintings and illustrations of the time the homecoming wounded soldier is always being royally received by a sympathetic Queen or being reunited with his family in a welcoming

---

<sup>324</sup> "Wounded Soldiers From the Crimea in Liverpool," *John Bull*, January 20 1855, 37; "Return of Invalids from the War," *The Lady's Newspaper*, February 3, 65.

<sup>325</sup> "Our wounded and invalid soldiers," letter to the editor, *The Times*, February 14 1855, 10.

<sup>326</sup> "Distribution of War Medals by The Queen At the Horse Guards," *The Times*, May 19 1855, 11.

household.<sup>327</sup> One particular painting dealing with this theme and known to Dobell was “Home” (1856) by his Scottish friend Joseph Noel Paton (Figure 4).<sup>328</sup> The work depicts the sentimental moment when a wounded Scottish soldier who has just returned home and collapsed on a chair is embraced by his wife and mother. Although Paton does not depict the soldier’s mutilated body, which is covered by his clothes, he does make it clear that the soldier has lost his left arm. The painting won popular approval during the 88th exhibition of the Royal Academy in May 1856.<sup>329</sup>



Figure 4 Joseph Noel Paton, *Home* (1856). Reproduced by Courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust.

<sup>327</sup> For visual representation of this theme see Matthew Paul Lallumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984), p. 96-97; Ulrich Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War* (Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association, 2001), pp. 180-92.

<sup>328</sup> Dobell referred to Paton’s work as “The Guardsman’s Return” in a letter dated January 1857. See Jolly, II: 68.

<sup>329</sup> “The Exhibition of the Royal Academy,” *Illustrated London News*, May 10 1856, 509.

Dobell's "Home, Wounded," however, questions both the public's spectatorship of the wounded bodies and the mainstream treatment of invalid soldiers in art. The sonnet begins with the voice of an invalid asking his comrade to wheel him to a meadow on a sunny spring morning; having reached the meadow and surrounded by roses, the speaker begins to reflect on his service in the war

Blare the trumpet, and boom the gun,  
But, oh, to sit here thus in the sun,  
To sit here, feeling my work is done  
While the sands of life so golden run,  
And I watch the children's posies (II. 162-66).<sup>330</sup>

The stirring music of the "trumpet" is a recurrent motif in Crimean War poetry, signalling the call to fight. One key component of a soldier's masculine identity is his duty to respond to the call for war and defend the nation. Yet the invalid speaker realises that he is no longer required to take up arms and can now repose "idle" to watch the flowers for the remainder of his life: "Bring whatever the years may bring,/The flowers will blossom, the birds will sing,/And there'll always be primroses" (II. 168-70). He describes himself as "a basking hound,/A hound that dreams and dozes" (II. 183-84). It is while in this state of reverie that Dobell revisits explicitly the speaker's experience of losing his limbs in the Crimea:

Oh to lie a-dream, a-dream,  
To feel I may dream and to know you deem  
My work is done for ever,  
And the palpitating fever

---

<sup>330</sup> "Home, Wounded," line 162-166, in *England in Time of War* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856), pp. 109-110. Further references to this poem in this edition will be internally cited by line number.

That gains and loses, loses and gains,  
And beats the hurrying blood on the brunt of a thousand pains  
Cooled at once by that blood-let  
Upon the parapet;  
And all the tedious taskèd toil of the difficult long endeavour  
Solved and quit by no more fine  
Than these limbs of mine  
Spanned and measured once for all  
By the right hand I lost,  
Bought up at so light a cost (II. 210-23)

The first three lines of this passage concern the speaker's dream, in the midst of war, that he has fulfilled his service and does not have to fight anymore. For the speaker, this depends on the judgment of "you": "to know you deem/My work is done for ever." The pronoun can allude to his comrade pushing the wheelchair, his lover waiting for him at home or even readers of the poem. The two extended lines in this passage that run parallel to each other (ll. 215-18) reveal how the speaker's bodily experience transforms his feelings toward the war. "[T]he palpitating fever" refers not only to the speaker's illness but to a war fervour that excites him to join the war and bear "the brunt of a thousand pains." On the other hand, the "tedious taskèd toil of the difficult long endeavour" suggests the speaker's war weariness, perhaps connoting the protracted siege of Sebastopol. Ironically, the speaker's war fever is cured by blood-letting and his ordeal ended by the loss of a limb.

Significantly this is the first time Dobell uses a first-person voice to describe a soldier's bodily experience directly without resorting to images or metaphors—for instance, "The raven croaking in his carrion ear" in "Home," the mother bird epic

simile in “The Army Surgeon” and the “Poor branchless trunk” in “The Wounded.” In a sense, the soldier’s wish that “My work is done for ever” does eventuate. His feeling on losing his limbs was at first exhilarating for his “name is crost/From duty’s muster-roll” (II. 228-29) and he can now “slumber tho’ clarion call/And live the joy of an embodied soul” (II. 230-31). This sense of physical and mental liberation, however, soon gives way to his realization of the absurdity and pointlessness of the services rendered that resulted in such bodily suffering— “a life of deed/was emptied out to feed/That fire of pain that burned so brief a while” (II. 233-35).

In the two stanzas which follow, the speaker reflects upon an encounter with the public and his lover at home respectively. He envisions that “tho’ there is little I can say,/Each will look kind with honour while he hears” (II. 251-52). As illustrated in the Queen’s distribution of Crimean medals in May 1855, it is the invalid’s maimed body not words, which evoke the concept of “honour” and makes him an object of curiosity for the public. The speaker realises that it would be futile to try to communicate to others his corporeal experiences— “my thoughts will halt with honourable scars,/And my dark voices stumble with the weight/Of what it does relate” (II. 254-56).

Even more troubling for the soldier is the prospective reunion with his childhood sweetheart, “Perhaps oh even she/May look as she looked when I knew her/In those old days of childish sooth” (II. 267-69). At first the speaker decides not to “seek nor sue her” and, because of his “giftless, graceless, guinealess truth,” is convinced that he “only lived to rue her” (II. 281, 284-85). His anxiety about meeting and disappointing his lover underlines the predicament of many invalid veterans— poverty, physical deformity and the difficulties of obtaining employment as a maimed civilian.<sup>331</sup> And yet he soon declares that “in spite of her lovers and lands/She shall

---

<sup>331</sup> In an 1855 article reporting the Queen’s reception of the wounded guards, the writer for the

love me yet, my brother!” (II. 287-88). Claiming that “I will leave my glory to woo her,” the speaker insists that “I shall not be denied.” (II. 297, 301). Again, ironically, the only reason he will “not be denied” is due to his maimed body, a body that will evoke for the girl’s conception of what achieving “glory” truly means and which will accord him the status of war hero.

The poem concludes with the speaker’s wish that his comrade will love her also, and that they three will “sit in the sun,/And see the Aprils one by one, Primrosed Aprils one by one” (II. 307-09). Punctuating the poem throughout, this idyllic scene, full of sunshine and primroses, appears to promise the maimed soldier a sense of security, hope and regeneration. However, it is clear that this rosy picture of life is only a façade that masks the wounded hero’s traumatizing experience of war and his inability to return home and live the life of an ordinary civilian. “Home, Wounded” is thus an anti-war poem which raises questions about the meaning of soldiers’ bodily sufferings and satirizes the public’s spectatorship of their wounded bodies. By exploring an invalid’s ambivalent feelings about losing his limbs and the subsequent repercussions dealing with his maimed body both during and after the war, Dobell critiques the prevailing glorification of soldiers’ sufferings and damaged bodies.

As this chapter has shown, Dobell was one of the most daring and radically original Crimean War poets in his treatment of the wounded Crimean soldier and theme of suffering. His experimentation with poetic forms broke with established traditions of war poetry and his thematic exploration of the figure of the wounded soldier called into question the dominant arm-chair spectatorship of suffering. Instead

---

*Illustrated London News* raised the issue of their further employment and appealed to the public to help them find a suitable occupation: “Several of them, having been but a short time in the Army, will be entitled to only a small amount of pension; and the bare idea that men who have performed such feats of valour in the service of their country should be left to struggle with penury and destitution cannot be for a moment tolerated.” “The Wounded Guards at Buckingham Palace,” *Illustrated London News*, March 10 1855, 731.

of fashioning patriotic images of war heroes and heroines which satisfied the nation's self-complacency and erased the traces of physical sufferings, Dobell sought to commemorate the trauma of war and challenged readers to make sense of the futility of an army surgeon's duties, to hear the disturbing voices of the wounded, and to sympathize with the predicament of the faithful woman at home and the invalid unable to adapt to the life of a civilian. His war poems discussed in this chapter succeed where the majority of his contemporaries failed in accurately communicating the truth and the horror of the Crimean War. One civilian poet who read Dobell and Smith's war sonnets and incorporated their depictions of suffering soldiers into his later war poem, albeit without acknowledgment, was Tennyson. In the next chapter, we shall see how in *Maud*, the Laureate rewrites Dobell and Smith's depiction of distant suffering and trauma of the war as a civilian speaker's private warfare on the home-front.

## Chapter 4

“Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die”:

### Tennyson’s Echoes of War-Cries in *Maud*

Dedicating his volume to Alfred Tennyson in late August 1854, the Northumberland poet Robert Story urged the Poet Laureate, “graced by royal feeling/with Britannia’s laurel crown,” to “shine with added splendour/Ere thy brows the gift surrender.”<sup>332</sup> Story’s expectation of the Laureate was not an uncommon one during the Crimean War. In December 1854, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* printed Corporal John Brown’s song “The Twentieth of September, Eighteen Hundred Fifty-Four” with the following note:

It has been rumored that the Poet Laureate, as well as other bards of renown, are presently engaged in the task of commemorating the great campaign. With all respect for their genius and accomplishments, we doubt much whether any of them will exhibit more graphic power than the gallant Corporal, who certainly had the advantage of witnessing what he sings.<sup>333</sup>

This passage highlights at once the prominent role of Tennyson amongst British poets and the difficulties of composing war poetry without combat experience. Brown’s piece, beginning “Come all you gallant British hearts that love the red and blue/And drink a health to those brave lads that made the Russians rue,” celebrates the army’s victory at the battle of Alma. Today, the poem is long forgotten; at the time it received high praise and was widely circulated in the press and sung by soldiers in the

---

<sup>332</sup> Robert Story, *The Third Napoleon, An Ode; Addressed to Alfred Tennyson, Esq: to Which Are Added Songs of the War* (London: John Hearne, 1854), p. 3.

<sup>333</sup> John Brown, “The Twentieth of September, Eighteen-Hundred Fifty-Four: As written and Sung by Corporal John Brown, Grenadier Guards, When the Men Got Some Drinks for the First Time at Balaclava, September 28 1854,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 76.470 (December 1854), 696.



Crimea.<sup>334</sup> As this passage suggests, the poem's appeal lay in Brown's personal experience of war, which authorized it, in the words of the critic, as a "genuine effusion from the Crimea."<sup>335</sup> Around the same time, in another review of a wide array of war volumes, *Hogg's Instructor* proclaimed:

‘Our own correspondent’ is, for the present, emperor of the literary world. He has, for the time being, put down the read Republic of Letters, and reigns alone in his glory.<sup>336</sup>

Whilst the epithet “emperor of the literary world” connotes the Poet Laureate, the critic acknowledges the dominance of war correspondents’ mass-circulating newspaper reports. Meanwhile, the rhetorical phrases “for the present” and “for the time being” hint at the critic’s reservations about the correspondent’s usurpation of the prestige of poets and the possibility that such phenomenon is only temporary. This critic, like the writer of *Blackwood's*, speculated about the form of the Laureate’s new war poem: “It has long been rumoured that Tennyson was writing something on the subject of war, which I still think very probable, but I do not imagine that we shall have it in the shape of a single ode. Perhaps we shall get a series, who knows?”<sup>337</sup> In a sense, the comments of *Blackwood's* and *Hogg's Instructor* reflect what Chapter 1 has discussed: a widespread scepticism about civilians’ ability to depict the present

---

<sup>334</sup> *The Times* published *Blackwood's* article containing Brown's song and the commentator's note on January 6 1855. The poem was also reprinted in the form of various broadsides, in James Friswell's anthology of Crimean War poetry *Songs of the War* and “often sung round the camp-fires in front of Sebastopol.” See *The Times*, January 6 1855, 8; “The 20<sup>th</sup> of September, 1854” (London: H. Such), *Broadside Ballads Online*, <<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/static/images/sheets/10000/06653.gif>>; Friswell, *Songs of the War*, pp. 33-35; and William Forbes-Mitchell, *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny 1857-59*, (London: Macmillan and Co, 1983), p. 141.

<sup>335</sup> Brown, *Ibid.*, p. 696. In his review of the war poetry, Edward Hamley also wrote of the popularity and authenticity of the poem: “The lines which ring the truest among those we have seen are some purporting to be written by Corporal John Brown on the battle of Alma, whose verses have become popular in a song.” See Hamley, “Poetry of the War: Reviewed Before Sebastopol,” p. 532.

<sup>336</sup> “Letters from the Metropolis,” *Hogg's Instructor* IV (December 1854), 79.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

conflict in poetry. What is new is that both critics have singled out Tennyson for special attention among British poets, clearly anticipating his upcoming poetic output as a war poem.

How did Tennyson rise to the occasion and fulfil his duty as the Laureate in *Maud*? The monodrama was published in *Maud and Other Poems* (on July 28 1855), Tennyson's first volume after accepting the Laureateship. In Chapter 1, I argued that, in Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," first published in *The Examiner* on December 9 1854, the Laureate responded to commentators' strident criticism of civilian poets "sitting at home at ease" by erasing his presence in the poem and by subsuming his private emotion into a rhetorically public admiration of the soldiers' sacrifices. By the early months of 1855, however, it is not merely the lack of first-hand experience of war that presented problems to civilian poetic representation of war. The reading public's awareness of Britain's military incompetence and the aristocratic leaders' mismanagement of the war would make it increasingly difficult for the Laureate to extol the military campaign and exhort soldiers to die for their country in the confident manner of early Crimean War poets. This chapter will consider the ways in which the Laureate confronted the difficulties of composing a war poem through his treatment of echoes of earlier war poems in Part I and II of *Maud* (Part III will be discussed in Chapter 5).

## II

Literary critics have long identified *Maud* as an allusive text that documents not only Tennyson's response to the politics of the Crimean War but also reveals the poet's revisiting of his early troubled life and reworking of established traditions of literature such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Annoyed by the hostile reviewers of *Maud*, Tennyson famously performed a life-long ritual of reciting the poem amongst a

limited circle of sympathetic friends. One of them was Elizabeth Browning. Having heard Tennyson's reading of *Maud* at a social gathering in London on September 27 1855, she recorded in a letter: "If I had had a heart to spare, certainly he would have won mine. He is captivating with his frankness, confidingness and unexampled *naïveté*! Think of his stopping in 'Maud' every now and then – 'There's a wonderful touch! That's very tender. How beautiful that is!'"<sup>338</sup> The indignant Laureate told his friends: "You must always stand up for *Maud* when you hear my pet bantling abused. Perhaps that is why I feel sensitive about her. You know mothers always make the most of a child that is abused."<sup>339</sup> The reason Tennyson felt so sensitive about criticism of *Maud* and relentlessly came to its defense, is perhaps that the writing of the poem, as Ralph Wilson Rader and Christopher Ricks have shown, is in part his attempt to come to terms with his early life of family troubles and frustrations in love. According to Rader, the creation of the poem was "an act of cathartic recapitulation by which he defined and judged his early life and attempted to put it behind him."<sup>340</sup> *Maud*, in the words of Ricks, "is a story which gave fierce play to all the central griefs and grievances of Tennyson's life."<sup>341</sup> In his examination of Tennyson's allusive practice, Ricks highlights the poet's "self-borrowing" of lines he wrote earlier for his later works as a characteristic of Tennyson's method of composition.<sup>342</sup> For Ricks, the germ of *Maud*, the lyric 'Oh! that 'twere possible,' written between 1833 and 1834 after the death of Arthur Hallam, was a successful example of Tennyson's

---

<sup>338</sup> Elizabeth Barrett Browning, letter to Mrs. Martin, October 1855, in *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1897), II: 453.

<sup>339</sup> Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son* (London: Macmillan, 1897): I: 468.

<sup>340</sup> Ralph Wilson Rader, *Tennyson's Maud: The Biographical Genesis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), p. 88.

<sup>341</sup> Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Macmillan: 1989), p. 233.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 281-94.

self-borrowing.<sup>343</sup> The fragment thus manifests Tennyson's yearning to have a reunion with his lost friend. This does not account, however, for his expansion and transformation of the fragment into a monodrama in the context of the Crimean War.

Tennyson's own commentary about *Maud* suggests that the creation of the poem was also profoundly influenced by his literary predecessors. He declared: "The poem is a little *Hamlet*, the history of a morbid poetic soul [...]. He is the heir of madness."<sup>344</sup> As the connections Tennyson establishes between his poem and *Hamlet* suggest, the Laureate's use of a maddened speaker can be viewed as a literary convention he inherited from Shakespeare. Taking his cue from Tennyson's own words, Antony H. Harrison has discussed the poem's intertextuality with Shakespeare's tragedy, while Timothy J. Lovelace has examined the Homeric echoes in *Maud*.<sup>345</sup> In a 1987 article exploring the relationship between gender, Tennyson's poetic identity and echoes of "male-authored canonized intertexts," Linda Shires observes that the Laureate's "dependence on them in *Maud* is so heavy as to make the poem a tissue of citations."<sup>346</sup> Drawing on John Hollander's *The Figure of Echo* (1984), Shires pays particular attention to the speaker's love lyrics, which echo the works of Renaissance male writers including Edmund Spenser, John Donne and Andrew Marvell.<sup>347</sup> She claims that "*Maud* gains authority [...] by being positioned firmly in the male tradition" whilst "those intertexts tell their own tale, which results in *Maud* being traversed with an otherness which disturbs as much as it might buttress

---

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>344</sup> Hallam, *A Memoir*, I: 396.

<sup>345</sup> Harrison investigates the links between *Maud*, Shakespeare's tragedy and the Spasmodic poetry of Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell. Examining how the traditions of Homer's epics influenced *Maud*, Lovelace opens his book chapter by saying: "In the *Iliad*, Homer sings of the devastating wrath of Achilles; in *Maud* Tennyson sings of the psychic devastation of his own wrathful hero." See Antony H. Harrison, *Victorian Poets and Romantic Poems: Intertextuality and Ideology* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990); Timothy J. Lovelace, *The Artistry and Tradition of Tennyson's Battle Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 119.

<sup>346</sup> Linda Shires, "Maud, Masculinity and Poetic Identity," *Criticism* 29.3 (1987), 281.

<sup>347</sup> John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (London: University of California Press, 1981).

male poetic identity.”<sup>348</sup>

Whilst critics have also long noted close parallels between *Maud* and volumes of poetry published in 1854 and 1855, they have concentrated mainly on the so-called “war passages,” (a term deriving from Goldwin Smith’s 1855 review of *Maud*), debating on Tennyson’s political views of the war.<sup>349</sup> Susan Shatto, for instance, states: “There is no doubt that the political passages in *Maud* resulted from deeply held convictions, but Tennyson’s convictions were those of most Englishmen of his day, and the passages merely echoes of familiar catch-phrases and popular sentiment.”<sup>350</sup> In recent years, Matthew Bevis and Stephanie Markovits have both offered incisive readings that foreground *Maud*’s intertextual relation with other Crimean War poems. Bevis reminds us that the *OED*’s first reference to the term “war poem” concerns *Maud*. In a letter of May 1857, John Addington Symonds records that in a lecture on “the poetry of the war” a tutor “chiefly talked about two Lushingtons and *Maud* which he considers a true war poem and praises highly.”<sup>351</sup> Here, the lecturer’s remark that *Maud* was “a true war poem” is explicitly at the expense of the jingoistic lyrics of Franklin and Henry Lushington. Bevis stresses the ways in which *Maud* “echoes [and questions] language and arguments from poems by the Lushingtons and other pro-war collections” in a dramatic form, arguing that Tennyson’s poem “is an echo of a war-cry, an echo of questionable fidelity that

---

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> See Susan Shatto, *Tennyson’s Maud: A Definitive Edition* (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 36; The “war passages” include VI to XIII of Part I in which the speaker condemns a commercial society while alluding to the parliamentary debates on England’s involvement with war in the Crimea in early 1854 and Part III in which the speaker joins the army, which signals the beginning of the Crimean conflict. [Goldwin Smith], “The War Passages in *Maud*,” *Saturday Review* 1 (November 3, 1855), 14-15.

<sup>350</sup> Shatto, p. 36.

<sup>351</sup> John Addington Symonds to Charlotte Symonds, May 1857, in *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), I: 105.

provokes rather than distils thought.”<sup>352</sup> As for Markovits, she examines the intertextual relation between Tennyson’s two Crimean War poems. Boldly imagining Tennyson’s “The Charge” (1854) as the silenced battle song sung by the heroine Maud, she studies the “notable areas of thematic overlap” between “The Charge” and *Maud*. Whilst building on such recent scholarship on *Maud*, this chapter will demonstrate that there is more to the poem’s intertextual relation with earlier war poems than has been recognized. It argues that Tennyson confronted the challenges of civilian poetic representation of war through both the figure of “Echo” embodied by the heroine Maud and “echoing,” a particular mode of allusion that incorporates the recurrent words and images of earlier war poetry into the speaker’s nightmarish vision of contemporary England.

The term “echo” is thus employed not only to distinguish it from other critical terminologies such as “influence,” “allusion” and “self-borrowing” but to stress the ways Tennyson handled challenges of composing home-front poetry in the specific context of the Crimean War. In a recent article on “Allusion,” Gregory Machacek points out that “insofar as echo implies exact duplication, it is one of those terms that tend to suggest that allusive texts are derivative and their authors unimaginative and thus to diminish the accomplishment of allusive authors.”<sup>353</sup> In many respects, this association of echo with authorial derivation encapsulates the predicament of Crimean War poets. Consider, for instance, the comment from the critic of *Hogg’s Instructor* cited earlier:

The war is calling forth quite a literature of its own; that which is sent home from the Crimea being by far the most interesting portion. The books, pamphlets, and

---

<sup>352</sup> Matthew Bevis, “Fighting Talk,” pp. 17, 19.

<sup>353</sup> Gregory Machacek, “Allusion,” *PMLA* 122.2 (March 2007), 528.

poems on the subject, which are manufactured at home, are essentially poor.<sup>354</sup>

The critic's description of the poetry "manufactured at home" conjures up the image of vast numbers of volumes being mass-produced without original, individual voices. In this sense, a civilian's poetic response was seen as a less genuine, authentic war representation than that of a soldier or correspondent. Some less well-known civilian poets openly acknowledged the reverberative character of their poetic responses, using the word "Echoes" in the title of their volumes: Henry Sewell Stokes' *Echoes of War and Other Poems* (January 1855), for instance, and Alfred Knott's *War Echoes: Being Poems for the Time* (1854).<sup>355</sup> From another perspective, however, to echo is not merely to avail oneself of a previous utterance to authorize the present one, but to engage in a dialogue with it. This chapter will demonstrate that Tennyson's treatment of echoes in *Maud* is more artistically and culturally significant than has been acknowledged. It will first discuss the ways in which Tennyson both failed and fulfilled his duty as the Laureate in light of the contemporary reception of *Maud*. It will then explore Tennyson's echoes of war-cries by focusing on three major episodes of the poem: the death of the narrator's father at the start of Part I, Maud's war song, and the speaker's duel with Maud's brother at the start of Part II.

### III

To many of the Victorian reviewers who anticipated the publication of Tennyson's new work during the Crimean War, it is clear that *Maud* was not a poem that met their expectations.<sup>356</sup> William E. Aytoun, the reviewer for *Blackwood's*, for

---

<sup>354</sup> "Letters from the Metropolis," *Hogg's Instructor* IV (December 1854), 79.

<sup>355</sup> Henry Sewell Stokes, *Echoes of War and Other Poems* (London: Longman, 1855); Alfred Knott, *War Echoes: Being Poems for the Time* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1854).

<sup>356</sup> Shannon wrote: "Of the ninety-one reviews and essays I have examined, the derogatory slightly outnumbered the laudatory; and strident abuse tended to obscure judicious praise. Among Tennyson's contemporaries there was no doubt that *Maud* had been roughly handled." Edgar F. Shannon's "The Critical Reception of Tennyson's *Maud*," *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 401.

one, announced that it was “a sore disappointment to us.”<sup>357</sup> Elizabeth Browning, one of the more appreciative readers of *Maud* observed in a letter of July 1855: “People in general appear very unfavourably impressed by this poem, *very unjustly*, Robert and I think. On some points it is even an advance. The sale is great, *nearly five thousand copies already*.”<sup>358</sup> The poet’s grandson Charles Tennyson also claimed that *Maud* “was the least understood and the most controversial of all the poems issued by him after 1850.”<sup>359</sup> The controversy and public debates provoked by *Maud* can to some extent be understood as a reaction against Tennyson’s highly experimental poem and the extent to which the Laureate had departed from the conventions of war poetry. For all critics’ disagreements, however, the dominant interpretive mode shared by the literary community is to read *Maud* in light of the immediate socio-historical context of the Crimean War. As Edgar F. Shannon pointed out, “the war passages’ constituted one of the most prominent contemporary aspects of *Maud*; and Tennyson’s war philosophy was the feature of the poem most frequently discussed by the reviewers.”<sup>360</sup> In seeking to decipher Tennyson’s “war philosophy,” critics tended to boil his position down to that of a staunch advocate of the war. While most approved of the conclusion of *Maud* and interpreted the speaker’s voluntary military service as Tennyson’s endorsement of the war, several critics such as Goldwin Smith, William Gladstone, *Punch*’s anonymous commentator, who published a doggerel “The Laureate’s View of War,” and William Bennett, who composed a parody *Anti-Maud* (1855), all took the Laureate to task for appearing to subscribe to the war in all its

---

<sup>357</sup> [William E. Aytoun], *Maud*, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 78.479 (September 1855), 312.

<sup>358</sup> The emphasis in the quotation is Browning’s. See Elizabeth Barrett Browning, letter to Mrs. Martin, July 1855, in *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, II: 453.

<sup>359</sup> Charles Tennyson, “Tennyson as Poet Laureate,” in *Tennyson*, ed. D. J. Palmer (London: G. Bell, 1973), p. 218.

<sup>360</sup> Shannon, “The Critical Reception of Tennyson’s *Maud*,” p. 401.



atrocities.<sup>361</sup>

In Smith's review of *Maud and Other Poems*, for instance, he denounces the Laureate as a civilian gossiping about the war, drawing this image from another poem of the volume "To the Rev. F. D. Maurice": "Mr. Tennyson paints himself, in the Lines to the Rev. F. D. Maurice, sitting with his friend in a charming cottage in the Isle of Wight, and chatting of the war over his wine, while the men-of-war sailing outwards lend another charm to the beautiful sea view."<sup>362</sup> In addition, he also invoked Wordsworth, the previous Laureate, to criticize Tennyson: "[...] the manhood of a poet, if it is a little compromised by the softness of his calling, must be redeemed, not by talking lightly of blood, but by true tenderness, self-control, obedience to the moral law, and fidelity to the end of his mission, such as lent heroism to the soft and, in some respects, weak nature of Wordsworth."<sup>363</sup> In another notorious review published in *The Times*, the critic Eneas Dallas, while "rejoic[ing] to find the Laureate proclaiming the truth with regard to the war—that this great war is the salvation of the country from evils far more to be dreaded than any excite the fears of dove-eyed peacemongers," dismissed *Maud* as "a spasm."<sup>364</sup> Dallas castigates the Laureate's "representation of a diseased state of mind" and his non-combatant status at home: "the really great poets have been pre-eminently men of action [...]. Instead of this, what have we now? Poets hiding themselves in holes and corners, and weaving

---

<sup>361</sup> See "The Laureate's View of War," *Punch* (August 18 1855), 69; [William Cox Bennett], *Anti-Maud* (London: E. Churton, 1855).

<sup>362</sup> "To the Rev. F. D. Maurice," Tennyson's invitation to Maurice to visit him at the Isle of Wight, describes the poet's abode as a haven where they could engage in the political debates without provoking public scandals: "We might discuss the Northern sin/Which made a selfish war begin;/Dispute the claims, arrange the chances." See [Godwin Smith], "The War Passages in *Maud*," *Saturday Review*, 1.1 (November 1855), 14-15.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>364</sup> "Spasm" is a contemporary parlance that aligns the formal qualities of the monodrama with the characteristics of the works of much maligned Spasmodic Poets including Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell (See Chapter 3). *Maud and Other Poems*, *The Times*, August 25, 1855, 8.

interminable cobwebs out of their own bowels.”<sup>365</sup> In a sense, the commonalities between the scathing critiques of Smith and Dallas, critics who opposed and espoused the war respectively, underline their own assumptions about the role and responsibilities of a war poet.

Tennyson, however, seemed to have anticipated the political outcry his *Maud* would stir up. Replying to Archer Thompson Gurney, the author of *Ode of Peace* (one of the few anti-war volumes published in 1855), and clarifying his position of war in a letter of December 6 1855, Tennyson protested: “How could you or anyone suppose that if I had had to speak in my own person my own opinion of this war or war generally I should have spoken with so little moderation. The whole was intended to be a new form of dramatic composition.”<sup>366</sup> Emphasizing that his speaker is a madman, the Laureate insisted on his critical distance from the politics of the war. For him, readers should separate the speaker’s view of war from that of the poet. As Tennyson’s defence suggests, his use of the soliloquy of a madman can be construed as a poetic strategy to deal with the challenges facing civilian poets: it liberates Tennyson from the traditional role of war poet and the moral implications of the speaker’s words and action.

One reviewer who appreciated Tennyson’s artistic treatment of war in *Maud* and read it—as I shall show— against earlier war poems was Tennyson’s friend David Masson. In his 1855 review of *Maud* published in the *British Quarterly Review*, he claimed that Tennyson “has...contrived to weave together a poem which, though ‘subjective’ in its parts, is as ‘objective’ as anyone could desire in its total

---

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>366</sup> Tennyson, letter to Archer Thompson Gurney, December 6 1855, in *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon Jr, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press), II: 138.

impression.”<sup>367</sup> In contrast to “the poor results of all those efforts which our poets have been making up to get up a ‘minstrelsy of the war,’” Tennyson’s *Maud*, he declared, “is a genuine war-poem; a genuine offering of the Laureate to the cause of British patriotism to the present hour.”<sup>368</sup> He continued:

The manner in which this has been accomplished is worthy of notice. Instead of coming forward, directly and ostensibly, in the character of Tyrtaeus, singing war-songs about the British Lion, and cheering our soldiers and sailors on by sonorous rhymes about ‘war’ and ‘Czar,’ he has been our Tyrtaeus in a far more subtle and characteristic fashion.<sup>369</sup>

Masson’s emphasis on *Maud* as a “genuine war-poem” suggests that for him Tennyson has resolved the problems faced by earlier civilian poets, found a way to approach the subject of war and fulfilled his responsibility as the Laureate. Masson’s characterization of Tennyson as “our Tyrtaeus in a far more subtle and characteristic fashion” points to the indirect techniques Tennyson employs. According to Masson,

[I]t is primarily the most thoughtful minds of the country that the poem is meant to impress; and it is only as acting through these upon the general tone of the public sentiment, or perhaps, also, as containing occasional bursts of war-music, intelligible at once to all, that the poem can be called a poem of the war.<sup>370</sup>

Massey contends that it is only insofar as we consider the reciprocal relationship between the poem and two different kinds of readers that *Maud* can be regarded as a war poem. What Masson means by “the most thoughtful minds of the country” is

---

<sup>367</sup> Isobel Armstrong notes that David Masson is the only reviewer “who saw the poem as essentially dramatic” and “show[ed] anything like an ability to grasp and analyse the poetry of the dialogue of the mind.” See *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830-1870* (London: The Athlone Press, 1972), 47. See David Masson, “Maud and Other Poems,” *British Quarterly Review* 44 (October, 1855), 482.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.* p. 492.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 492-93.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 493.

open to debate but “thoughtful minds” entail reflection and sympathy and Masson’s use of the phrase implies that Tennyson’s new experimental war poem is targeted at a minority of educated or at least deep-thinking readers.<sup>371</sup> On the other hand, “war-music, intelligible at once to all” can refer to military music, or direct echoes of war, easily understood by everyone. In explicating “the poet’s philosophy of the war,” Masson himself reverts to the “war passages,” where the speaker rails against “the blessings of peace” in Part One and gives a patriotic speech at the end of the poem, to argue that the Laureate heartily endorses the government’s prosecution of the war. To a large extent, contemporary reviewers tended to take sides and focus on the speaker’s outright allusions to the war. In what follows, I intend to consider how Tennyson’s echoing of earlier war poems—classical, biblical and contemporary—functions as an indirect mode of allusion, a double critique which highlights the speaker’s struggle to negotiate between his private emotion and public duties while challenging readers’ conceptions of the war and suffering. As we shall see, Tennyson explores the reading public’s trauma of the Crimean War in *Maud* as he dramatizes the speaker’s recollections of his father’s death and his emotional reactions to the death of Maud’s brother. Although the speaker does not stake his position on the war until the conclusion of the poem, the beginning of Part I and II are permeated with echoes of war-cries which simultaneously haunt the speaker and remind readers of the trauma of the current conflict.

#### IV

In the famous opening stanza of *Maud*, Tennyson draws readers’ attention to both

---

<sup>371</sup> This point is echoed by Tennyson’s apologist of *Maud* Robert James Mann: “these stanzas are beyond the reach of careless and cursory readers. They are marked by the highest and subtlest qualities of the Laureate’s genius, and are, indeed, especially illustrative of the one leading characteristic of Tennysonian poetry, which is *intellectual elaboration*.” See Robert James Mann, selections from *Tennyson’s “Maud” Vindicated: An Explanatory Essay* (1856) in *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage*, ed. John D. Jump (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 200.

the centrality of the figure of Echo and the importance of echoing by rewriting the myth of Narcissus and Echo into the speaker's retelling of a murder scene.

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,  
The red-ribbed ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is asked of her, answers 'Death.' (I. I-4)<sup>372</sup>

The poem begins with a first-person confessional voice "I hate the dreadful hollow" but ends this assertive sentence with the passive third-person voice of a female figure of Echo. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the nymph Echo, punished by Juno for interfering with Jupiter's affairs, has lost the power to speak and can only "repeat the last words spoken, and gives back the sounds she has heard."<sup>373</sup> While Ovid's Echo is hiding in a cave in a pastoral scene, Tennyson's Echo lives in a "dreadful hollow" filled with blood. While Ovid's Narcissus is infatuated with the lake's reflection of his image, the speaker is horrified by the blood-dripping hollow and can only hear the echo of the sound "Death." The ambiguities surrounding "the dreadful hollow" in this opening scene raise a number of questions: Why does the speaker "hate" it? Why is it soaked with blood? Whose blood is it? And where is the location of this hollow?

The speaker explains in the next stanza that "the ghastly pit" is where the body of his father has been found.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
His who had given me life—O father! O God! Was it well?— (I. 5-6).

Lamenting the tragic death of his father, the speaker speculates how his body has ended up in the pit. He wonders whether his father was struck by a falling rock or

---

<sup>372</sup> Susan Shatto, *Tennyson's Maud: A Definitive Edition* (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 41. All references to Tennyson's *Maud* are to this edition and will be internally documented by part and line number.

<sup>373</sup> *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, trans. Mary M. Innes (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1955), p. 84.

committed suicide after the failure of a commercial enterprise: “There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell/Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had failed” (I. 8-9). Unable to figure out the cause, the speaker attributes the death of his father and the decline of his family to the “Villainy” (I. 17) of Maud’s father, who now occupies his father’s estate as the new rich owner. In the speaker’s retelling of his father’s death, this “dreadful hollow” is presumably located near the speaker’s old house. I will argue, however, that the resounding echo of “Death” reverberating through the hollow can be read as an echo of the trauma of war in the Crimea, while the crushed body of the speaker’s father uncannily calls to mind the fallen soldiers buried in the Crimea.

Robert Martin notes that once Tennyson was appointed the Poet Laureate, “the two hundred million poets of Great Britain felt free to send him verses for criticism and advice.”<sup>374</sup> During the Crimean War, the Laureate also received numerous volumes of war poetry. In the early months of 1854, Massey, and Smith and Dobell, two of the most high-profile members of the Spasmodic school, were all rising poets of a younger generation who had established their literary reputations and presented the Laureate with their volumes. Massey, a great admirer of Tennyson’s poetry, sent a copy of the second edition of his volume *The Ballad of Babe Christabel* (March 1854) to Tennyson with the note “Alfred Tennyson, Esq. Poet Laureate, Greatest Poet of our country and one of the noblest of all.”<sup>375</sup> Tennyson, in an encouraging letter of 1 April 1854, called Massey’s volume a “captivating one” and praised him for his “fine

---

<sup>374</sup> Robert Bernard Martin, *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 352.  
<sup>375</sup> There are three copies of Massey’s *The Ballad of Babe Christabel, and other Lyrical Poems* (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> editions) from the books of Tennyson’s Library in the Tennyson’s Research Centre in Lincoln. Containing not only Massey’s earlier working-class protest poems but also his new war poems, the volume proved to be immensely popular and went through five editions from the early months of 1854 to 1855.

lyrical impulse.”<sup>376</sup> Delighted by the Laureate’s reply, Massey continued to send him the third and fourth editions of the volume (published in April and August 1854) with newly added war poems and appreciative notes.<sup>377</sup> Meanwhile, Tennyson owned a second edition of Smiths’ *The Poems* (1853), Dobell’s *Balder* (1853) and a copy of their *Sonnets on the War* (January 1855). Meanwhile, correspondence survives between Tennyson and Dobell, suggesting that the Laureate read and offered his criticism of Dobell’s war poetry. In a letter of January 26 1855, he told Dobell, “I can sympathize with your genius but not at this hour with any song of triumph when my heart almost bursts with indignation at the accursed mismanagement of our noble little army, that flower of men.”<sup>378</sup> Tennyson’s description that “my heart almost bursts with indignation” may allude to Dobell’s war sonnet on “The Cavalry Charge,” in which he employs the image of monument to honour the sacrifices of the Light Brigade: “his heart/Bursts with that final effort, from the stones/Spring up and builds a temple o’er his bones” (II. 12-14).<sup>379</sup> Dobell was thrilled to tell his parents in January 1855: “Did I tell you I had a sweet-natured note from Tennyson about them?”<sup>380</sup> On February 7 1855, he “apologizes for not thanking Tennyson ‘long ago’ for his ‘kind note of criticism’” and pays tribute to the Laureate’s own “The Charge,” declaring that “no man living but yourself could have written the first verse and the ‘canon’ verse.”<sup>381</sup> Tennyson also sent Dobell a note of “special approval” for the poem “Grass from the Battlefield,” published in *England in Time of War* (1856).<sup>382</sup>

---

<sup>376</sup> See Tennyson’s letter to Gerald Massey, on April 1 1854, in *Letters*, II: 88.

<sup>377</sup> The notes appended to the third and fourth editions of the volume read: “To Alfred Tennyson with the author’s thanks for his precious note of encouragement” and “To England’s Alfred the Greater, from Gerald Massey.” Massey continued to send a copy of his works to Tennyson after the war.

<sup>378</sup> Tennyson’s letter to Dobell, on January 23 1855, in *Letters*, II: 104.

<sup>379</sup> Dobell, *Sonnets on the War* (London: David Bogue, 1855), p. 21.

<sup>380</sup> *The Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell*, Jolly, I: 401.

<sup>381</sup> See Lang and Shannon’s note to Tennyson’s letter to Sydney Dobell, on January 23 [or 29?] 1855, in *Letters*, II: 104.

<sup>382</sup> Jolly, II: 25.

As Tennyson's correspondence with Massey and Dobell suggests, the Laureate held a special relationship with his peers. Isobel Armstrong has pointed out that *Maud* shares stylistic affinities with Massey's Crimean war poetry<sup>383</sup> and Victorian scholars have long debated the influence of Spasmodic poetry on *Maud*.<sup>384</sup>

Given that the Laureate kept abreast of his contemporaries' war volumes and that he wrote Part III during the early months of 1854 before turning to work on the opening scene of Part I and Part II roughly between August 1854 and February 1855 (the most intense and traumatic phase of the conflict), I will argue that that Tennyson's depiction of the violent scenes in *Maud* was informed by a combination of his reading of war volumes published in 1854 and early 1855 and newspaper reports of soldiers' sufferings.<sup>385</sup> To be sure, as war poetry is densely intertextual, Tennyson may have chanced upon the same phrases and images that appear in other civilians' war poems. To use the key rhyme "wondered" and "thundered" employed in Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" as an example: when asked by Willingham F. Rawnsley if he had borrowed the metre of "The Charge" from Michael Drayton's "Ballad of Agincourt," Tennyson replied: "No, when I wrote it I had not seen Drayton's poem, but *The Times* account had 'Someone had blundered,' and the

---

<sup>383</sup> Armstrong writes: "There is an uncanny parallel between the rhythms of these poems [Massey's Crimean War poems] and their blood-drenched, pulsating, sadomasochistic imagery and those of *Maud*." See Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 271-72.

<sup>384</sup> As Dallas' satirical reference to *Maud* as a "spasm" makes clear, some contemporary reviewers denounced *Maud* for exemplifying the style of Spasmodic poetry. Victorian scholars have debated the interrelationship between Tennyson's *Maud* and the poetry of the Spasmodics. Joseph J. Collins, for instance, refutes the influence of the Spasmodics on Tennyson, claiming that the style of the Spasmodic school was already present in his early works. More recent critics such as Antony Harrison and Jason Rudy, while acknowledging the Spasmodic influence, read *Maud* as either a parody or rejection of the poetics of Spasmodic poetry. Harrison asserts that the poem "is, finally, poised between an empowering debt to *Hamlet* and a parodic confrontation with Spasmodic poetry." Rudy indicates that "*Maud* in fact only flirts with Spasmodism, and ultimately comes—à la *Balder*—to reject the Spasmodic Style." See Jason R. Rudy, *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007), p. 106.

<sup>385</sup> According to Susan Shatton's dating and study of the composition of *Maud*, the opening scenes of Part I were being composed between August 1854 and February 1855 after Tennyson's completion of Part III. See Shatton, p. 6.



line kept running in my head, and I kept saying it over and over till it shaped itself into the burden of the poem.”<sup>386</sup> Whilst this might be the case, the rhyme “wondered” and “thundered” not only appears in Drayton’s war poem but also in Louisa Shore’s “War Music,” published at least two weeks before Tennyson’s “The Charge.” In scrutinizing Tennyson’s echoes of contemporary war poems, I am not suggesting that Tennyson intentionally alluded to their works. Rather, my point is to explore the intertextuality of *Maud* with contemporary war poetry and the ambiguities generated by the recurrent images and phrases of Crimean War poetry.

Tennyson’s representation of the death scene of the speaker’s father recalls several elements of Alexander Smith’s “War,” published in *Sonnets on the War*, which as, I discussed in Chapter 3, commemorates, amongst other topical themes of the war, the bodily sufferings of the soldier. Smith’s sonnet begins with a voice brutally imposing the news of the death of soldiers upon their mothers and wives: “The husband from whose arms you could not part,/Sleeps amongst hundreds in a bloody pit” (II. 1-2). Here, the blood-dripping hollow, “the ghastly pit” in which lies the body of the speaker’s father, is a haunting echo of Smith’s imagery of the “bloody pit” filled with the fallen soldiers (I. 2). In the middle of the sonnet, this authoritative voice addresses the bereaved families and admonishes them to accept their men’s sacrifices for the nation: “Bewildered Bride! mute Mother! creep apart,/And weep yourself away as it is fit/England hath sterner work to do than grieve” (II. 5-7). If we situate Tennyson’s opening scene alongside Smith’s “War,” the speaker’s traumatic account of the death of his father reads as though he were a victim of the war, an orphan grieving over the violent death of his father during the war. *Maud*’s speaker has learned of his father’s death when the body is being carried across the ground of

---

<sup>386</sup> W. F. Rawnsley, quoted in *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures: Tennyson*, ed. Matthew Bevis (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), p.84.

his house (“I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirred/By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trailed, by a whispered fright” (II. 12-13), followed by the shrieking of his mother (“And my pulse closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard/The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night” (II. 14-15)). Tennyson’s echoes of Smith’s war vocabulary and images suggest that he has incorporated the physical violence taking place in the Crimea into the speaker’s traumatic memory of his father’s death on the home-front.

Obsessing about the condition of his father’s body, the speaker envisages him as “Mangled, and flattered, and crushed, and dented into the ground” (I. 7). As Markovits has pointed out, “the ‘mangled’ corpse of the speaker’s father calls to mind the many descriptions of corpses strewn across battlefields in the war literature of the period.”<sup>387</sup> The word “Mangled” specifically denotes the damaged, mutilated bodies of combatants. It is the word employed by Dobell in “The Army Surgeon,” also included in *Sonnets on the War*, to describe the wounded, suffering and dead bodies lying on the battlefield in the aftermath of the battle of Alma: “The fearful moorland where the myriads lay/Moved as a moving field of mangled worms” (II. 5-6).<sup>388</sup> By placing the signal war vocabulary “Mangled” at the start of the line depicting the bodily sufferings of the speaker’s father, Tennyson invites readers to associate his damaged body with the mutilated unknown corpses in the Crimea.

According to this line of argument, Maud’s father’s plundering of the speaker’s family property in England can also be regarded as a microcosm of Russia and Austria’s imperial expansion.

---

<sup>387</sup> Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, p. 157.

<sup>388</sup> Sydney Dobell, “The Army Surgeon,” in *Sonnets on the War*, p. 14. In his translation of “Battle of Brunanburh” (1880), Tennyson also singled out the word to describe a young warrior “lost in carnage/Mangled to Morsels” (II. 73-74). See Alfred Tennyson, “Battle of Brunanburh,” lines 73-74, in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 3 vols (Harlow: Longman, 1987), III: 21.

But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,

Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drained (I. 19-20).

In this passage, Maud's father is portrayed as though he were a vampire who has pounced upon and sucked the blood of the speaker's family. As seen in Chapter 2, this vampire imagery was current in Gerald Massey's "Certain Ministers and People" and Dobell's "Austrian Alliance," both of which concern the resistance of the oppressed against Austria.<sup>389</sup> Also, the word "gorged" is also employed by Christina Rossetti to describe the King Crocodile feeding on other broods to satisfy his voracious appetite in "My Dream" (1855): "While still like hungry death he fed his maw;/Till every minor crocodile being dead/And buried too, himself gorged to the full" (II. 31-33).<sup>390</sup> Given that this poem was composed on March 9 1855, only one week after the death of the Russian Emperor the Czar (March 2 1855) and that Rossetti clearly depicts the crocodile as though he were a monarch, critics such as Ralph Pordizk have read the speaker's dream as an allegory or political satire of the Czar, who started the Crimean conflict by invading territories held by Turkey.<sup>391</sup> Taken together, the imagery of a vampire preying on its victims likens Maud's father to Austria encroaching the oppressed lands or to Russia invading Turkey. The effect of reading the opening five stanzas of *Maud* with an ear to Tennyson's echoes of current war poetry is that as the speaker is recounting and lamenting the death of his father and the decline of his family, the horrors of imperial struggle are also brought to mind.

Structurally and thematically, Tennyson's deployment of recurrent war vocabulary and images in the first five stanzas of Part I pave the way for the speaker's denunciation of a society ruled by commerce in the "war passages" in which he

---

<sup>389</sup> See note 198 in chapter 2.

<sup>390</sup> Christina Rossetti, "My Dream," in *The Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti*, ed. R. W. Crump, 3 vols (London: Louisiana State University, 1979), I: 39.

<sup>391</sup> See Ralph Pordzik's discussion of Rossetti's "My Dream" in *Victorian Wastelands: An Apocalyptic Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2012), pp. 128-37.

alludes to the debates on England's position on the war and draws parallels between the imperial war in the Crimea and the "civil war" at home. "Is it peace or war?" asks the speaker twice (I. 27, 47). He first declares that the current condition of England is a version of civil war, "that of a kind/The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword" (I. 27-28). Then, the second time he invokes the phrase ("Is it peace or war? Better, war! Loud war by land and by sea,/War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred throes" [I. 48-49]), he is excited by a vision that an open war will transform "the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue" into a patriot defending the nation with "his cheating yardwand" (I. 51-52). And yet, despite this early vision of the war, the speaker immediately dismisses it as a symptom of his father's hereditary disease:

Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die

Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood

On a horror of shattered limbs and a wretched swindler's lie? (I. 54-56).

In this passage, "shattered limbs" and "a wretched swindler" point to the afflicted body of his father and Maud's father respectively but they can also refer to the suffering bodies of soldiers in the Crimea and Nicholas the Czar, invoked by the speaker in Part III as "a giant liar" (I. 45). The Czar was typically vilified by the British press as a liar who encroached on the territories of the Ottoman Empire under the pretext that he was defending the rights of Orthodox Christians in the principalities. Gazing over a hill at a village, the speaker asserts that "Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar" (I. 110). As a victim of the civil war, the speaker feels that his countryman is as much an evildoer as the Czar. He asks:

Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?

Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?

*I* have not made the world, and He that made it will guide. (I. 147-49)

To “shriek” is precisely the reaction of the speaker’s mother when the father’s body is sent back home. The three rhetorical questions raised by the speaker concern not only his emotional response to but his willingness to intervene in and aid the suffering of the oppressed nations such as Poland and Hungary.<sup>392</sup> “He that made it will guide” can refer to God or the Russian Emperor Czar. Convinced that “the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey” and that it is better to lead “a philosopher’s life in the quiet woodland ways” (l. 125, 150), the speaker is content to be a passive spectator of the European affairs. The parallels he draws between his family on the home-front and the oppressed nations abroad underscore a pessimistic, Darwinian view of the world, which paralyzes his readiness to engage in the Crimean conflict. As we have seen, the recurrent images and phrases Tennyson employs in retelling the brutal death of the speaker’s father function as a political critique of the imperial struggle. They evoke readers’ traumatic memories of the suffering soldiers during the current conflict, elucidate the speaker’s private war against the whole society and explain why he is unwilling to respond to the imperial war abroad.

## V

The earliest moment in the poem wherein the speaker is compelled to reconsider his public duties and the glory of fighting and dying for his nation takes place when the speaker overhears “[a] voice” (l. 162), which turns out to be a war song Maud is singing:

She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet’s call!  
Singing alone in the morning of life,

---

<sup>392</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 71-76.

In the happy morning of life and of May,

Singing of men that in battle array,

Ready in heart and ready in hand,

March with banner and bugle and fife

To the death, for their native land. (I. 164-72)

Although attracted to Maud's "beautiful voice," the speaker finds it so unsettling and overpowering that he pleads to silence her siren singing: "Be still, for you only trouble the mind/With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,/A glory I shall not find" (I. 180-82). Literary commentators have debated the nature of this "martial song" since it is overheard rather than directly narrated.<sup>393</sup> This episode, I will contend, raises several related questions that shed light on Tennyson's artistic treatment of echoes and his rewriting of existing war poetry: what kind of war song Maud is singing? Why is the speaker so overpowered by it? And why does Tennyson assign Maud to sing this song to the speaker? To answer these questions, it is important to explore the historical underpinnings of Maud's war song and to contextualize it within classical and contemporary war poetry. One important clue Tennyson provides in this passage is that upon hearing the "voice," the speaker immediately recognizes that "she is singing an air that is known to me." From the lines "men that in battle array," "March with banner and bugle and fife," one can assume that Maud is singing a war song glorifying men marching to the battlefield and preparing to sacrifice their lives for the nation. I will argue that not only the speaker but also Tennyson's readers are familiar with this battle song. It is the strand of unashamedly patriotic songs the reading public had been hearing throughout but especially during the early phase of the Crimean War.

---

<sup>393</sup> Bevis argues that the speaker's ambivalent response to Maud's war song "encapsulates the predicament and the achievement of the most enduring Victorian war poetry—a speaker drawn to, yet distrustful of, martial fervour, who aspires to be included in the battle march, yet senses the limits of its rhythms. See Bevis, "Fighting Talk," p. 18. For a review of critics' explication of Maud's war song, see Markovits, p. 149.

The lines of Maud's song echo Franklin Lushington's "The Muster of the Guards" and Massey's "England Goes to Battle," both of which were published in the early months of 1854. In the former, Lushington commemorates the departing troops of the Grenadier Guards in February 1854 and calls upon readers to cheer for "the gallant and good fellows, marching to the war" (I. 18).<sup>394</sup> In the latter, Massey personifies England as a female warrior carrying "The good sword in her hand" and "going to battle [...] gallant and [...] gay" (II. 4, 25-26).<sup>395</sup> Tennyson knew both poets well and had a copy of their volumes in his library.<sup>396</sup> Lushington's "The Muster of the Guards" and Massey's "The Battle March" can be categorized as exhortative pieces intended to inflame readers' patriotic sentiment and advocate the government's military campaign. As discussed in Chapter 1, because of most male poets' lack of combat experience, reviewers frequently condemned such Tyrtæan mode of poetic response, questioning their excessive and affected emotion. In Masson's review of *Maud*, he also provides a satirical portrait of the enthusiastic civilian poets:

our poets have been puffing and blowing, with laudable zeal, and striding up and down in their rooms, and beating their brains for rhymes; and yet somehow or other, with one or two exceptions, all the poetry we have yet got out of the subject of the Muscovite is terribly wooden.<sup>397</sup>

The reason why Tennyson did not need to narrate Maud's war song in its entirety to his readers is that early Crimean War poets had done the task for him. In contrast to Massey and Lushington, Tennyson puts under erasure the outbursts of patriotic lyrics

---

<sup>394</sup> Franklin Lushington, "The Muster of the Guards," in *Points of War* (Cambridge: Macmillan and Co, 1854), p. 5. See Chapter 1's discussion of Lushington's war poetry, pp. 28-30.

<sup>395</sup> Gerald Massey, "England Goes to Battle," in *The Ballad of Babe Christabel: With Other Lyrical Poems* 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (London: David Bogue, 1854), p. 158. For Massey's earlier Crimean War poems, see Chapter 2, pp. 64-69.

<sup>396</sup> The impact of Franklin Lushington's "The Muster of the Guards" on *Maud* has long been noted. See Ricks, in *The Poems of Tennyson*, II: 516.

<sup>397</sup> Masson, p. 492.

in a dramatic performance and gives voice to a civilian speaker enticed by Maud's singing but endeavouring to resist it. In doing so, he dramatizes the speaker's conflicting emotion and forces readers to hear the polyphony of war-cries. This disembodied "beautiful voice" moves him to tears and overpowers him, forcing him to kneel down on the ground, crying "Still! I will hear you no more" (I. 183). Whilst Maud's singing evidently arouses the speaker's war fantasies, at this moment of the poem, he is not able to identify himself with the "gallant and gay" soldiers. Instead, the speaker deprecates himself as "languid and base."

Significantly, the speaker's conflicting emotion occasioned by his failure to respond to the "trumpet's call" further reveals Tennyson's reworking of the classical traditions of Tyrtaeus' war songs: Maud's celebration of soldiers taking up sword "in hand" and marching to die for 'their native land' is a direct echo of the opening passage of Thomas Campbell's translation of an elegy by Tyrtaeus.

How glorious fall the valiant, sword in hand,

In front of battle for their native land!

But oh! what ills awaits the wretch that yields

A recreant outcast from his country's fields! (II. 1-4)<sup>398</sup>

Contrasting the fortune of "the valiant" with that of "a recreant outcast," Campbell's Tyrtaeus insists that it is a man's duty to fight for his nation in time of war. What complicates the speaker's emotional response is that prior to overhearing Maud's Tyrtaean song, the speaker is already a social outcast estranged from his community. Following his father's death, and the loss of his family's wealth and social status, he has identified himself as a victim of the "civil war" and vows to disengage himself

---

<sup>398</sup> Campbell, "Martial Elegy, from the Greek of Tyrtaeus," in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell* (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), p. 59. There is a copy of an updated 1849 edition from the books of Tennyson's Library in the Tennyson Research Centre in Lincoln.



from the politics of war. Maud's Tyrtæan war song, however, awakens his civic responsibility for his community and puts him to shame. He feels "base" in that unlike the patriotic soldiers "ready in heart and ready in hand" to die "for their native land," earlier he has sardonically remarked that he is "ever ready to slander and steal" (l. 120), suggesting that he is just as corrupt as the merchants he denounces. By delineating the speaker's conflicting emotion evoked by Maud's singing, Tennyson not only affirms and questions the traditions of Tyrtæus but also makes explicit a male civilian's anxiety about his responsibility for a nation at war.

What is also intriguing in Tennyson's treatment of this episode is the role played by Maud: she replaces the traditional male minstrel singing the glory of war to induce the listener into action. At the start of the poem, Tennyson's reconfiguration of the myth of Narcissus and Echo, which recurs in the course of the poem, is a revealing one that foreshadows the relationship between the speaker and Maud. Like the nymph Echo, Maud, in the monodrama, is a silent, emblematic lady who reflects the speaker's desires. Yet, unlike Echo, Maud plays an active role in stimulating the speaker's war fantasies both in this episode and at the start of Part III. In the war plot of the poem, Maud resembles the national emblem "Britannia," an image that recurs in the speaker's dream in Part III.<sup>399</sup> Significantly, the speaker feels "languid" a loaded gendered term describing a man's enervated masculinity and inaction in the face of an imminent battle.<sup>400</sup> Evidently, it is Maud who plays the role of the general in the poem and whose singing compels the "languid" speaker to rethink his public

---

<sup>399</sup> Bristow and Markovits have discussed the image of Britannia in the Crimean War, see Joseph Bristow, "Nation, Class, and Gender," Tennyson's *Maud* and War" *Gender* 9 (1990):93-111, rpt. in *Tennyson*, ed. Rebecca Stott. (London: Longman, 1996), p.142; Markovits, pp. 104-6.

<sup>400</sup> *OED*'s example of the term "languid" in 1855 is found in Thomas Macaulay's *History of England* in which a French general during the siege of Athlone in 1690 "addressed to the officers an appeal which might have moved the most languid and effeminate natures to heroic exertion." See Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James II*, 5 vols (London: Longman, 1855), IV: 90.

duties for the nation. As the speaker later recalls this crucial encounter with Maud and employs the word “languid” again, he comments: “And Maud, who when I had languish’d long/To arouse me that May morning when/She chanted a chivalrous battle song” (I. 382, 384-385).<sup>401</sup> In light of contemporary reviewers’ criticism of the role of the male civilian poet, Tennyson not only exploits the soliloquy of a madman to interrogate his public role but also uses the heroine Maud as the unacknowledged war poet in the poem to galvanize the speaker into action and explore his conflicting emotion.

## VI

At the end of Part I, the speaker is in an ecstatic mood on meeting Maud in her garden. As Part II unfolds, their tryst is discovered by Maud’s brother, who insults the couple and infuriates the speaker. After a fierce confrontation, the speaker inadvertently kills the brother in a duel. After this tragic incident, the speaker flees to France in exile. When he returns to England and finds Maud dead, he is driven to madness by her ghost and resides in an asylum. As I hope to show, Tennyson represents the speaker’s retrospective narrative of the duelling scene at the start of Part II and his emotional turmoil through various kinds of echoes, which reverberate with and between the trauma of war in the Crimea, the death of his father and Maud’s war song in Part I. These echoes of war-cries shed light on his psychological struggle between private and public warfare and ultimately question the distinction he makes between “lawful and lawless war” (II. 333).

Part II begins with the speaker’s anguished reflections of the homicide he just committed:

‘The fault was mine, the fault was mine’—

---

<sup>401</sup> I have quoted these lines from an earlier version of *Maud* in 1855 rather than those in 1856. See Shatto, p. 78.

Why am I sitting here so stunned and still  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?  
 It is this guilty hand!—  
 And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath the darkening land—  
 What is it, that has been done? (II. 1-7).

The quotation “The fault was mine, the fault was mine” inserted at the start of Part II are the last words of the brother retrospectively narrated by the speaker: ““The fault was mine,’ he whispered, ‘fly!’” (II. 30). Herbert Tucker has examined Tennyson’s narrative of this scene and noted that the speaker’s repetition of the brother’s words makes clear his guilt and responsibility.<sup>402</sup> In many respects, the ambiguities of the speaker’s emotional reaction during and after the duelling spring from the echoes Tennyson employs. His belated realization of the gratuitous violence is conveyed through the image that he is “[p]lucking the harmless wild-flower” with his “guilty hand,” an image that echoes the last two lines of Smith’s “War” discussed above: “The far-off lily of a worthy peace/Can be plucked only by War’s bloody hand” (II. 13-14). The last couplet of Smith’s sonnet reinforces the authoritative voice’s pro-war argument that military force is a necessary means to regaining “The far-off lily of a worthy peace” and carnage (as embodied by “War’s bloody hand”) is inexorable. Tennyson’s repurposing of the flower and hand imagery in Smith’s sonnet at once conflates the speaker’s killing of the brother at home and the terror of war taking place abroad (a function of echoes of earlier war poems we have seen in Part One), and underlines the ironies of resolving his private feud with armed forces.

---

<sup>402</sup> Herbert F. Tucker writes: “It is in representing the pivotal deed, the hero’s fatal duel with Maud’s brother, that Tennyson exploits the narrative resources of monodrama most brilliantly and makes the question of causality most strikingly problematic.” See Herbert F. Tucker, *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 413-14.

But the more explicit ironic echoes Tennyson employs are biblical ones which associate the speaker's homicide and the consequence he suffers with those of Cain. The "passionate cry/From underneath the darkening land" and the speaker's question—"What is it, that has been done?"—is a direct echo of God's judgment on Cain's murder of Abel: "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Immediately, the garden associated with the speaker's romantic fancy of Maud at the end of Part I is turned into the garden of Eden: "O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,/The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,/The fires of Hell and of Hate" (II. 8-10). Like Cain punished by God to be "a restless wanderer on the earth" (Genesis 4:11), the speaker is haunted by "[t]he ghastly wraith I know" (II. 32) and goes into exile in France. Yet, unlike Cain, who killed Abel out of his wrath and jealousy, the speaker challenged the brother to a duel for: "he struck me [...] over the face" and "Struck for himself an evil stroke" (II. 18, 21).

And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke  
 From the red-ribbed hollow behind the wood  
 And thundered up into Heaven the Christless code,  
 That must have life for a blow (II. 24-27).

The "horrible bellowing echoes" which "broke [f]rom the red-ribbed hollow behind the wood" link the speaker's duelling with the brother inextricably with his memory of the death of his father, drawing parallels between the two homicide scenes at the start of Part I and II, which, according to Shatto, "were composed about the same time."<sup>403</sup> Although these echoes which "thundered up into Heaven" suggest that the speaker "broke [...] the Christless code," the fact that they come from the "the

---

<sup>403</sup> Shatto, p. 9.

red-ribbed hollow” implies that the duelling did not occur simply because of his outburst of “anger” (II. 17) but because of his private feud with Maud’s family.

As the speaker conflates the two murder scenes with “the red-ribbed hollow,” his “guilty hand” and the “passionate cry/From underneath in the darkening land” become a parodic echo of Maud’s war song which inspires him to act like the marching soldiers “ready in hand” to die “for their native land.” Ironically, what haunts the speaker after this episode is not Maud’s “passionate ballad” but “a passionate cry,/A cry for a brother’s blood,” which he poignantly says, “will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die (II. 33-35). Earlier, he has reviled “the spirit of Cain” (I. 23) possessed by the merchants covertly waging a civil war against the poor but his slaying of the brother makes him a fratricide descending from Cain.

Tennyson further depicts the speaker as a divided figure torn between his private feud and public duties through two war songs. When returning from his exile, the speaker bemoans:

Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear;  
But that of Lamech is mine (II. 94-96).

The “old song” refers to the Maud’s martial song the speaker wishes to hear from time to time, but now all he can sing is the song of Lamech, another biblical murderer and a descendent of Cain. According to Shatto, “T.’s Eversley gloss quotes the words of Lamech to his wives: ‘I have slain a man to my wounding , and a young man to my hurt’ (Genesis 4:23).<sup>404</sup> At first sight, Tennyson’s reference to Lamech’s song seems to emphasize the speaker’s remorse for killing the brother, but the poet’s gloss only gives the first and omits the second couplet of Lamech’s song: “If Cain shall be

---

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold” (Genesis 4: 24). Here, Lamech invokes God’s promise to protect his foregather Cain as a precedent for his safety: “whosoever slaveth Cain, vengeance should be taken on him sevenfold” (Genesis 4:15). In an 1855 article, published only a few months after *Maud*, a biblical reader discusses the textual ambiguities of Lamech’s song, and raises several questions about the second couplet: “Why is Cain introduced here? On what grounds does this wicked man claim impunity for his crime, and expect to be thus specially defended from the vengeance of man?”<sup>405</sup> In spite of the interpretive problems of the verse,<sup>406</sup> at least two mid-century Biblical critics agreed that having killed a young man who wounded him in self-defense, Lamech sought to assuage the fears of his wives by asserting that his family would be protected by his strength.<sup>407</sup> For instance, in an 1851 article published in *Journal of Sacred Literature*, a critic termed Lamech’s song “his war-song,” indicating that it is “an exemplification of the proud ferocity and vindicated daring of the early dwellers in the earth.”<sup>408</sup> This critic adduced Bishop Hall’s interpretation in his 1808 work *Explications of Hard Texts* to illustrate this point:

What tell you me of any dangers and fears? Hear my voice, O ye faint-hearted wives of Lamech, and hearken to my speech; I pass not of the strength of my adversary; for I know my own valour and power to revenge; if any man give me but a wound or a stroke, though he be never so young and lusty, I can, and will

---

<sup>405</sup> “The Most Ancient Poem in the World,” *The Sunday At Home* (November 1 1855), 696.

<sup>406</sup> For instance, in Richard Moulton’s 1896 discussion of the first couplet of Lamech’s song: he asked: “Does this passage imply the slaying of one person or two persons?” He argued that taking into account the parallelistic feature of this verse “a man” and “young man” refer to the same person. See Richard G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible: An Account of the Leading Forms of Literature Presented in the Sacred Writings* (London: Isbister and company, 1896), p. 68.

<sup>407</sup> See “Parallelistic Poetry,” *Journal of Sacred Literature*, 14 (April 1851), 380; “Analecta Biblica,” *Journal of Sacred Literature* 7:14 (April 1851), 453.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, “Parallelistic Poetry,” p. 380.

kill him dead.<sup>409</sup>

In Hall's paraphrase, he changes the present perfect tense of "I have slain a man to my wounding" to a conditional one "if any man give me but a wound." For Hall, Lamech's war song is not just an address to ease his wives' fears but a boast of his martial power to take revenge. In line with this explication, late Victorian Biblical commentators accounted for his boast by the fact that his son, Tubal Cain, the first smith who forged brass and iron, could provide weapons for the family<sup>410</sup> and called Lamech's address "The Song of the Sword."<sup>411</sup> If we interpret Lamech's song as a vengeful war song, rather than filled with remorse for killing the brother, then it appears that *Maud's* speaker feels justified in seeking vengeance against the brother who initiated the fight and shows his defiance of the community from which he is expelled.

Tennyson's juxtaposition of Maud's war song and that of Lamech thus embodies the speaker's struggle to reconcile his private feuds with public duties. Although he is inspired by Maud's war song to fight for his native land with a noble cause, his invocation of Lamech's song suggests that his private feuds still preclude him from fulfilling his public duties. Later, in section IV of Part II which begins with the earliest written lyric "O that 'twere possible," about the moment when the speaker finds Maud dead, his intense longing for a reunion with Maud is marked by his reminiscence of her as a lady singing a patriotic song (II. 171-184) and a ghost crying

---

<sup>409</sup> Joseph Hall, D.D., *Paraphrase on Hard Texts, From Genesis to Daniel*, in *The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God*, 10 vols (London: C. Whittingham, 1808), III: 21.

<sup>410</sup> For instance, the Bishop of Ely's commentary published in the 1871 revised version of Old Testament put it: "Lamech comforts his wives with the assurance that with the aid of the bronze and iron instruments now in his hands he could kill anyone who injured him, and if it had been promised to Cain that he should be avenged seven-fold, there was power in the hands of Lamech's family to avenge seventy-seven fold. This speech is one of confident boasting. Lamech trusts his weapons of brass and steel to maintain his cause, even when referring to words used by God to his forefather Cain." Quoted in *The British Quarterly Review* 55:109 (January 1872), 155.

<sup>411</sup> See Thomas G. Selby, "Irreligious Civilisations," *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 120 (May 1897), 324.

for revenge: “Do I hear her sing as of old [...]. But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry/There is some one dying or dead” (II. 185, 188-189). At the end of Part II, his grief over Maud’s death and madness lead him to make a distinction between striking a “private blow” and opposing “public foe”: “I swear to you, lawful and lawless war/Are scarcely even akin” (II. 327, 331-333). Here, the “public foe” refers to the Czar; the speaker’s realization here of the distinction between “lawful and lawless war” (which is the first time he distinguishes the civil war at home from the imperial warfare abroad) is often taken as the rationale for his decision to enlist and carry out his public duties in Part III. However, as we have seen, Tennyson’s deployment of echoes of moments of trauma—of the death of his father and of Maud’s brother—obliterates any stable differences between domestic and military conflict and thus undermines this claim. These echoes at once conjure up the trauma of the present war, parallel the civil war at home with the western powers’ imperial expansion abroad and problematize the speaker’s conflict between his private feud and public duties.

As this chapter has attempted to show, Tennyson’s *Maud* is a peculiar late Crimean war poem reverberating with echoes of war-cries from classical, biblical and contemporary works. These echoes grew out of the Laureate’s response to the challenges confronting civilian poets writing war poetry at home. Interrogatory, haunting, and revisionary, these echoes reveal the ways in which the Laureate assimilated the words and images of earlier war poetry to bring home the trauma of war, rewrote the established conventions of war poetry and challenged readers’ interpretations of the speaker’s conflict between his private emotion and public duties. As analysis of Tennyson’s treatment of Maud’s war song has shown, unlike the early Crimean War poets who affirmed the traditions of Tyrtæus, Tennyson radically



rewrote the traditional role of war poet and the function of war song by assigning Maud to provoke a madman's conflicting emotion and by asking readers to interpret the intertextuality of his war poem.

## Chapter 5

### The Afterlife of Thomas Campbell and “The Soldier’s Dream”

On August 10 1854 in the House of Lords, Lord John Campbell appealed to the Prime Minister Lord Aberdeen for government help to secure a site in Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey for the erection of a statue of Thomas Campbell (1777-1844).<sup>412</sup> Immediately after the death of Campbell in June 1844, a committee had been established to erect a memorial to the Scottish poet in Westminster. Friends of the late poet,<sup>413</sup> Lord Campbell and Aberdeen not only served as pallbearers during the procession of the poet’s funeral held in Westminster on July 3 1844 but also as committee members for “The Campbell Monument.”<sup>414</sup> Although Campbell was already a highly esteemed poet in his lifetime and the ceremony of his funeral in Westminster attracted the most leading politicians and prominent literary figures such as Charles Dickens and William Thackeray, the committee’s public subscription campaign was far from successful. On August 23 1844, “An Englishman,” in a letter to the editor of *The Times*, proclaimed that he read the committee’s advertisement for subscriptions to Campbell’s memorial with “feelings both of surprise and regret.”<sup>415</sup> He criticized the proposal to squeeze another memorial into the crowded space of the Abbey, pointing out that “the highest tribute of respect which can be paid to the dead, that which Nelson himself anticipated with triumph before the moment of action,

---

<sup>412</sup> “Monument to Thomas Campbell the Poet,” Lord Campbell, HL Debates, August 10 1854, vol. 135, cols 1501-4, *Hansards Online 1803-2005* <[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1854/aug/10/monument-to-thomas-campbell-the-poet#S3V0135P0\\_18540810\\_HOL\\_3](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1854/aug/10/monument-to-thomas-campbell-the-poet#S3V0135P0_18540810_HOL_3)> [accessed June 2014].

<sup>413</sup> For instance, in a letter of May 25 1801, John Campbell told his father that he asked the poet to bring a packet for his sister. See *Life of John, Lord Campbell, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. ed. Mary Scarlett Hardcastle, 2 vols (London: John Murry, 1881), I: 71. The poet mentioned Aberdeen several times in his letters. See *Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell*, ed. William Beattie, 3 vols (London: Hall, 1850), III: 16, 24, 35.

<sup>414</sup> For a detailed account of the funeral and a list of the committee members, see Beattie, III: 441-44.

<sup>415</sup> [An Englishman], “The Poet Campbell,” letter to the editor, *The Times*, August 23 1844, 5.

‘victory or Westminster Abbey,’ has been already paid to Campbell.”<sup>416</sup> He proceeded to remark that if a statue of Campbell was to be erected, it should be placed in his birthplace Glasgow where it “may have its due moral influence”; he asked: “what influence [...] will it have in Westminster Abbey?”<sup>417</sup> Though the sculptor W. C. Marshall had executed a life-size statue of Campbell in 1848, it hitherto could not have admission to Poets’ Corner because the committee had failed to pay the “200 guineas” demanded by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey for a site for the statue.<sup>418</sup>

The Crimean War, however, dramatically elevated Campbell’s status. Addressing the long-delayed issue of Campbell’s memorial, a letter to the editor of *The Times* commented on August 3 1854: “Surely at this moment, when the naval songs of Campbell may be exercising no mean influence in the Baltic and Black Seas, this strange omission needs only to be noticed to command instant attention.”<sup>419</sup> On November 11 1854, a critic for the *London Journal* brought up the issue of Campbell’s memorial, asserting: “During the last war his effusions did more to nerve the hearts of the British seamen than those of all the other poets put together. He was sung on board of every ship, and was revered alike by the exile and the soldier.” The critic ended by appealing: “Those are things which should not be forgotten, and we hope it requires only a hint to stimulate the country to the slight degree of liberality necessary to enable ‘Campbell Monument Committee’ to place this suitable memorial of one of its greatest poets amongst the other ‘Immortals.’”<sup>420</sup> As both quotations suggest, by this time Campbell had come to be remembered not merely as a popular

---

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>418</sup> [A Scotchman], “The Campbell Monument,” letter to the editor, *The Times*, June 21 1852, 4.

<sup>419</sup> [A], “Westminster Abbey-Campbell’s Monument,” letter to the editor, *The Times*, August 3 1854, 4.

<sup>420</sup> “Thomas Campbell,” *The London Journal* (November 11 1854), 152.

poet, commonly referred to as the “Bard of Hope” after his first and longest didactic poem *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799), but, given the influence of his war poems during the Napoleonic wars and the Crimean conflict, as a national poet. It was mainly because of the mid-Victorians’ belated recognition of Campbell’s literary achievements as a preeminent early nineteenth-century British war poet, and because of the impact of his poems during the Crimean War that his statue was finally admitted into Poets’ Corner in May 1855.<sup>421</sup>

This chapter will examine the poetic influence of Campbell’s works by focusing on the afterlife of his “The Soldier’s Dream” (1804) in the Crimean War. It argues that Campbell’s war poems provided mid-century Victorians with a wealth of poetic materials, conventions and motifs that helped them make sense of the pressing issues provoked by the overseas conflict. It will argue further that this influence is manifest in the myriad ways Victorian poets and artists rewrote Campbell’s dream-vision poem to address the reading public’s anxieties and expectations about the welfare of the common soldier. It will first highlight Campbell’s prominent role as a grandfather of Victorian war poets, then briefly discuss the popularity and significance of his dream-vision framework, and finally trace the ways in which civilian poets and artists reworked his dream-vision poem at specific historical moments of the conflict. The works I will consider include: *Punch*’s two renditions of “The Soldier’s Dream,” published on July 9 1853 and April 1 1854, the second of which was accompanied by John Tenniel’s cartoon; the poem “A Night on the Heights,” penned by the pseudonymous poet “Private Jones” in *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* in December 1854; a piece of commemorative pottery designed by George Eyre in January 1855; and Part III of Tennyson’s *Maud*, published in *Maud and Other Poems* in July 1855. I will

---

<sup>421</sup> *The Times*, May 7 1855, 11.

demonstrate that Campbell's dream vision emerged as a recurrent war motif which poets and artists deployed to depict and negotiate the soldier's public duties and private emotions, as well as the government's responsibilities for the soldier and his family. While in general mid-century commentators transformed Campbell's battle-traumatized soldier's dream of home into a patriotic soldier's dream of a benign government's efforts to look after his family, Tennyson's conclusion of *Maud* offered an ironic rendition. Instead, a civilian's dream of war becomes a nightmarish vision of the government's military incompetence and the suffering of the rank and file in the Crimea.

## II

On December 25 1854, in an article entitled "War Poetry," while indicating that "it would be imprudent, as well as unbecoming, to lose all confidence in the poetic genius of the country," the critic for *The Morning Post* lamented: "Yet who can fail to reflect that they are gone who sang the deeds of war with such wondrous power in the earlier part of this century, and that they have left no successors. Campbell, Scott, Byron [...] what glorious strains did they not give us?"<sup>422</sup> For this critic, Campbell as a British war poet was ranked first alongside Scott and Byron. Today, the best known and most acclaimed Crimean War poet is undoubtedly Alfred Tennyson for "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854) and *Maud* (1855), whereas Campbell is a name that critics seldom associate with the Crimea. Nevertheless, when Victorian commentators were still awaiting the poetic responses of Tennyson and other poets during the War, they frequently invoked Campbell's works and revered him as a much more established war poet than any contemporary poet. His best-known works range from overtly patriotic naval odes "Ye Mariners of England" (1801) and "Battle of the

---

<sup>422</sup> *The Morning Post*, December 25 1854, 3.

Baltic” (1804-5) to realistic pieces that reflected his battle-front experience such as “Hohenlinden” (1802) and “The Soldier’s Dream” (1804).<sup>423</sup>

On December 23 1854, the writer for *Illustrated London News* printed lines from Campbell’s “Hohenlinden”—beginning with “Each horseman drew his battle blade,/And furious every charger neighed/To join the dreadful revelry”—under the heading of an article entitled “The Battle of Balaclava.”<sup>424</sup> The writer begins by claiming:

Had Campbell stood upon the heights, watching the fearful tournament, when, in the face of an army of infantry, artillery, and cavalry, our gallant Light Brigade, knowing their doom, charged to certain death, determined to die hard, he could not better have described the fatal combat of Balaclava.<sup>425</sup>

It is remarkable that for this writer it is Campbell’s lines written almost fifty years ago rather than any contemporary poetic response that best captures his interpretation of the heroic yet futile charge of the Light Brigade. “Hohenlinden” is concerned with a speaker’s experience of watching a violent clash between two opposing cavalries. Prior to the battle, the speaker is a war tourist excited by the prospect of the “dreadful revelry.” Yet, as the snow is covered with blood and the battlefield is obscured by “war-clouds,” the speaker begins to question the heroism of the cavalrymen: “Oh, ye brave,/Who rush to glory, or the grave!” Like the speaker of the poem, the *Illustrator’s* journalist is fascinated by the “fearful melée” of the charge but announces that it is “a purposeless attack” and a “sheer folly.”<sup>426</sup> The poem ends with the speaker’s reflection that the brave will be united in death:

Few, few shall part where many meet!

---

<sup>423</sup> For a discussion of Campbell’s war poems, see Mary Ruth Miller, *Thomas Campbell* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), pp. 81-94.

<sup>424</sup> Quoted in “The Battle of Balaclava,” *Illustrated London News*, December 23 1854, 719.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 719.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

The snow shall be their winding sheet,  
And every turf beneath their feet,  
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre. (II. 29-32)<sup>427</sup>

The speaker's prophetic vision of snow engulfing the brave in a foreign land is a trope frequently invoked by Victorian commentators to describe the fate of the British soldiers during the Crimean winter. One of them is Fanny Duberly, who accompanied her husband Henry Duberly, paymaster to the 8<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Hussars, to the frontier of the Crimea, and published her first-hand accounts of the war as *Journal Kept During the Russian War* (December 1855). In a letter of October 21 1854, four days before the battle of Balaclava, Duberly told her sister: "We all dread the winter here I fear the 'snow will be the winding sheet' of many a gallant heart. I wonder if I shall live through it."<sup>428</sup> Based in the Crimea, and thus in a position to give her sister an eyewitness description of the condition of the weather there, it is striking that she turns to poetry to express her concern about the condition of the British soldiers. The incorporation of Campbell's famous line "The snow shall be their winding sheet" into her sentence underlines how poetry plays a part in shaping commentators' interpretation and representation of the war as well as the familiarity of Campbell's war poem to educated readers.<sup>429</sup>

In a letter of January 1 1855, author and dramatist Mary Russell Mitford asked: "Have you seen Alfred Tennyson's fine poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," printed in *The Examiner*, some weeks ago?" She exclaimed: "It is a grand war song:

---

<sup>427</sup> Quoted in "The Battle of Balaclava," *Illustrated London News*, December 23 1854, 719.

<sup>428</sup> Quoted in Frances Isabella Locke Duberly, *Mrs Duberly's War: Journal and Letters from the Crimea*, 1854-6, ed. Christine Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007), p. 90.

<sup>429</sup> Soon afterwards, the last stanza of "Hohenlinden" would be invoked by John Sumner Gibson as an epigram of his "The War in the Crimea," a religious reflection on the suffering of British soldiers during the winter siege of Sebastopol, which won Cambridge's Chancellor's medal for English verse in 1855. See John Sumner Gibson, *The War in the Crimea*. Cambridge, 1855, rpt in *A Complete Collection of the English Poems Which Have Obtained the Chancellor's Gold Medal Prize in the University of Cambridge*, new and enlarged edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1859), pp. 331-38.

except one or two of Campbell's, I know nothing of the sort."<sup>430</sup> In an 1857 review of the poetry published during and after the war, while claiming that "Mr. Tennyson is unquestionably a poet of far higher order than Mr. Campbell, and his poem on the Balaklava charge is not unworthy of him," essayist and critic George Brimley added: "it would, we think, be rash to prophesy for it anything like the same popularity as has been attained by 'Hohenlinden' and 'The Battle of the Baltic.'"<sup>431</sup> Both commentaries remind us that during and immediately after the war, Campbell's early nineteenth-century war poems served as dominant cultural points of reference for mid-Victorians and were already secure in their canonical status, while Tennyson's "The Charge" was still a new piece—one that would only gradually be enshrined as the most iconic Crimean War poem for modern readers.<sup>432</sup>

One important credential of Campbell as a grandfather of the Victorian war poets was that several of his noted war poems—"Hohenlinden" and "The Soldier's Dream" for instance—were inspired by the battle scenes he witnessed during his travels in Germany in 1800. In Edmund Blunden's now classic article "The Soldier Poets of 1914-1918" (1930), Campbell is the only pre-First World War poet mentioned: "It was one of the romantic things about Thomas Campbell that he had seen as well as sung the Battle of Hohenlinden, or at any rate people said he had seen it, which was remarkable enough."<sup>433</sup> Blunden downplays Campbell's experience of war with the word "romantic" in order to highlight the novelty and distinctive identity of the soldier-poets of his own Great War generation. However, to the mid-Victorians, the

---

<sup>430</sup> Mary Russell Mitford, January 1 1855, in *Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*, ed. Henry F. Chorley, 2 vols (London: John Lane, 1925; first published in 1872), II: 265.

<sup>431</sup> [George Brimley], "Little Lessons for Little Poets," *Fraser's Magazine* 55.326 (1857), 223.

<sup>432</sup> For instance, published immediately after the war in May 1856, a lavishly illustrated war anthology memorializes the fallen soldiers by selecting nine war poems by Campbell, and a number of poets. Amongst them are Campbell's "The Soldier's Dream," "The Battle of Baltic," and "Hohenlinden" and alongside Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade." See *In Honorem. Songs of the Brave, Poems and Odes* (London: Sampson Low, 1856).

<sup>433</sup> See Edmund Blunden, "The Soldier Poets of 1914–1918" in Frederick Brereton, ed., *An Anthology of War Poems* (London: Longman, 1930), p. 13.



authority of Campbell's experience of war as expressed in his war poems was indisputable. In the 1854 article cited above, the writer for the *London Journal* noted that during Campbell's visit to Germany, he "witnessed the fields of Ratisbon and Ingoldstadt, which inspired his mind with terrible ideas of the horrors of war."<sup>434</sup> Similarly, in another 1855 biographical sketch, Robert Chambers wrote: "Campbell found himself in a situation that falls to the lot of few poets; he was likely to be the witness, as well as the eulogist and recorder, of great military achievements."<sup>435</sup> Edited by William Beattie and published in 1848, Campbell's letters make it clear that he was at first drawn to but subsequently haunted by the bloodshed he saw in Ratisbon. In a letter of that year, he remarks that "I got down to the seat of war some weeks before the summer armistice, and indulged in what you call the criminal curiosity of witnessing blood and desolation."<sup>436</sup> Later, he commented on this experience: "those impressions at seeing numbers of men strewn dead on the field—or, what was worse—seeing them in the act of dying, are so horrible to my memory, that I study to banish them. At times when I have been fevered and ill, I have awoke [sic] from night-mare dreams about those dreadful images!"<sup>437</sup>

The germ of "The Soldier's Dream" was the horrific battle Campbell witnessed in 1800.<sup>438</sup> The poem opens with an anonymous combatant's view of the aftermath of a battle:

Our bugles sang truce—for the night-cloud had lowered

And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky;

And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered.

---

<sup>434</sup> "Thomas Campbell," *The London Journal* 20.507 (November 11 1854), 152.

<sup>435</sup> "Thomas Campbell," *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen*, ed. Roberts Chambers and Rev. Thomas Thomson, 5 vols (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1855), V: 84.

<sup>436</sup> *Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell*, ed. William Beattie, 3 vols (London: Hall, 1850), I: 284.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>438</sup> Beattie wrote: "Another song, inspired by the events that had passed before his eye in Bavaria, though long withheld from the public, was the 'Soldier's Dream.'" *Ibid.*, p. 348.

The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.<sup>439</sup>

Amongst the “weary to sleep” is a soldier who reclines on a “pallet of straw” and safeguards the dead soldiers’ bodies with a “wolf-scaring faggot” (II. 4-5, 6). “At the dead of the night” he sees “a sweet vision” in his dream that he is running “from the battle-field’s dreadful array” to “the pleasant fields” to be reunited with his family and friends (II. 7, 9, 13). As he reaches home, he “pledge[s]” that he would never again leave them. However, just as he hears his wife’s voice—“Stay, stay with us, rest thou art weary and worn”—the “war-broken soldier” awakes full of sorrow (II. 21-22). The twenty-four line poem is anti-war, in that it captures a battle-traumatized soldier’s war-weariness and longing for home.<sup>440</sup> Campbell’s use of the dream-vision is deeply ambivalent. His insistence that the soldier speaker dreamt the vision “thrice ere the morning (I. 8) and the adjective “sweet” (I. 7) suggests an element of indulgence. Although the vision fulfils the soldier’s wish for a reunion with his family during his sleep, it also turns out to be an illusory one: he wakes up and returns to the harsh reality of the war.

Just a few months after its publication in 1804, Campbell’s poem prompted a parody entitled “The Soldier’s Second Dream” in which Campbell’s “war-broken soldier” is berated as a “deserter.”<sup>441</sup> From the start, the soldier is ridiculed as a man who shirks his duties by invoking the “sweet vision” to bring him home in his dream: “‘Return’ [...] ‘thou dear dream of delight,/Through the comfortless day I lament me in vain,/Return thou sweet vision and soothe me at night’” (II. 10-12). However, this time he is appalled to find his father and children all dead. His wife, the only survivor

---

<sup>439</sup> Thomas Campbell, “The Soldier’s Dream” lines 1-4, in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell* (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), p. 100.

<sup>440</sup> In 1902, a critic for *Edinburgh Review* praised the poem as “the most beautiful rendering in English verse of the war-weary mood.” “War and Poetry,” *Edinburgh Review* (1902), 39.

<sup>441</sup> See [A.Z.], “The Soldier’s Second Dream,” line 37, in *The Anti-Gallican*, 1:12 (December 1804), 472.

of the family, rebukes him for his “weakness,” attributing the family tragedy to his failure to endure the “hardships of the war.” (II. 26-34). When the soldier wakes up and realizes that “it was only a dream,” he exclaims: “Those I love I must toil to protect,/And Peace must be brought by the hardships of War” (II. 40, 43-44). “The Soldier’s Second Dream” turns the “sweet vision” in which Campbell’s soldier indulges, into “a sad scene of horror” (I. 39) which conveys a didactic lesson to both Campbell’s speaker and readers. The anonymous poet’s satirical rewriting exemplifies pro-war conservatives’ reactions to the bleak aspect of Campbell’s work.

Since its publication, Campbell’s “The Soldier’s Dream” had been readapted in both poetical and visual forms and it returned decisively to the fore during the Crimean war.<sup>442</sup> One might wonder what resuscitated the appeal of Campbell’s poem specifically in the context of Britain’s first “modern” war. While the framework of dream vision is a long established one that goes back to the conventions of medieval literature, Campbell could be credited as the first war poet who popularized the dream of a “war-broken soldier.” As the parody “The Soldier’s Second Dream” suggests, Campbell’s poem lends itself to rewritings not least because the dream-vision framework allows subsequent commentators to articulate their responses to the soldier as a divided figure torn between his public duties and private emotion. Significantly, it enabled the non-combatant artist of the Crimean War to express private emotions through the first-person voice of an emotionally distraught soldier, alternating between domestic and military scenes. The tripartite narrative structure of the dream vision—which entails the soldier’s anxiety about his duties before he falls asleep, his dream vision of home and his life on reawakening — offered a recurrent motif easily

---

<sup>442</sup> For instance, in 1837, Edward Moxon commissioned the famous painter William Turner to produce twenty-one vignettes for an illustrated edition of Campbell’s works including “The Soldier’s Dream.” See Campbell, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell* (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), pp. 100-101. I will discuss the Crimean War artists’ visual depiction of Campbell’s poem later on.

adaptable by civilian artists and readily intelligible to educated readers. As we shall see, mid-Victorian's rewritings of Campbell's dream-vision closely chart their responses to public discourse about the welfare of the soldiery at every stage of the war. Whilst some opted for satirical and ironic renditions, most mid-century Victorians transformed Campbell's "war-broken" soldier into a patriotic hero, who was deeply troubled by the welfare of his family but ultimately relieved by the vision of a female authority figure.

### III

On July 9 1853, *Punch* published a satirical version of Campbell's "The Soldier's Dream." The speaker is a military officer based on Chobham common in Surrey, a military camp established to provide barrack training for British troops who in turn staged military displays for the public between June and August 1853.<sup>443</sup> The poem begins with his description of the pouring rain at the camp: "the sentinels' throats were the only thing dry/And under their tents Chobham's heroes had cowered,/The weary to snore, and the wakeful to sign" (II. 3-4).<sup>444</sup> After his grumble about the size of the bed, the speaker falls asleep and dreams a dream, "which I hope I shall ne'er have again" (II. 7-8). In his dream, he travels from "Chobham's mock battle-array" to the "balls of Belgravia [in London] that welcomed me back" (II. 9, 12). Dancing in a ballroom to the music of an orchestra, the speaker suddenly spots his lover and swears that he would be "a guardsman no more" and "From my sweet little partner for life never would part" (II. 16-17). He soon discovers that "a civilian" is "laying siege to her heart!" (I.19). Just when ready to "cut her" and "challenge him," the enraged officer is awakened by the "vile bugle-horn" (I. 22, 24).

---

<sup>443</sup> From May to August 1853, news of the "The Camp at Chobham" was intensively reported by newspapers such as *The Times* and *Illustrated London News*.

<sup>444</sup> "The Soldier's Dream," *Punch* (July 9 1853), 11.

Below the title of the poem are the words in parenthesis “After T. Camp-bell. By A. Camp-Beau.” The anonymous poet plays with the name of “Camp-bell” not only to acknowledge the influence of his war poem but to mock the military officer engaged in the mock warfare at the Chobham camp. According to George Dodd, a combination of historical factors led the British government to establish the first military camp since England’s conflict with France: “a feeling of uneasiness connected with the state of affairs in France, a knowledge that the army was in a defective state, and possibly a secret impression that Russo-Turkish difficulties might ultimately involve England.”<sup>445</sup> Chobham common, accessible to public visitors from London, was chosen as the location of the military camp partly because the authorities intended the military displays to arouse the public’s interest and confidence in the national defence.<sup>446</sup> Susan Walton observes that the military training camp at Chobham “was a landmark occasion; it altered perceptions of the army and generated a variety of cultural and media spin-offs, yet has been strangely overlooked by historians.”<sup>447</sup> Commenting on the first military display of June 14 1853 involving the manoeuvre of 10,000 soldiers, an editorial of *The Times* expressed doubts about the utility of such theatrical performances: “we entertain some suspicions that too much has been done for show and too little for work.”<sup>448</sup> Yet noting that Londoners “have within easy reach of them a military display more extensive and more nearly approaching to the realities of a soldier’s life, than for many years has been witnessed in this peaceful country,” a writer for *The Times* was convinced that “such a spectacle

---

<sup>445</sup> George Dodd, *Pictorial History of the Russian War 1854-5-6* [sic] (London: W. and R. Chambers, 1856), p. 380.

<sup>446</sup> On May 28 1853, a writer observed: “The camp in progress of formation on Chobham-common promises to be the great feature of the present season. The novelty in England of any great military display invariably attracts vast crowds of spectators, and this seems to have been anticipated by the authorities in their selection of Chobham-common as the scene of encampment.” *Illustrated London News*, May 28 1853, 411.

<sup>447</sup> Susan Walton, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Young’s Models of Manliness* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 38.

<sup>448</sup> Leader, *The Times*, June 14 1853, 6.

will prove immensely attractive cannot be doubted” and “that it will be useful as a means of disciplining the troops is equally certain.”<sup>449</sup> One week later, on June 21 1853, Queen Victoria’s visit to the camp generated further newspaper coverage. Meanwhile, some commentators were critical of the real training achieved and the privileges enjoyed by the military officers in the camp. From the very start, in a series of cartoons and articles, *Punch* had mocked the officers for allegedly undergoing discipline while actually living comfortable lives. For instance, in a cartoon published on June 18 1853, a military officer is seen using his breastplate as a mirror to comb his hair, while a soldier carrying a bucket of water walks into the tent and remarks: “If you please Sir, It’s five o’clock, and I’ve brought your shaving water” (Figure 5).

The satirical rendition of Campbell’s dream-vision poem mocks the public duties of the high-ranking officer, in particular, his privileges in the camp and his yearning to escape from the mock military camp at Chobham to the sumptuous lifestyle of the aristocracy. On the same day the poem was published, *Punch* also printed a cartoon depicting a fallen tent packed with soldiers who step on each other’s bodies on a rainy day. The caption of the cartoon reads: “Another Night Surprise at Chobham.” At the Chobham camp, the “night surprise” was a manoeuvre the military were expected to perform without notice at breakneck speed. By contrast, the cartoon’s “night surprise” is a poor, overcrowded tent collapsed by the pouring rain: a dismal surprise damaging to welfare and morale. Meanwhile, the officer speaker does not suffer from the rain: he has a bed, “a Mackintosh to keep out the rain” and “a glad of grog” in his marquee (II. 6-7). He is one of “The weary to snore” and falls asleep simply because the pouring rain bores him. Furthermore, the speaker’s mention of the ball in London in his dream alludes to the state ball given by the Queen at Buckingham Palace on July 2

---

<sup>449</sup> “The Camp at Chobham,” *The Times*, June 15 1853, 6.

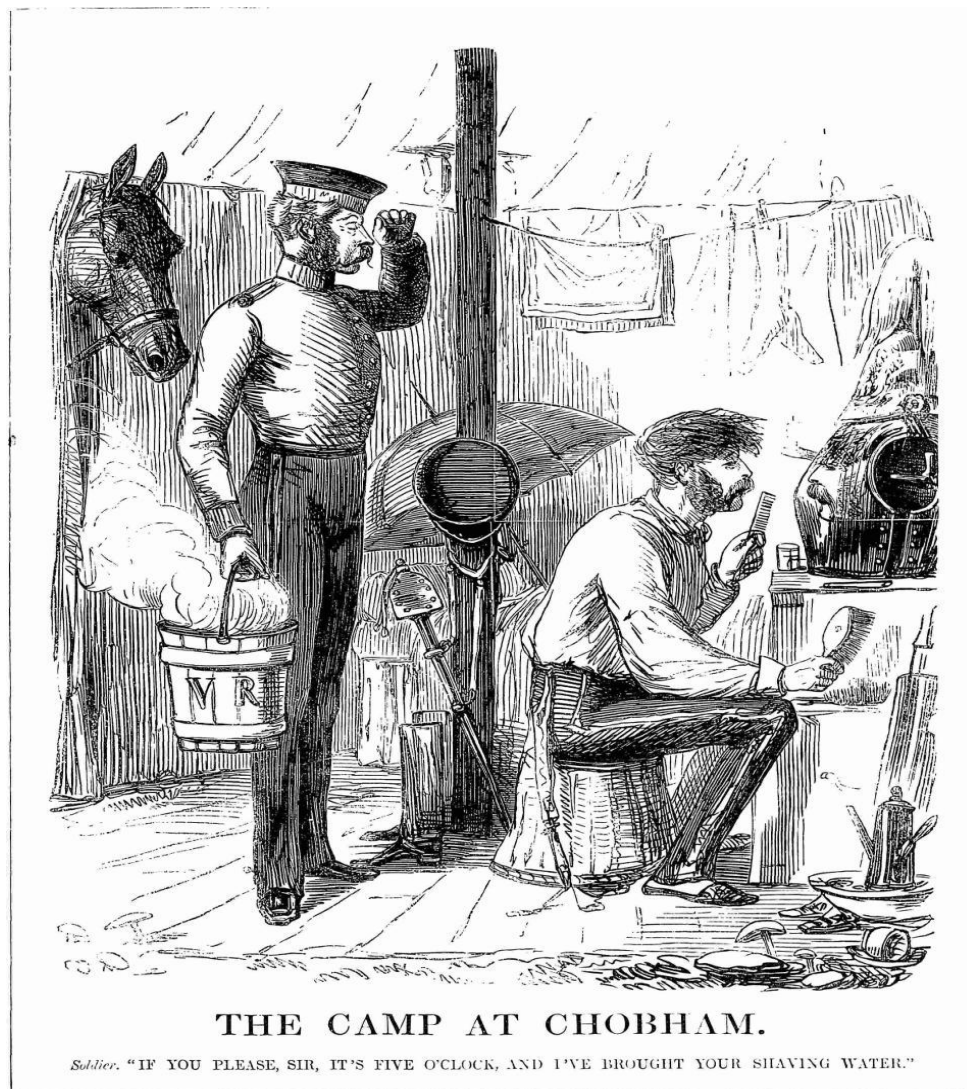


Figure 5 "The Camp at Chobham," *Punch* (June 18 1853), 244.

1853, only one week before the publication of the poem.<sup>450</sup> On July 4 1853, a report in *The Times* recorded: "On Friday the troops remained in their tents, and heavy showers of rain fell at intervals. The Queen's ball drew away to town a good number of the officers that evening."<sup>451</sup> One can read the officer's dream of returning to the "balls of Belgravia" as a satirical attack on the aristocrats who attended the Queen's ball or stayed at the camp but wished they could have made it. The poet's version of the soldier's dream satirizes upper class concerns: anxiety about being excluded from the elite circle and betrayed by his lover.

<sup>450</sup> *Punch* (July 9 1853), 20.

<sup>451</sup> "The Camp at Chobham," *The Times*, July 4 1853, 5.

On April 1 1854, a few days after England's declaration of war, on March 27 1854, *Punch* published another rendition of Campbell's poem bearing the title "The Soldier's Dream." This time, the speaker is not a military officer but a departing soldier. What unsettles him is not the tedious or harsh army life but the practical question of how his wife might eke out a living without the main breadwinner. In his dream, he first sees that his presentiment of his suffering family has come true: his children are starving and crying for food and his wife does not know where to turn for help. Just when they are "shivering for cold on a blanketless bed,/And crouched round a hearth whence the last spark was gone," the soldier sees "a kind lady" who "look[s] like an angel of grace" arrive at his house and offer them food, fuel and clothing.<sup>452</sup> The lady explains to the soldier's family: "'tis the offering of friends [...]. It comes from the country your husband defends,/Which to you pays a debt that to him it feels owed" (II. 23-24). Published immediately after the departure of English troops in February 1854, *Punch*'s "The Soldier's Dream" is a direct response to the public's concern over the fate of army wives and families left behind without adequate provision.

It was "A Naval Officer," in a letter to the editor of *The Times* on February 22, who first drew the public's attention to the welfare of soldiers' wives. Stating that "the pay of the soldier is wholly inadequate to maintain his wife, even without children, in his absence on foreign service," he contended that "no better proof could be given of deep and heartfelt interest in the welfare of our soldiers [...] than by an earnest effort upon the part of the country to ameliorate the condition of their wives and families."<sup>453</sup> What the country and people at home should do for the soldiers' dependents became the subject of public discussion in the following months as an

---

<sup>452</sup> "The Soldier's Dream," lines 15-16, 17 and 19 in *Punch* (April 1 1854), 131.

<sup>453</sup> [A Naval Officer], "Soldiers' Wives," letter to the editor, *The Times*, February 22 1854, 12.



outpouring of letters addressing this issue appeared in the columns of *The Times*. On February 23, “A Young Englishwoman,” who read the letter by “A Naval officer” quoted above, confidently expressed that “there are thousands (young ladies especially) who would willingly come forward, and turn to good account, in aid of the soldier’s wives, the many hours they now spend daily in comparative idleness.”<sup>454</sup> She suggested that women could contribute to the war effort by visiting soldiers’ families or by working for a bazaar selling articles to raise funds for them. On March 2, *The Times* printed a letter by “M. Walker,” a soldier’s wife, who wrote that since the departure of her husband, she had “nothing but my needle to depend on to provide for myself, one child, and another unborn. I have neither money nor the necessities for my confinement.”<sup>455</sup> She appealed to readers of *The Times* to look into her case and grant her admittance to the Queen Charlotte’s Lying-In Hospital. Her request was immediately answered. On March 6, a committee member of the hospital wrote that “M. Walker” whose husband was a soldier of Scots Fusilier Guards, was given admission already and that “the committee will, as long as they have any means left at all, be too happy to receive the wives of those brave men now gone to fight our battles.”<sup>456</sup> While there were various local war efforts to aid the soldier’s wives and children, the official organization was The Central Association for the Aid of the Wives and Families of Soldiers Ordered to the East, established in March 1854.<sup>457</sup>

The *Punch* poet turned Campbell’s dreamer’s longing for home into a soldier’s anxiety about his family and concern that his family be provided for on the

---

<sup>454</sup> [A Young Englishwoman], “Soldiers’ Wives,” letter to the editor, *The Times*, February 23 1854, 9.

<sup>455</sup> [M. Walker], “Soldiers’ Wives,” letter to the editor, *The Times*, March 2 1854, 9.

<sup>456</sup> [C. H and Birmingham, March 3. G. H. ST. CLAIR], “Soldiers’ Wives,” letter to the editor, *The Times*, March 6 1854, 10.

<sup>457</sup> For philanthropy and women’s war efforts in the Crimean War, see Myna Trustram, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 161-89 and see Helen Rappaport, *No Place For Ladies: The Untold Story of Women in the Crimean War* (London: Aurum, 2007).

home-front. The dream of this Crimean soldier is not an illusion or a vision of horror but a vision, “a glad dream” that makes him feel “sorry no more” (I. 7) and that in turn helps shape his understanding of the war, a pattern we shall see in subsequent rewritings. The pivotal moment of this “glad dream” is illustrated in John Tenniel’s cartoon that accompanies the poem with the caption “The Soldier’s Dream.” In previous visual representations of Campbell’s poem, artists such as William Turner had illustrated the scene in which the soldier dreams of his family. They focused on the moment when he is running away from the “battle-field’s dreadful array” to the “pleasant fields,” where he encounters his family at the homestead in pastoral surroundings (Figure 6).<sup>458</sup> But Tenniel’s *Punch* cartoon is the first one that depicts the soldier’s family not outside in a rural landscape but inside a domestic setting (Figure 7). In the foreground of the cartoon is the soldier sleeping face up, while his children is visited by two angels in the top left and his wife bows and shakes hands with a lady in the top centre.<sup>459</sup> Here, the lady visitor’s face-to-face encounter with the soldier’s wife visualizes the war efforts of middle- and- upper class women as invoked in the correspondence column of *The Times*. The *Punch* poet’s reworking of Campbell’s poem accompanied by the cartoon is thus an attempt to ease the public’s anxiety about the condition of soldiers’ families, to shore up the self-image of the civilian middle class, and to embolden soldiers to fulfil their public duties without having to worry about their families: “His heart will be stouter, his arm will be stronger,/When he knows that his children are clothed, taught and fed;/That his wife lives in dread of the workhouse no longer” (II. 24-26). Thus, the poem that reports the

---

<sup>458</sup> Two examples include Turner’s 1837 vignette illustration and a drawing printed alongside Campbell’s poem in the magazine *London Pioneer* in 1847. See Campbell, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell* (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), pp. 100-101; “The Soldier’s Dream,” *London Pioneer* (October 21 1847), 417.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*



Figure 6 William Turner, “The Soldier’s Dream,” in Thomas Campbell’s *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell* (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), 100.

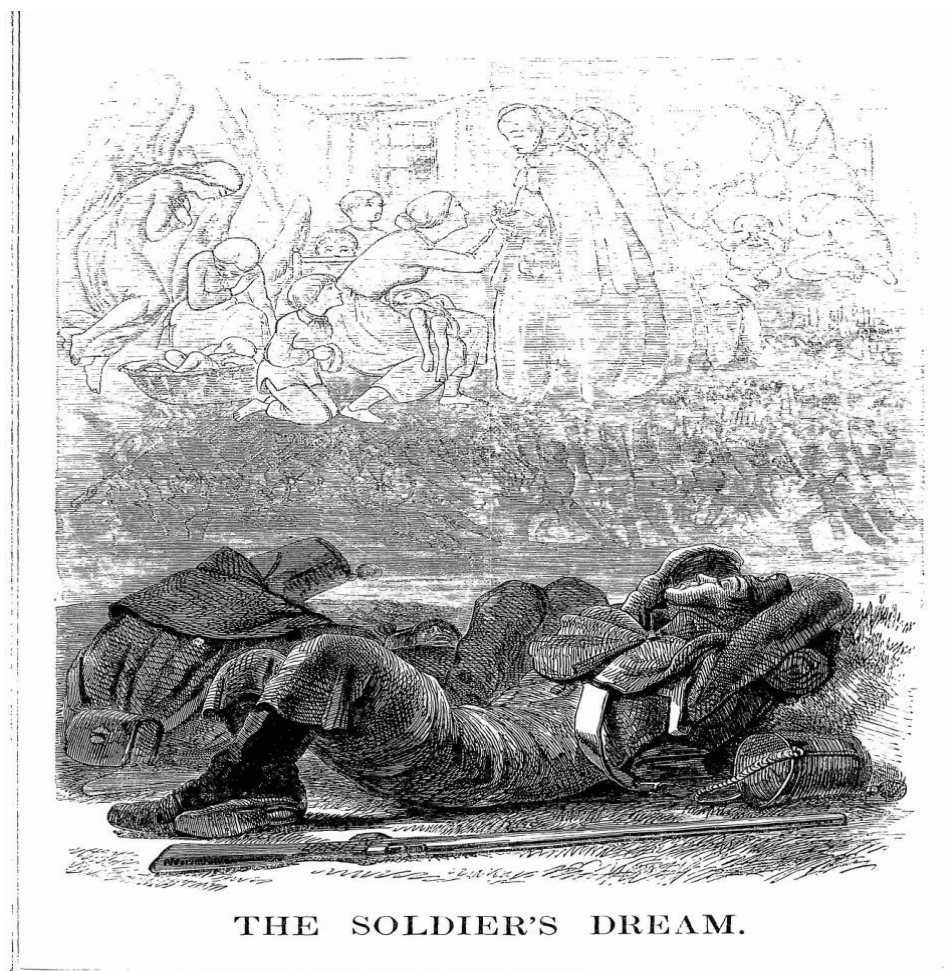


Figure 7 [John Tenniel], “The Soldier’s Dream,” in *Punch* (April 1 1854), 131.

soldier's anxiety, his dream of the lady's philanthropic work at his house—and his transformation in his waking life—"I stood to my arms with a heart free from grieving,/All fears for my wife and my babes chased away" (II. 30-31)—becomes itself a testimony to the government's war effort on the home-front and the soldier's dedication to his service at the onset of the war.

Meanwhile, the poem suggests that there is a kind of "military covenant" between the soldiery and the nation: since soldiers sign up for the army and run the risks of dying on the battlefield, the nation is obliged to underwrite the welfare of their families.<sup>460</sup> This doctrine, however, was problematized when, in the aftermath of the battle of Alma (September 20 1854), *The Times* reported the suffering of the wounded both in the Crimea and in the Scutari hospitals. In an article of October 10 1854, one correspondent wrote that "the wounded were left, some for two nights, the whole for one, on the field [...] there were no proper means for removing the wounded from the field."<sup>461</sup> Also, as discussed in Chapter 1, in Thomas Chenery's alarming report of October 12, the Constantinople correspondent for *The Times* disclosed the shortage of the medical supplies and staff for the wounded transported from the battle of Alma to the Scutari hospital and urged the wealthy civilians to donate money and materials for the suffering soldiers.<sup>462</sup> Only a few days later, the government reacted to Chenery's report by establishing the Patriotic Fund commission to raise subscriptions exclusively for the widows and orphans of the

---

<sup>460</sup> The term "military covenant" was first adopted by the Army Doctrine Publication "Soldering: the Military Covenant" in 2000: "Soldiers will be called upon to make personal sacrifices—including the ultimate sacrifice—in the service of the Nation. In putting the needs of the Nation and the Army before their own, they forego some of the rights enjoyed by those outside the Armed Forces. In return, British soldiers must always be able to expect fair treatment, to be valued and respected as individuals, and that they (and their families) will be sustained and rewarded by commensurate terms and conditions of service." Quoted in Sarah Ingham's *The Military Covenant: Its Impact on Civil-Military Relations in Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p.1.

<sup>461</sup> "The Battle of the Alma," *The Times*, October 10 1854, 7.

<sup>462</sup> [Thomas Chenery], *The Times*, October 12 1854, 6.

mariners, soldiers and sailors who died in the war.<sup>463</sup> In the following two rewritings of Campbell's dream vision, we shall see how civilian artists and poets, informed by newspaper reports of the suffering of soldiers in the wake of Alma, reworked Campbell's dream vision form to address a troubled relationship between the government, soldiers and their families.

In January 1855, Samuel Alcock and Company, a pottery manufacture based in Burslem, Staffordshire, produced a "Royal Patriotic Jug," designed by George Eyre. In an advertisement printed in *The Times*, the company announced that it produced this jug for anyone desiring to "possess a memorial [...] illustrative alike of the horrors of the war, as well as of the nation's grateful efforts to alleviate them, evidenced by the Royal Patriotic Fund."<sup>464</sup> Whilst Staffordshire pottery was made in profusion during the war to commemorate specific people and events,<sup>465</sup> the ceramic designer Eyre painted the jug with the battle and home scenes of Campbell's dream-vision poem (Figure 8). There are obvious parallels between Tenniel's *Punch* cartoon and the jug's scenes but the most striking difference is that Eyre incorporates the ethical dimension of the sufferings of the soldiers into his visual representation. In Tenniel's piece, the sleeping soldier remains unscathed and his wife, receiving help from two charity ladies, appears to be only concerned with the problems of the households. By contrast, on the jug, sitting in the foreground of the battle scene is a wounded soldier whose head is covered with a bandage; in the middle ground, another, either wounded or dead, is being carried away. On the other side of the jug, superseding the angelic charity lady in *Punch*'s cartoon is an angel carrying a banner inscribed "The Patriotic Fund."

---

<sup>463</sup> See "The Patriotic Fund" *The Times*, October 14 1854, 5; "The Patriotic Fund" *Illustrated London News*, October 21 1854, 381.

<sup>464</sup> *The Times*, 21 March 1855, 14.

<sup>465</sup> See Asa Briggs, *Victorian Things* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1988), p. 164.





Figure 8 George Eyre, "Royal Patriotic Jug," January 1855, Samuel Alcock and Co, Hill Pottery, Burslem. Reproduced by Courtesy of the National Army Museum, London.

As only those who lost their men at the front line were entitled to claim from the fund, the angel can be read as a harbinger of death. Hence, the soldier's wife is in mourning, and covering her face with her hands. In this sense the artefact brings the cost of war into the mid-Victorian parlour. However, for the wounded soldier who sees his family visited by the angel in his dream, the patriotic fund is a quasi-official guarantee that if he dies in war, his family will receive financial support from the government. The envisioned scene brings reassurance for the soldier, and hence he is encouraged to carry out his duties. By advertising the government's official public subscription through the double images of the angel, Eyre reworked Campbell's dream vision to acknowledge the sacrifices and sufferings of both the soldier and his family and highlight the government's efforts to assuage them.

In December 1854 *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* published "A Night on the Heights" by the pseudonymous poet "Private Jones." The title of the poem refers to the evening spent by a British Grenadier after allied victory at the battle of Alma. The poem is a fine example of how the use of the first-person narrative in a dream-vision might complicate readers' responses to the identity of the poet. Cynthia Dereli notes that the poem is "an eyewitness account of the battle of the Alma, written by a soldier" and that it "added a personal touch that was sentimental in the profuseness of its reference to the soldiers' thoughts of loved ones back home."<sup>466</sup> Yet "Private Jones" actually incorporates details of the battle of Alma into the framework of Campbell's dream vision to produce what appears to be a soldier's account of war. The soldier-speaker is a young Grenadier Guard traumatized by his intense combat experience.

My heart was filling fast as I weary down did lie—

My heart was filling faster as I looked upon the sky;

---

<sup>466</sup> Cynthia Dereli, *A War Culture in Action*, p. 108.

And then it went and burst, for I thought that I should cry.

“Why, William, what’s the matter? What’s the matter Bill,?” says I.<sup>467</sup>

The poet draws on the rhyme “sky” and “die” (II. 2, 4) in the opening scene of Campbell’s poem while putting much greater emphasis on the soldier speaker’s psychological conflict in the aftermath of the battle of Alma. “I thought that I should cry” suggests an emotional breakdown and the poet registers his conflicting emotions in the final line of this stanza wherein the speaker addresses two masculine voices, William and Bill, simultaneously.

As the dialogue of the two voices progresses, it becomes clear that William represents the emotional, sensitive side of the soldier who is horrified by the ugliness of killing—“Such a bloody piece of business as to-day you’ve had to do?” (I. 14)—and is anxious about his family—“Bill! How about them—you know!—in Old England all alone?” (I. 32)—and the consequence of his death—“And if some stray Russian bullet—!” (I. 45). At one point, the soldier realises that William is the “little boy” in him: “I thought he grow’d up hard, and a soldiering did go;/But I find he’s still a youngun, and I hope he’ll never grow” (II. 22-24). Here, the soldier’s ambivalence toward William epitomizes his contradictory feelings towards “soldiering.” As a soldier, he ought not to have doubts about killing enemies or worry about his family. At first, the soldier is not troubled by William’s voice and simply asks him to stop: “I’m about the Nation’s business: there aint nothing half so clear:/And how *am* I to do it, if you goes on like this here?” (II. 35-36). And yet, William’s voice finally renders him hysterical: “Spare me, though I am a soldier! Strike these thoughts upon my brain,/Strike them dead, that they may never, never, never rise again!” (II. 47-48). Not long after his breakdown the soldier feels a wind

---

<sup>467</sup> Private Jones, “A Night on the Heights,” lines 5-8 in *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* (December 1854), 743-45.



blowing upon his face: “It was soft and cool as waters to the thirsty lips that flow,/So I drank, and sank, and slept at ease upon my pallet low” (II. 59,60). Here, “Private Jones” injects the realistic detail “my pallet,” an allusion to Campbell’s speaker reclining “on my pallet of straw” (I. 5), while the water drunk by the thirsty soldier hinting at a recovery from his breakdown. It is after this symbolic gesture that the soldier falls asleep and dreams that he is back in England. The speaker compares his dream-vision to the prophecies in the Bible: “And the dreams that came to me, dreams that as I dreamed I knew/Were like them that you may hear’n of in the Scriptures, and as true” (II. 61-62). The poem already foreshadows that this is a prophetic dream that will make the battle-traumatized soldier feel “blessed” and help improve his state of mind.

In the second part of the poem, having searched for his children in vain in “the workhouses,” “hospitals” and “the prisons” (II. 69-70), the dreaming soldier encounters Britannia:

“Bill, my son,” says she, “what ails you, that you doubt me so to-night?

Do you think that I shall never learn my faithful to requite?”

“Iron soldier, tender-hearted! tender-hearted, true and tried.

See whose hands in mine are clasped—see whose little feet I guide!

Thine or mine!” says she, and then her robe of glory parted wide,

And I saw two little children clinging at my Country’s side. (II. 79-84)

The poet reiterates the nation’s obligations to the soldier and his family through the figure of Britannia (Figure 9, 10).<sup>468</sup> The soldier not only sees his children being protected but has a direct encounter with Britannia who calls him “Bill, my son.” It is

---

<sup>468</sup> Earlier, *Punch* had disseminated this maternal image of Britannia protecting and taking care of the soldier’s children at home in two cartoons published respectively in March and October 1854.



Figure 9 "Britannia taking Care of the Soldiers' Children," *Punch* (March 4 1854), 84.



Figure 10 "Britannia Takes the Widows and Orphans of the Brave Under her Protection," *Punch* (October 21 1854), 158.

interesting to note that the soldier's wife is absent from his dream and he is only concerned about the condition of his children. The implication of this emblematic scene is that the soldier who has undergone his first experience of combat is himself a son who desires to be comforted by a maternal Britannia. "Private Jones" thus recast Campbell's dream vision into a soldier's struggle with his conflicting emotions, suggesting that his vulnerability is embraced by the nation. The epithet Britannia gives him—"Iron soldier, tender-hearted"—acknowledges both traditional manly virtues and emotional side of the soldier. Significantly, it is only when Britannia helps regulate the soldier's conflicting emotions that he wakes up with a renewed confidence in his job. In the final stanza of the poem, the poet plays on the masculine rhyme "fulfil/ Bill/still/will" (ll. 93-96) to show the reconciliation of the two conflicting masculine voices and to reinforce the implication that the soldier called Bill fulfils his duties.

As we have seen, Crimean War poets and artists borrowed Campbell's dream vision to produce a fabricated testimony to the government's war relief. The soldier's dream vision—whether through the figure of the lady philanthropist, the angel of the Patriotic fund or Britannia—dispels his anxiety about his family and reaffirms his conviction in his public duties. Tennyson's Part III of *Maud*, however, was an exception to this pattern. The final section of this chapter will explore how Tennyson's speaker's dream of the war provokes readers' anxiety about the condition of the common soldier at the closing stages of the war.

#### IV

When publisher Edward Moxon informed Tennyson of Campbell's death in 1844, Hallam Tennyson recalled: "My father missed him, for he was a kind-hearted man and

a brilliant talker in a “tête-à-tête; and very good-natured whenever they met.”<sup>469</sup>

Tennyson was not only a friend of Campbell’s but knew his works well from childhood. He once said: “When I was eight, I remember making a line I thought grander than Campbell, or Byron, or Scott.”<sup>470</sup> Hallam Tennyson’s *Memoir* reveals that Tennyson often invoked Campbell as a poet of an older generation against whom he measured himself, reciting and analyzing his war poems, including “The Soldier’s Dream.”<sup>471</sup> As I hope to show, the poetic influence of Campbell can be seen in Tennyson’s heavily allusive war poem *Maud*, published in *Maud and Other Poems* in July 1855, Tennyson’s first volume after becoming Poet Laureate in 1850.

*Maud* concerns a mentally unstable speaker’s failed relationship with a neighbour’s daughter, the eponymous Maud. In the poem, the speaker obsessively dreams of Maud and strives to interpret his sights and visions of her:

If Maud were all that she seemed,

And her smile were all that I dreamed,

Then the world were not so bitter” (I. 225-227).<sup>472</sup>

According to Susan Shatto, the etymology of Maud derives from “a Norman-French form of the old German ‘Mahthildis,’ a compound name meaning ‘might,’ ‘strength’ and ‘battle,’ ‘strife.’”<sup>473</sup> Maud, in the war plot of the poem, is a silent, emblematic female figure who arouses the speaker’s war fantasies. In Part II, the speaker kills Maud’s brother in a duel and is haunted and driven to madness by the ghost of Maud. At the beginning of Part III, the speaker, however, claims that he has recovered from

---

<sup>469</sup> See Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son* (London: Macmillan, 1897), I: 220.

<sup>470</sup> Hallam, II:93,

<sup>471</sup> Tennyson regarded the line “The Sentinels stars set their watch in the sky” from “The Soldier’s Dream” as “unquantitative” while praising the next line “The weary to sleep and the wounded to die.” See Hallam, II: 202, 289.

<sup>472</sup> Tennyson, *Maud*, in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Harlow: Longman, 1987), II: 583.

<sup>473</sup> Susan Shatto, *Tennyson’s Maud: A Definitive Edition* (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 33

his madness and decides to enlist, having seen a vision of Maud in his dream.

She seemed to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,

And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming of wars—

‘And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,

Knowing I tarry for thee,’ and pointed to Mars

As he glowed like a ruddy shield on the Lion’s breast. (III. 10-14)

The speaker’s dream vision is one saturated with emblems of war: “Mars,” “Lion” and Maud herself. Tennyson’s description of Maud as an angelic lady who emerges “from a band of the blest” resembles the female authority figures we have seen in earlier rewritings of Campbell’s dream vision. Here the crucial difference is that Maud embodies not the maternal but a martial image of Britannia exhorting the speaker to engage in the war. This image of Maud is best illustrated in a *Punch* cartoon published immediately after England’s declaration of war in April 1854 with the caption “Right against Wrong” (Figure 11). It depicts a warrior-like Britannia carrying a sword in one hand, holding a standard on her shoulder, and standing next to a lion.

Significantly, the speaker’s dream vision of Maud marks the decisive turning point of his attitude towards war.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight

To have looked, though but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,

That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;

And it was but a dream, yet it lightened my despair

When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,

That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,

The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,



Figure 11 “Right Against Wrong,” *Punch* (April 8 1854), 140.

Nor Britain’s one sole God be the millionaire: (III. 15-22)

The speaker’s vision of war echoes the pro-war rhetoric of early 1854 that heralded the coming of war as a regenerative force for a mercantile society after forty years of morally stagnant peace.<sup>474</sup> Just like Campbell’s soldier who dreams of “a sweet vision [...] thrice ere the morning” (I.7-8), Tennyson’s speaker refers to the effects of his dream three times, stressing how his dream vision “yielded a dear delight/To have looked” and “lightened my despair.” At first glance, the dream vision in *Maud* seems to serve the same function as we have seen in earlier rewritings: it inspires the speaker to enlist at the outbreak of the Crimean War. Far from assuaging anxiety, however, the conclusion of *Maud* actually serves to heighten readers’ uncertainty, generating a

<sup>474</sup> Part III of *Maud* is the earliest part of the poem Tennyson composed around March 1854. See Shatto, pp. 9-10.

heated debate on Tennyson's "war philosophy."<sup>475</sup> While some approved of the speaker's voluntary military service at the end of *Maud*, critics such as Goldwin Smith and William Gladstone denounced it. "What the speaker wants is not a just and necessary war, but war in itself—war, as a cure [...] for the hysterical mock-disease of a heart-broken and, one must add, guilty man" protested Smith in November 1855.<sup>476</sup> "What interpretation are we meant to give to all this sound and fury?" wrote Gladstone of the conclusion of *Maud* in his 1859 review. He continued: "We would fain have put it down as intended to be the finishing stroke in the picture of a mania which has reached its zenith."<sup>477</sup>

One important reason why some reviewers read the speaker's participation in the Crimean conflict with such a profound scepticism is that by the time *Maud* was published, the public's initial war enthusiasm had given way to disillusionment with military incompetence and the troops' privation. In the wake of the collapse of the Aberdeen coalition in late January 1855, the leader-writers of *The Times* described the military campaign as a nightmare for both the reading public and the soldier. On January 30 1855, a leader in *The Times* wrote: "Is there nobody who can wake us from this hideous dream, and show us the British army in the Crimea not so wholly unchanged from that which began to land there on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, only four months since?" It lamented that "[t]he vast *prestige* of the naval and military organization which we have been nursing so sedulously for these forty years [...] has gone with a touch at the moment of trial."<sup>478</sup> A few days later, speaking of the plight of the suffering soldiers, a leader of February 3 stated: "their life has been one long,

---

<sup>475</sup> See Chapter 4, p. 154.

<sup>476</sup> [Goldwin Smith], "The War Passages in *Maud*," *Saturday Review* (November 3 1855), 14.

<sup>477</sup> [William Gladstone], "Tennyson's Poems," *Quarterly Review* 106 (October 1859), 461. I should emphasize that Gladstone changed his opinion of *Maud* in 1878, acknowledging that Tennyson's treatment of the war in *Maud* was far more complicated than he had assumed. See his recantation, Hallam, II, pp. 398-99.

<sup>478</sup> Leader, *The Times*, January 30 1855, 8.

troubled, miserable dream, —battle, and famine, and rotting wet, and icy cold, increasing labour, and diminishing strength.”<sup>479</sup> Furthermore, the British government faced serious problems convincing men to join the army. As recruitment to the British army did not operate on conscription but on a voluntary system, around the middle of December, in order to tackle the shortage of soldiers, the government had to introduce the Foreign Enlistment Bill, an unpopular and controversial act that allowed foreign mercenaries to fight for England. In a leader of December 18 1854, the writer lambasted it, invoking the catchphrase “the people’s war” to protest that the government could not pass it without obtaining the public’s support.<sup>480</sup> On January 4 1855, in a letter to the editor of *The Times*, commenting on the manpower shortage in the army, a writer noted that the government had “cut the Gordian knots, as they think, by their Foreign Enlistment Act.” This writer argued, however, that the fundamental solution to the problem was to raise the soldier’s pay to reflect the nation’s appreciation of their service:

Increase the soldier’s pay, and we shall not lack men in this or any other emergency—men ready to serve their country at duty’s call. We cannot expect patriotism alone to be the only motive in inducing our youth to enter the ranks of the army.<sup>481</sup>

As these quotations suggest, it was the public’s increasing awareness of the government’s military incompetence, of the difficulties of recruiting men, and of the privations of the common soldier, which prompted critics to question Tennyson’s speaker’s reading of the war as a moral purge and his decision to enlist. Why, in the circumstances, does Tennyson’s speaker decide to enlist?

---

<sup>479</sup> Leader, *The Times*, February 3 1855, 6.

<sup>480</sup> Leader, *The Times*, December 18 1854, 8.

<sup>481</sup> “Desaix,” letter to the editor, January 4 1855, 10.



In several respects, the speaker's dream vision in *Maud* is a deeply ironic one that confounds the expectations of a reading public familiar with the conventions popularized by Campbell's poem. It is ironic in that, unlike the husband and father soldiers in earlier rewritings of Campbell's poem, Tennyson's speaker is an unmarried recruit deprived of the claims to citizenship that go with heading a family. While the dream visions we have encountered so far transports the married soldier home to his family, Tennyson's reverses the movement: his dream vision inspires the single and heart-broken speaker to sign up for the army to be reunited with Maud on the battlefield: "I stood on a giant deck [...]. Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly/Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death" (III. 34, 36-37).

As the speaker wakes up, he asserts that his dream vision of war "had been in a weary world my one thing bright" (III. 15-17). The word "weary" is a key one which first appears in Campbell's "The Soldier's Dream" and recurs in mid-Victorian rewritings. In Campbell's poem and Private Jones' "A Night on the Heights," the word "weary" denotes both the soldier's physical exhaustion and war-weariness in the aftermath of a battle. In the context of *Maud*, however, Tennyson's use of the word "weary" hints at the speaker's languor or loss of masculine power on the home front. It would seem that it is his crisis of masculinity, concomitant with loss of family, love and status and manifested in his madness, that induces him to participate in public action. The outbreak of the war provides an opportunity for him to become a "strong man in a blatant land" (I. 392) and reclaim "[t]he glory of manhood [...]" on his ancient height" (III. 21).

Tennyson, in other words, reworks Campbell's soldier's yearning for home and peace into a civilian speaker's desire for power and war. His rendition evinces a civilian's anxiety over his masculine status in wartime. Indeed, Part III of *Maud* can

be read as a critique of the civilian's war fantasy. That some contemporary readers could still identify with the civilian speaker's dream of fulfilling his public duties in the arena of war suggests that they also shared his anxiety about the non-combatant's status on the home front. Meanwhile, it is important to reiterate the Laureate's defence of his monodrama. Tennyson insisted that *Maud* is told from the perspective of a madman and that "[t]he whole was intended to be a new form of dramatic composition."<sup>482</sup> In this sense, his deployment of Campbell's dream vision in a dramatic form further underlines the poet's critical distance from the politics of the war. Tennyson leaves to his readers the task of interpreting the vehement speaker's dream of the war, one that radically rewrites the conventions of Campbell's dream vision and challenges their own conceptions of the war and suffering.

In a letter of December 11 1854, Elizabeth Browning, residing in Italy, declared: "I understand that literature is going on flaggingly in England just now, on account of nobody caring to read anything but telegraphic messages."<sup>483</sup> Her observation highlights the dominance of modern forms of reportage and the literary challenges facing armchair civilians depicting a conflict already mediated by the press. However, reading together the mid-Victorian rewritings of Campbell's "The Soldier's Dream" not only reveals harnessed Campbell's dream-vision framework to address distant suffering. The dream-vision poems thus chart the artistic endeavours of civilian poets to respond to the private emotion and well-being of the soldier in a foreign land: a humanitarian concern for the suffering of the fighting men that marks the legacy of Crimean War poetry.

---

<sup>482</sup> Tennyson's letter to Archer Thompson Gurney, December 6 1855, *Letters*, II: 138.

<sup>483</sup> Browning's letter to Mary Russell Mitford, December 11 1854, in *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1987), II: 453.

## Afterword

“Glory to each and to all, and the charge that they made!

Glory to all the three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!”<sup>484</sup>

These are the last two lines of Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava,” first printed in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in March 1882. The poet explains at the end of the poem that “the three hundred” refers to “the Scotts Greys and the 2nd squadron of Inniskillings” and that “the three” were “Elliot, Scarlett’s aide-de-camp, who had been riding by his side, and the trumpeter and Shegog the orderly, who had been close behind him.”<sup>485</sup> On October 25 1854, the charge of the Heavy Brigade, led by General James Yorke Scarlett (1799-1871), was a victorious one.<sup>486</sup> In his famous account of the battle of Balaclava published in *The Times* on November 14 1854, Russell described it vividly before turning to the disastrous charge of the Light Brigade. The Heavy Brigade’s defeat of the Russians was entirely obscured by the sensation and controversy generated by the “blunder” of the Light Brigade. During the Crimean War, it did not attract the attention of commentators or civilian poets. Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade” is one of the few poetic renditions of the incident and the main reason why we still remember it.

Why did the Laureate feel the need to rescue a neglected victory of the British army and commemorate the “the gallant three hundred” (I. 1) almost thirty years after the war ended? In Christopher Ricks’ note to “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade,” he indicates that it “was written at the request of Alexander William Kinglake, the author of *The Invasion of the Crimea* (published in eight volumes from 1863 to 1887), who

---

<sup>484</sup> Alfred Tennyson, “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava,” *Macmillan’s Magazine* 25. 269 (March 1882), 337-39.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>486</sup> See [William Howard Russell], “The Operation of the Siege,” *The Times*, November 14 1854, 7.

sent Tennyson “a memorandum.”<sup>487</sup> Kathryn Ledbetter has also observed that with the publication of the poem, “Tennyson resurrects great moments of British heroism from previous generations in an artistic response to a dark, late-century public mood increasingly in need of heroes.”<sup>488</sup> In revisiting the history of the Crimean War, Tennyson was not only responding to Kinglake’s suggestion but also the political context of the 1880s and reflecting upon his previous experience of the conflict. In his 1885 volume *Tiresias and Other Poems* Tennyson published a revised version of “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade” with “Prologue to General Hamley,” based on the Crimean veteran’s visit to the Laureate’s home at Alderworth in November 1883,<sup>489</sup> and an epilogue, provoked by his conversation with Laura Tennant.<sup>490</sup> With the two newly-added pieces, Tennyson provide readers with a framework to interpret “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade” in the socio-historical context of 1880s and make explicit his personal commentary on the task of composing war poetry. In what follows, I will briefly discuss the wider context in which Tennyson memorialized the Crimean veterans and the Laureate’s reflection on a civilian poet’s role in wartime in order to give a sense of the afterlife of the Crimean War. Beginning with Hamley’s satirical attack on the civilian poet’s mediated experience of and poetic response to the Crimean War, this thesis ends with his approval of Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade” and a larger consideration of the legacy of Crimean War poetry.

Tennyson was composing “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade” at a time when the Crimean veterans were gradually disappearing and a large number of historical

---

<sup>487</sup> See Rick’s head-note to the poem in *Poems of Tennyson*, III: 92-93 and Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon’s note in Tennyson’s letter to James Thomas Knowles, February 1882, in *Letters*, III: 220-21.

<sup>488</sup> Kathryn Ledbetter, *Tennyson and Victorian Periodicals* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 134.

<sup>489</sup> See Hallam, II: 297-98 and Rick’s head-note to the poem, III: 91.

<sup>490</sup> Hallam wrote: “‘The Epilogue of ‘The Charge of the Heavy Brigade’ was founded on a conversation that my father had had with Miss Laura Tennant [...]. He was offended by the way in which those who did not know him repeatedly accused him of loving war.” See Hallam, II: 319-20 and Rick’s head-note to the poem, III: 95.

accounts of the Crimean War, soldiers' memoirs, and military officers' biographies were appearing in the press.<sup>491</sup> While these works were intended to memorialize specific veterans and their experiences of the war, they also responded to debates over these individuals' contributions to the war. Kinglake, for instance, famously undertook his monumental project to do justice to the commander-in-chief, Lord Raglan and ended his eight-volume narrative of the war with Raglan's death on June 29 1855.<sup>492</sup> Kinglake's account of the battle of Balaclava was also an important source for Tennyson's depiction of "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade."<sup>493</sup> The epithet "Scarlett's three hundred" (I. 4), for instance, is a phrase used by Kinglake in his exhaustive account of the Heavy Brigade published in 1868.<sup>494</sup>

Meanwhile, writers' concerted attempts to memorialize the service of the Crimean veterans and its war dead coincided with the military tensions provoked by the new conflicts. By the late 1870s and early 1880s, England had entered a period of colonial warfare and faced several rebellions (or uprisings) in her colonies: the Zulu war of 1879, the Transvaal war (1880-1881) and the Anglo-Egyptian war of 1882. In one sense, to evoke the public's memories of the Crimean veterans and to celebrate their victories at the battles was to arouse their patriotic sentiment and to endorse the government's current military campaigns in the colonies.

---

<sup>491</sup> For instance, see John Alexander Ewart's *The Story of a Soldier's Life; or Peace, War, And Mutiny*, 2 vols (London: Sampson Low, 1881); Lawrence Shadwell, *The Life of Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1881); James Henry Skene, *With Lord Stratford in the Crimean War* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1883).

<sup>492</sup> Kinglake travelled to the Crimea and was an eyewitness of the war. He was entrusted with the unaccessed materials and official letters from the widow of Lord Raglan. *The Times*, which played a vital role in exposing the problems of the government's military operation, was critical of Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*. In an 1880 review of Kinglake's new volume, for instance, an editorial of *The Times* noted that it was bound to "revive some of the interest which the memory of the momentous struggle must always call forth, though this interest must be diminished by the strange tardiness with which Mr. Kinglake discharges his task." See Leader, *The Times*, October 13 1880, 9.

<sup>493</sup> For a discussion of the possible sources Tennyson may have consulted in the composition of "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," see Patrick Waddington, "*Theirs But To Do and Die*," p. 21.

<sup>494</sup> See Alexander William Kinglake, *Invasion of the Crimea*, 8 vols (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1863-1887), IV: 134.

One notable example illustrating this point was the public's concern with the government's handling of the British graves in the Crimea.<sup>495</sup> On April 26 1881, *The Times* printed a letter signed by "J.P." calling attention to "the neglected and dilapidated condition of the British cemetery in the Crimea, known as Cathcart-hill by English officers."<sup>496</sup> Commenting that "[t]hese broken marbles and walls [...] represent [...] the measure of our estimate of those who have died in defence of their country's interests and *status*," this writer urged the government to repair and preserve the Crimean graves.<sup>497</sup> In fact, there was nothing new about J.P.'s appeal. As early as in 1869, at least three letters had appeared in *The Times* decrying the state of the British graves.<sup>498</sup> In the 1870s, several letters printed in *The Times* continued to address the same issue, demanding government intervention.<sup>499</sup> In 1881, J.P.'s letter, however, immediately provoked a government inquiry,<sup>500</sup> which in turn led to the establishment of a Crimean Cemeteries Committee in 1883 aimed at promoting a public fund to repair and maintain the memorials of the fallen soldiers in the Crimea.<sup>501</sup> Coincidentally, two Crimean veterans also died around this time: General Sir William Fenwick, who had led the Turkish forces to defend Russians' siege of Kars, became a prisoner, and was shortly released after the war, died in 1883 and

---

<sup>495</sup> Lara Kriegel is currently working on the fate of the Crimean War cemeteries. See "Graceful Exits: War Cemeteries, Violent Legacies, and the Afterlife of the Crimean War," (MVSA's 2014 Jane Stedman lecture, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, April 11 2014).

<sup>496</sup> The cemetery was named after General George Cathcart who died during the battle of Inkerman. [J.P.], "The British Cemetery in the Crimea," *The Times*, April 26 1881, 12.

<sup>497</sup> See [E. C. Grenville-Murray], "The British Graves in the Crimea," *The Times*, April 30 1869, 12; [G. Arbuthnot], "The Graves in the Crimea," *The Times*, May 4 1869, 5 and [T. Brocklebank and J.H. Law], "Soldiers' Graves in the Crimea," November 30 1869, 4.

<sup>498</sup> See [H. Daniel. Colonel, late Coldstream Guards], "The Crimean Cemeteries," *The Times*, June 25 1873, 11; [Henry Shirly], "British Cemeteries In The Crimea," *The Times*, August 5 1873, 3; and [Tourist], "The British Graves In The Crimea," *The Times*, August 19 1873, 3.

<sup>499</sup> On May 9, in the House of Commons, Major Vaughan Lee addressing High Childers, the secretary of the war, brought up J.P.'s letter, asking him to check its statement and take the necessary measures to maintain the tombstones in the Crimea. See "British Cemeteries in the Crimea," HC Debates, May 9 1881, vol. 261, cols. 19-20, *Hansards Online 1803-2005* <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1881/may/09/army-british-cemeteries-in-the-crimea>> [accessed January 2015].

<sup>500</sup> [William J. Codrington], "The British Graves in the Crimea," *The Times*, November 24 1883, 6.

General William J. Codrington, who replaced Sir James Simpson in November 1855 to become the commander-in-Chief, and who served as the chairman of the Crimean Cemeteries committee died in 1884.<sup>502</sup> On June 9 1884, a correspondent of *The Times* proclaimed: “[a]t last, after the lapse of more than a quarter of a century, the question of the British military graves and graveyards under the steppes around Sebastopol appears to have been settled.”<sup>503</sup> As the shifts in the attitude to the Crimean graves suggest, although readers long expressed concerns with the state of the Crimean cemeteries, it was during the early 1880s that it emerged as a pressing concern for the public and the government.

By erecting war memorials to commemorate those who fell in the Crimea, the government not only remembered the dead on behalf of the bereaved families but also elicited public support for the current wars and affirmed the ideology of militarism. One reader named Robert Cust, who sent a letter to *The Times* in October 1883, argued: “The Cluster of monuments on Cathcart’s- hill will, like the Greek monumental inscription upon those who fell at Plataea, survive to all ages as an incentive to future deeds of valour.”<sup>504</sup> Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Heavy Brigade” can be seen to fulfil a similar political function in the early 1880s- as a commemorative piece which memorializes General Scarlett and his three hundred while mourning the deaths of the recent Crimean veterans. This is manifest in his “Prologue to General Hamley,” (written in 1883 and published in 1885), in which he esteems Hamley, the Crimean veteran, “as one of those I fain would meet again,” declaring that “you and all your men/were soldiers to her heart’s desire” (II. 21-22, 24-25). Meanwhile, Tennyson ends his prologue with an allusion to Lieutenant

---

<sup>502</sup> See “The Death of Sir General William Fenwick,” *The Times*, July 28 1883, 9; “Death of Sir William Codrington,” *The Times*, August 8 1884, 8.

<sup>503</sup> See “The British of Cemeteries at Sebastopol,” *The Times*, June 9 1884, 5.

<sup>504</sup> [Robert Cust], “Tombs of British Soldiers Near Sebastopol,” *The Times*, October 10 1883, 3.

General Garnet Wolseley's defeat of the Egyptian army in Tel-el-Kebir in 1882: "And Wolseley overthrew/ Arâbi, and the stars in Heaven/Paled, and the glory grew" (II. 30-32).<sup>505</sup> The poet thus looks backwards to the last war and then around him at the present wars. The prologue commemorates the service of the Crimean veteran while celebrating the current war hero's achievements.

If Tennyson engaged with the history of the Crimean War to address the current conflicts, he also revisited his experience of the war. As noted in Chapter 4, many mid-century reviewers of *Maud and Other Poems* denounced Tennyson as a warmonger treating the subject of suffering from the perspective of an arm-chair civilian. Godwin Smith, in particular, invoked this image of Tennyson from another poem printed in the same volume "To Rev. F. Maurice" in which the poet invites Maurice, the godfather of his son, Hallam, to visit him in the Isle of Wight and have a chat on light subjects including the origins of the Crimean War: "We might discuss the Northern sin/Which made a selfish war begin;/Dispute the claims, arrange the chances" (II. 29-31).<sup>506</sup> Tennyson's "Prologue to General Hamley" forms an interesting contrast to "To the Rev. F. Maurice." It recounts Hamley's visit and how the military specialist helps with his depiction of the charge of the Heavy Brigade: "We spoke of what had been/Most marvelous in the wars your own/Crimean eyes had seen" (II. 10-13). Tennyson asserts that it is because Hamley "heard the lines I read" and did not "utter words of blame" that he "dare without your leave to head/these rhyming with your name" (II.17-20). This scene functions as a testimony to readers that Hamley has imparted his knowledge and experience of the war to Tennyson and endorsed his poetic depiction. By rehearsing this scene and dedicating the prologue to Hamley, Tennyson authorizes his civilian version of the Heavy Brigade while making clear that

---

<sup>505</sup> See Leader, *The Times*, September 14 1882, 9.

<sup>506</sup> Tennyson, "To the Rev. F. D. Maurice," in *Poems of Tennyson*, II: 498-99.



he was not a flippant, ill-informed gossip but a serious, well-researched poet.

Significantly, while paying homage to the past and present war heroes from a civilian's perspective, Tennyson was also thinking about his role in wartime and the legacy of his war poems. The rhyme "name" and "blame" we have seen in the prologue recurs in the opening of his "Epilogue." It begins with the Lady Irene's charge that "Not this way will you set your name/A star among the stars" and that "You praise when you should blame/The barbarism of wars" (II. 1-2, 4-5). The poet expounds that he does not encourage "War for War's sake" but deems war as a necessary means to "make true peace" (II. 26, 29). He then mocks the classical notion that the bard's name will be immortalized by his songs. Speaking of "Homer's fame," the poet comments: "Though carved in harder stone—The falling drop will make his name/As mortal as my own" (II. 57, 58-60). Rather, the poet ends on a modest note.

And here the Singer for his Art

Not all in vain may plead

"The song that nerves a nation's heart,

Is in itself a deed" (II. 77-80).

Markovits observes that these lines convey "a convenient belief for an armchair poet of war."<sup>507</sup> But the Laureate's emotional plea about his art highlights at once a civilian poet's anxiety about the task of composing poetry in wartime and confidence that he has performed "a deed" just as heroically as the warrior he celebrates ("The warrior's noble deed" I. 36). In Mrs. Warre Cornish's recollection of her conversation with Tennyson, she wrote: "he once boasted, 'I have three times been taken into battle,' meaning his poems carried on the person of a soldier into action."<sup>508</sup>

---

<sup>507</sup> Markovits, *The Crimean War*, p. 167.

<sup>508</sup> Tennyson, quoted in Matthew Bevis, (ed.), *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures: Tennyson* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), p. 136.

Tennyson's defense of the role of the civilian poet would be echoed by his contemporaries. Although not all civilian poets discussed in this thesis shared the Laureate's confidence, they were all emotionally scarred by newspaper coverage of the violent calamities occurring in the Crimea and suffered similar anxiety as to what they could or should do for the nation at home.

The year 2014 not only marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War but also the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Crimean War. With the resurgence of the Ukraine conflict in the Crimea, now is a particularly appropriate moment for literary scholars to reconsider the impact and legacy of Crimean War poets. As this thesis argues, the Crimean War was not only a newspaper war but also literary one, and civilian poetic depictions of the war cannot be dismissed as mere patriotic verse. Reading Crimean War poetry reveals the ways in which mid-Victorian poets utilized poetry to deal with their experience of the first modern warfare: a war waged in a foreign land but the excitement and horror of which were deeply felt via the mediation of newspapers. These civilian poets reworked the established conventions of war poetry and experimented with sophisticated poetic forms other than lyrics to nerve a nation's heart in an impressive variety of ways: to commemorate soldiers' sacrifices; to challenge the political elite's prosecution of the war and the dominant class system; to represent the bodily pain of the wounded and to give voice to the emotional sufferings of civilians; and to ease the public's anxiety about the welfare of soldiers' family, as well as to explore their own bewildered responses to the trauma of the war.

## Bibliography

Full references to articles, poems, and illustrations from the following sources are given in the notes:

*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*

*Broadside Ballads Online*

*Daily News*

*Dictionary of National Bibliography*

*Fraser's Magazine*

*John Bull*

*Household Words*

*Illustrated London News (ILN)*

*Journal of Sacred Literature*

*Morning Chronicle*

*Morning Post*

*Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*

*Punch*

*Reynolds's Newspaper*

*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*

*The Athenaeum*

*The Lady's Newspaper*

*The Leader*

*The London Journal*

*The Standard*

*The Times*

## Primary Sources

Bennett, William Cox, *War Songs*, London: Effingham Wilson 11, Royal Exchange.

Blunden, Edmund, "The Soldier Poets of 1914–1918" in Frederick Brereton, ed., *An Anthology of War Poems*, London: Longman, 1930.

Brough, Robert Barnabas, *Songs of the Governing Classes, And Other Lyrics*, London: Henry Vizetelly, 1855.

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, vol. 2., London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1897.

[Campbell, Thomas] "Alteration of the Old Ballad, 'Ye Gentlemen of England'" *Morning Chronicle* (January 1801), 233-34.

---. "The Soldier's Dream," in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell*, London: Edward Moxon, 1837.

Chambers, Robert, "Thomas Campbell," *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen*, ed. Roberts Chambers and Rev. Thomas Thomson, 5 vols., Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1855.

Collins, John Churton, *Studies in Poetry and Criticism*, London: George Bell and Sons, 1905.

Cowper, William, *The Iliad of Homer, in The Works of William Cowper: Comprising His Poems, Correspondence, and Translations*, ed. Robert Southey, 8 vols., London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854.

Dobell, Sydney, *England In Time of War*, London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1856.

---. *Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell*, ed. Emily Jolly, 2 vols., London: 1878.

---. *The Poetical Works of Sydney Dobell*, ed. John Nichol, 2 vols., London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1875.

---. Dobell, Sydney and Alexander Smith, *Sonnets on the War*, London: David Bogue,

1855.

Duberly, Frances Isabella Locke, *Mrs Duberly's War: Journal and Letters from the Crimea*, 1854-6, ed. Christine Kelly, Oxford: Oxford University, 2007.

Fawcett, Joseph. "War Elegy, Better Suited to Our Circumstances than the War Elegies of Tyrtæus" *New Annual Register* (January 1795), 187-89.

Friswell, Laura Hans, *James Hans Friswell: A Memoir*, London: George Redway, 1898.

---. *Poems, by Joseph Fawcett. To which are Added Civilised War, Before Published under the Title of The Art of War, with Considerable Alterations; and The Art of Poetry, according to the Latest Improvements, with Additions*, London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1798.

Gowing, Timothy, *A Soldier's Experience or a Voice from the Ranks*, Nottingham: Thos. Fobman and Sons, 1892.

Hall, Joseph, *Paraphrase on Hard Texts, from Genesis to Daniel*, in *The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God*, 10 vols., London: C. Whittingham, 1808.

Higginson, George, *Seventy-One Years of a Guardsman's Life*, London: Smith, Elder Co, 1916.

*In Honorem. Songs of the Brave, Poems and Odes*, London: Sampson Low, 1856.

Innes Shand, Alexander, *The Life of Sir General Edward Bruce Hamley*, 2 vols., Edinburgh: William Blackwood's, 1895.

Jameson, Anna, *Letters of Anna Jameson to Ottilie von Gothe*, ed. George Henry Needler, London: Oxford University Press, 1939.

James, Charles, *A New and Enlarged Military Dictionary; or, Alphabetical Explanation of Technical Terms*, London: T. Egerton, 1802.

Kingsley, Charles, *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life*, Edited by

- His Wife [Frances Kingsley], 2 vols., London: Henry S. King and Co., 1877.
- . *Two Years Ago*, 2 vols., London: Macmillan, 1898.
- . Review of *Maud*, *Fraser's Magazine* 52 (September 1855), 264-73.
- Kinglake, Alexander William, *The Invasion of the Crimea*, 8 vols., London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1863-87.
- "Letters from the Metropolis," *Hogg's Instructor*, IV (December 1854), 79-84.
- Life of John, Lord Campbell, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. ed.
- Mary Scarlett Hardcastle, 2 vols., London: John Murry, 1881.
- Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. Thomas Moore, London: Murray, 1844.
- Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell*, ed. William Beattie, 3 vols., London: Hall, 1850.
- Lives of Victorian Literary Figures: Tennyson*, ed. Matthew Bevis, London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003.
- Lushington, Franklin, *Points of War. I. II. III. IV*, Cambridge: Macmillan, 1854.
- . "Tempo Di Marcia," *The Morning Chronicle*, February 25 1854, 8.
- Lushington, Henry and Franklin, *La Nation Boutiquière & Other Poems Chiefly Political and Points of War*, Cambridge: Macmillan, 1855.
- Mackay, Charles, "English Songs: Ancient and Modern," *Nineteenth Century* 16.94 (December 1884), 965-83.
- Martson, Westland, *The Death-Ride: A Tale of the Light Brigade*, London: Mitchell, 1855.
- Massey, Gerald, *The Ballad of Babe Christabel, and Other Lyrical Poems*, London: David Bogue, 1854.
- . *War Waits*, London: David Bogue, 1855.
- [Masson, David], review of *Maud and Other Poems*, *British Quarterly Review*, 44 (October 1855), 467-98.

- Miles, Alfred H. *The Poets and the Poetry of Nineteenth-Century: Charles Kingsley to James Thomson*, ed. Alfred H. Miles, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1905.
- Mitford, Mary Russell, *Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*, ed. Henry F. Chorley, 2 vols., London: John Lane, 1925.
- Moulton, Richard G., *The Literary Study of the Bible: An Account of the Leading Forms of Literature Presented in the Sacred Writings*, London: Isbister and company, 1896.
- Robson, William, *The Great Sieges of History*, London: G. Routledge and Co., 1855.
- [Scott, Sir Walter], "Romance of Dunois," *The Edinburgh Annual Register* 6 (January 1813), 339.
- Shakespeare, William, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brooks, London: Methuen, 1979.
- . *Othello*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann, Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson, 1997.
- [Shore, Louisa], "War Music," *The Spectator*, November 25 1854, 8.
- . *Poems, with a Memoir by Her Sister Arabella Shore and an Appreciation by Frederick Harrison*, London: John Lane, 1897.
- . A. and L. [Shore, Arabella, and Louisa], *War Lyrics*, London: Saunders and Otley, 1855.
- [Smith, Goldwin], "The War Passages in *Maud*," *Saturday Review* (November 3 1855), 14-15.
- Songs of the War. By the Best Writers*, ed. James Hain Friswell, London: Ward and Lock, 1855.
- Stokes, Henry Sewell, *Echoes of the War, and Other Poems*, London: Longman, 1855.
- Story, Robert, *The Third Napoleon, An Ode; Addressed to Alfred Tennyson, Esq: to Which are Added Songs of the War*, London: John Hearne, 1854.

“Street-Ballads of the War,” *Chambers’s Journal of Popular Literature* 124 (May 1856), 305-09.

Tennyson, Charles, “Tennyson as Poet Laureate,” in *Tennyson*, ed. D. J. Palmer, London: G. Bell, 1973.

Tennyson, Hallam, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols., London: Macmillan, 1897.

*The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, trans. Mary M. Innes, Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1955.

Theocritus, *The Idyllia, Epigrams, and Fragments, of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, with the Elegies of Tyrtæus, Translated from the Greek into English Verse. To which are Added, Dissertations and Notes*, Trans by the Rev. Richard Polwhele, Exeter: R. Thorn [etc.], 1786.

*The Oxford Book of War Poetry*, ed. Jon Stallworthy, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Trench, Richard Chenevix, *Alma: And Other Poems*, London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854.

Tyrtaeus, *The War-Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Imitated: And Addressed to The People of Great Britain. With Some Observations on the Life and Poems of Tyrtaeus*, by Henry James Pye London: T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies, 1795.

Unsigned review of *The Idyllia, Epigrams, and Fragments, of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, with the Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Translated from the Greek into English Verse. To which are Added, Dissertations and Notes*, Trans by the Rev. Richard Polwhele, *Gentleman’s Magazine* 57.5 (May 1787), 427-28.

Unsigned review of *The War-Elegies of Tyrtaeus, Imitated: And Addressed to The People of Great Britain. With Some Observations on the Life and Poems of Tyrtaeus*, by Henry James Pye, *English Review* (June 1795), 462-65.



Waugh, Arthur, *Tradition and Change*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1919.

Young, John, *Martial Effusions of Ancient Times; Addressed to the Spartan Hosts; to Excite them to Valour and Discipline in their Conflicts with the Messenians; and prescribed as permanent Recitations by the Republic of Lacedemon, to Inspire their Youth with Warlike Sentiment. From the Fragments of Tyrtaeus*, London: J. Hatchard, 1804.

## Secondary Sources

Adams, Michael C.C, "Tennyson's Crimean War Poetry: a Cross-Cultural Approach," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40.3 (1979), 405-22.

Armstrong, Isobel, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics*, London: Routledge, 1993.

---. *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830-1870*, London: The Athlone Press, 1972.

Bevis, Matthew, "Fighting Talk: Victorian War Poetry," in *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*, ed. Tim Kendall, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Briggs, Asa, *Victorian Things* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1988).

Bristow, Joseph, "Nation, Class, and Gender: Tennyson's *Maud* and War," *Gender* 9 (1990): 93-111, rpt. in *Tennyson*, ed. Rebecca Stott, London: Longman, 1996, pp. 127-47.

Brown, Michael, "'Like a Devoted Army': Medicine, Heroic Masculinity, and the Military paradigm in Victorian Britain," *Journal of British Studies*, 49.3 (July 2010), 592-622.

Campbell, James, "Combat Gnosticism: The Ideology of the First World War

- Criticism," *New Literary History* 30 (1999), 203-15.
- Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, London: Pimlico, 1994.
- Dereli, Cynthia, *A War Culture in Action: A Study of the Literature of the Crimean War Period*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Dowling, Linda, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Favret, Mary A., *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime*, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Figes, Orlando, *Crimea: The Last Crusade*, London: Penguin, 2010.
- Fussell, Paul, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Hankinson, Alan, *Man of Wars: William Howard Russell of The Times*, London: Heinemann, 1982.
- Harrison, Antony H., *Victorian Poets and Romantic Poems: Intertextuality and Ideology*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990.
- Hollander, John, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After*, London: University of California Press, 1981.
- Howell, Roger, *Images of Oliver Cromwell: Essays for and by Roger Howell Jr.*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.
- Keller, Ulrich, *The Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War*, Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association, 2001.
- Lalumia, Matthew Paul, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War*, Ann Arbor, MI: MUI Research Press, 1984.
- Lambert, Andrew and Stephen Badsey, *The War Correspondents: The Crimean War*, Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994.
- Ledbetter, Kathryn, *Tennyson and Victorian Periodicals*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

- Lovelace, Timothy J, *The Artistry and Tradition of Tennyson's Battle Poetry*, New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Machacek, Gregory, "Allusion," *PMLA* 122.2 (March 2007), 522-36.
- Markovits, Stefanie, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Martin, Robert Bernard, *The Dust of Combat: A Life of Charles Kingsley*, London: Faber and Faber, 1959.
- . *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.
- Massie, Alastair, *The National Army Museum Book of The Crimean War: The Untold Stories*, Oxford: Sidgwick and Jackson, 2004.
- McGann, Jerome, "Tennyson and the Histories of Criticism," in *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1985, pp.173-203.
- Mitchell, Jerome, *Scott, Chaucer, and Medieval Romance: A Study in Sir Walter Scott's Indebtedness to the Literature of the Middle Ages*, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1987.
- Palmer, Alan, *The Banner of Battle: The Story of the Crimean War*, London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1987.
- Peck, John, *War, the Army and Victorian Literature*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 1998.
- Phelan, Joseph P, *The Nineteenth-Century Sonnet*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Pordzik, Ralph, *Victorian Wastelands: An Apocalyptic Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Poetry*, Heidelberg: Winter, 2012.
- Rader, Ralph Wilson, *Tennyson's Maud: The Biographical Genesis*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.
- Randall, Timothy, "Chartist Poetry and Song," in *The Chartist Legacy*, eds. Owen

- Ashton, Robert Fyson and Stephen Roberts, Rendlesham: Merlin, 1999.
- Rappaport, Helen, *No Place For Ladies: The Untold Story of Women in the Crimean War*, London: Aurum, 2007.
- Richards, Jeffrey, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876-1953*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.
- Ricks, Christopher, in *Tennyson*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Berkley: The University of California Press, 1989.
- . *The Poems of Tennyson*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Harlow: Longman, 1987.
- Rommel, Thomas, “‘Lines Suggested by the War in the Crimea’: Florence Nightingale and the Role of the Individual Soldier,” in *War and the Cultural Construction of Identities in Britain*, ed. Barbara Korte and Ralf Schneider, New York: Rodopi, 2002.
- Royle, Trevor, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War, 1854-1856*, London: Abacus, 2000.
- Rudy, Jason R, *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007.
- Sanders, Mike, *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Schwab, Ulrike, *The Poetry of The Chartist Movement: A Literary and Historical Study*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987.
- Shannon, Edgar and Christopher Ricks, “‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’: The Creation of a Poem,” *Studies in Bibliography* 38 (1985), 1-44.
- Shannon, Edgar, “The Critical Reception of Tennyson’s *Maud*,” *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 397-417.
- Shatto, Susan, *Tennyson’s Maud: A Definitive Edition*, London: The Athlone Press, 1986.
- Shaw, David, *Gerald Massey: Chartist, Poet, Radical and Freethinker*, Online

- Edition, [http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog\\_part\\_03.htm](http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/cbiog_part_03.htm)
- Shires, Linda, “*Maud*, Masculinity and Poetic Identity,” *Criticism* 29.3 (1987), 269-90.
- Sontag, Susan, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, London: Penguin, 2003.
- Symonds, John Addington, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967.
- Tate, Trudi, “On Not Knowing Why: Memorializing the Light Brigade,” in *Literature, Science, Psychoanalysis, 1830-1970: Essays in Honour of Gillian Beer*, ed. Helen Small and Trudi Tate, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 160-80.
- Taylor, Miles. *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-1860*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Tennyson, *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannoon, Jr., 3 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Trustram, Myna, *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Tucker, Herbert F., *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Van Wyk Smith, Malvern, *Drummer Hodge: The Poetry of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Winstock, Lewis, *Songs and Music of the Redcoats: A History of the War Music of the British Army 1642-1902*, London: Leo Cooper, 1970.
- Waddington, Patrick, “*Theirs But To Do and Die*”: *The Poetry of the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, 25 October 1854*, Nottingham: Astra Press, 1995.
- Walton, Susan, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Young’s Models of Manliness*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.
- Warner, Philip, *The Crimean War: A Reappraisal*, London: Arthur Baker, 1972.