Thesis.

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TENNYSON AND THE COMMON PEOPLE.

The subject for the present paper was suggested by a statement to the effect that Tennyson was the poet of aristocracy, making almost no use of the lower classes in his poems, in this respect contrasting strongly with his great contemporary, Browning, who generally sought his heroes and heroines among the working people, often indeed giving his principal character no background as regarding family or social position. This seemed to the writer rather an unfair statement, knowing that Tennyson is read and enjoyed among the middle and lower classes, probably much more than is Browning or even than that other great poet of homely everyday life, Wordsworth, and accordingly an investigation was begun to determine, if possible, how far the statement is true.

To define the term "common people" is not an easy matter and while probably no one would go very far astray in his interpretation of it either, perhaps, could he give an exact definition for it. Webster gives as meanings for the word "common" when used in this sense, "not distinguished by rank or character; ordinary; often used in a depreciating sense". The first one seems, at first thought, to fit fairly well, but in a country where no titles are bestowed upon the people, it would mean nothing. However that need not trouble us at present since we are to study the common people of England as they appear in one of its greatest national poets. This paper will not attempt to include all those represented in the poems who do not have a title, but, since the common people are generally working people, the term will be used to cover all members of the middle and lower classes who toil for a living or at least do some sort of labor, either with head or hand, no matter whether it be painting a picture or driving a plow.

As a rule it is not hard to place Tennyson's poems of human life in one of two great classes, those dealing with kings, queens, princes, knights, nobles etc. and those dealing with the great mass of people in the work-a-day world. On this basis of classification, in the two hundred and thirty three published poems which Tennyson has left us, some forty five are found to deal with the common people directly or to include some mention of them. While this proportion is not a large one, it, at least, shows that he had more than a passing interest in this class of human beings and that he was
more or less familiar with them. The poems, are, of course, made the basis for the paper, but many illustrations will also be given from the "Memoirs" which show that Tennyson did have a strong democratic tendency.

The common people may be divided into three classes, servants, professional and nonprofessional, in the order of importance, proceeding from less to greater, in which they appear in the poems. Occupying the social position that he did, Tennyson must have had considerable experience with servants, though, I find no evidence of his being especially interested in them as a class. His son Hallam tells us that "the severest punishment he ever received was for lack of respect to one of their servants",* and adds that his father was always very particular about the children being courteous to the poor. Miss Elizabeth Fowler writes** that an aged cottager in Lincolnshire whom she used to visit, never failed to ask about Master Alfred and to read something from his poems. She had been in the service of Mrs. Bourne, an aunt of Tennyson's. While visiting her he would study in the evenings and when the servant would take the candles to him, "he was always patikler, very, to say Thankyou!".

In all the dramas except "The Ring", "The Falcon", "The Foresters" and "Becket" there is no attempt to characterize the servants, who are merely introduced in order to deliver a message, to bring in a new character or in some such way to further the development of the plot. However in "Queen Mary" we find one of Sir Thomas Wyatt's men is, not only given a name, William, but he makes puns and jests with his master much in the manner of some of Shakespeare's fools.

Sir Kay, the seneschal, in the "Idylls of the King", but appearing for the most part in "Gareth and Lynette", is a very interesting character, although thoroughly despicable on account of his coarse, spiteful, sensual nature. When he rides after Gareth to bring him back to work in the kitchen and is overthrown by him, he seems to be only partly repaid for his scornful and tyrannical treatment of Gareth. Arthur is reproached by Lynette for sending only a "kitchen knave" when she had asked for a knight, and Gareth, for being "a dishwasher and broach-turner-loon." However Tennyson shows the

** Memoir. Vol.II. p. 357.
aristocratic young lady that a kitchen knave" might be as good a knight as any other," The head waiter at the "cock", in "I'll Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue" is spoken of as being.

"As just and mere a serving man
As any born of woman". *

Only six times in the poems do we find any characterization of female servants and even then it is very slight. In "The Falcon" a nurse Elizabetta is one of the principal speakers. She is one of the proverbial old-time servants who retained her place with the family, not only when they were in prosperous circumstances but also when they became poverty striken. She is loyal to the core and anxious to do everything in her power to better the condition of her master, the Count. Her loquaciousness adds a bit of lightness to the otherwise very serious scenes though it hardly seems natural, even for one holding the important position that she held in such a household, to talk in the familiar and rebuking way that she uses toward the Count.

In "Becket" we have Rosamond's maid, Margery, making a long soliloquy of fifty one lines and containing no breaks, only slight pauses. This seems to be a very realistic touch, if a soliloquy may ever be regarded as real and natural, for who has not heard an unlearned person, as she no doubt was, talking for several minutes without once completing a sentence? The bad grammar, together with the shortened and mispronounced words, are such as we should expect a maid to use. She, too, is very loquacious and does not hesitate to talk familiarly with Rosamond about her domestic troubles and discuss them freely, for Margery as she herself says, she is no doubt, "no child, but more a woman of the world than my lady here". Nevertheless she seems to be a virtuous and honest girl.

"The Village Wife" is a monologue in Lincolnshire dialect spoken by one who has formerly been in the service of a Squire. Her utter ignorance, her scorn of an educated person, her inability to understand anyone above her own sphere of life and her extreme narrowness of mind, characteristics often found among the poor and ignorant, are illustrated in the following passages. ***

"Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an 'niver lookt arter the land-

* Poems p. 123.
** Poems p. 873.
*** Poems p. 568.
Kate, Maid Marian's attendant in "The Foresters" is very interestingly set forth by Tennyson. In fact she lays almost as much claim upon our attention as Marian. She is bright, vivacious, saucy, very independent and truly devoted to her lover. Her office seems to be more that of an attendant, than a maid, judging from the very sharp, cutting speeches she makes to her mistress.

In "The Promise of May" there are two family servants, Sally Allen and Milly, who always speak in their own colloquial language. They are themselves unimportant and are not characterized to any extent, but by means of their conversation we become better acquainted with some of the principal personages in the drama.

On the whole Tennyson has given us almost no insight into the life and character of his servants. They are treated, not scornfully or patronizingly, but as human beings worthy of respect. He shows no special knowledge of them, but on the other hand, does not have them act or talk in a way unsuited to their station, unless we except Elizabeth in "The Falcon", who has already been referred to. * In "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue" the thought is expressed that the servant is allotted by fate to his sphere in life and will never move out of it. Whether this is Tennyson's own belief or not we cannot be sure but doubtless it was, for we must remember that in England class distinctions are much more closely drawn than in our own country and that it is family, not money or success which counts for most there.

Among Tennyson's poems but two of the professions are represented, that of painting and the ministry.

* Poems p. 124.
The poem best illustrating the first is "Romney's Remorse" in which is told the story of a painter, who, having been told that 'marriage spoilt an artist' left his wife and family in order to become successful in his chosen profession. But when he has become old and diseased, he returns to them, is forgiven and tenderly nursed by his wife. It is a beautifully pathetic story but presents a most disagreeable picture of the painter. "The Gardener's Daughter" is the story of romances of two young artist friends who come to the country to paint, and fall in love. It is purely a romance and no attention is paid to the artist's characters. In "Sea Dreams" the wife is the daughter of "an unknown artist" and in "The Lord of Burleigh" we find the rather apologetic lines,

"He is but a landscape painter, 
And a village maiden she".

Of ministers we have fuller descriptions than of any class mentioned thus far, and several different types are represented. The "fat faced curate", Edward Bull is an earthy rather than a spiritual sort of a person. His ideal of woman is not high and he exclaims several times in the poem,

"I take it God made the woman for the man, 
And for the good and increase of the world". **

In "The Epic", the parson, after harping away on the church commissioners, Geology and schism finally ends by saying that faith has gone entirely. There is none of it abroad and very little left at home. His nature, so unresponsive to beauty and art, is revealed in the fact that he falls asleep during the reading of the poem "Morte d' Arthur". ***

In "Despair" we are shown that ministers are sometimes good for something else than saving souls, but the rescuer is reviled by the man whom he has saved from drowning in the lines, ****

"- - - - - I know you of old- 
Small pity for those who have ranged from 
the narrow warmth of your fold, 
Where you bawl'd the dark side of your 
faith, and a God of eternal rage, 
Till you flung us back on ourselves, and the 
human heart, and the Age".

* "Edwin Morris" p. 91. ** Same *** "The Epic" p. 79 
**** "Despair" p. 602.
The military type of clergyman is described and lauded in the two sonnetts addressed to J. M. K. *
He is called "a latter Luther and a soldier priest" who will "shoot into the dark arrows of lightnings".
In the poem addressed to his friend, Maurice, Tennyson gives us what should be the ideal, not only for a minister but for every man in the following stanza. **

"How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings of the poor;
How gain in life as life advances,
Valor and charity more and more".

But perhaps the most ideal clergyman of all of those to whom Tennyson alludes, is the old gray-haired kindly, self-sacrificing man who has been of so much comfort to the little girl who has been chosen May Queen *** but who is now about to die. He has gained her love and, seldom can a man be other than good, who wins the heart of a child.

So Tennyson has shown us several different types of ministers, not all of them the sort of men we like to think of as belonging to this class, but all the truer to life on account of the human element in them. A fuller discussion of what the church is, and what it should stand for, will follow when the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church are taken up, for, though not an adherent of this faith, Tennyson has more to say of it than of the Protestant branch of the church.

When we come to the nonprofessional men and women in Tennyson's poems, we find our material much more abundant and varied than for the other two classes. It seems to have been the common everyday laborer, whether in the city or on the farm, to whom his heart went out most fully. The life of the latter was thoroughly familiar to him, for much of his own life was spent near or among them.

During his tour in Cornwall in 1848 Miss Fox writes that instead of staying at hotels he stopped with little grocers and shop keepers along the way. He, himself says **** he could have got no better impression of the class. They had all read his poems and one miner hid behind a stone wall in order that he might see him. After their removal to Farringford, Mr. and Mrs. Tennyson immediately settled to a quiet country life, looking after their little farm and tending the poor and sick of the village. *****

Mrs. Tennyson writes in her diary, *"Farringford, August 6th, 1866. A's birthday: we gave a dinner to the farm men. Lincolnshire 'frumenty' caused great amusement among them, many not having the courage to touch it". Such acts of kindness and charity must have occupied much of their life, for, though only a few illustrations are left to us, still we can well believe that there were many which were not recorded. Tennyson was a very quiet, unassuming man who hated publicity, this being one of the reasons for his taking up an abode in the country. This fact may also account for our lack of knowledge of his private life. *We are told that **"whenever help was needed in the world he always gave it ungrudging and unostentatiously" and that "his qualities of childlikeness and absolute simplicity of life, aversion for all that was unreal and affected made him beloved". To the writer, one of the rather strange things in regard to his poetry is the fact that he has omitted children almost altogether. To be sure, at that time the study of child life had not assumed the great importance that it has in our own days yet it seems a little peculiar that one who loved children as did Tennyson should not have been interested in them enough to have addressed some of his writing to them. In "The May Queen", where childhood in the village is portrayed, we have one of the notable exceptions to this statement, and while children are sometimes mentioned in the poems, they are not generally characterized. The story related in "The Children's Hospital" *** was related to him by Mary Gladstone, and although the characters were unknown to him, they are taken from real life. He makes no attempt to copy the children's dialect but only to portray their thoughts and feelings, though he does use language that is simple and unornamental. Unlike W. Wordsworth, who often adds a moral to his poems dealing with peasant and rustic life, Tennyson simply relates the story and leaves us to draw whatever conclusion or lesson that we wish. He believed that all boys should be given a military education in order to be able to defend their country in time of peril. General Gordon had asked his help in founding a home which should be a training camp for poor boys and much as he desired to help in realizing the idea, "he was so fearful of seeming to

himself on the public "it was not until encouraged by Miss Maude Stanley, ever energetic in all good work, that he consented to write to the duke of Cambridge on the subject and to allow me (Hallam Tennyson) to send a letter to the Times". He continued to be keenly interested in the Home, which was built and dedicated to General Gordon though after his death, and in August 1891 at the request of Sir Dighton Probyn and Sir George Higginson, wrote a letter to Sir Edwin Arnold in the Daily Telegraph, 'Have We Forgotten Gordon?' appealing for further subscriptions. *

"The Grandmother" portrays old age in the village and, like "The May Queen", the character is allowed to tell her own story, a thing which was rather a novelty in Tennyson's day. This is another instance where he exhibits "the homely joys and griefs of the peasantry" in language that is "refined, correct and vivid"; and in a style which is purely his own. Her feelings are poetically described but she is not allowed to indulge in philosophic reflections unsuited to her station in life. She is a very old woman, indeed so old that Heaven seems very close to her and keeps her from weeping for her eldest son Willie, of whose death she has just heard. Just as old people are always doing, she lets her mind go back to her youth which she reviews enthusiastically and only occasionally are her thoughts on the things of today. The picture is indeed so realistic that it might have been copied from life, though probably was not.

"The Spinster's Sweet Arts" is a story of an elderly woman, a landowner, who has never married, for the various reasons which she recounts. In several respects she is a typical representative of the class of "old maids", formerly much in evidence, but now almost, if not quite, gone out of existence. The woman unconsciously unfolds her character to us as she tells of the incidents of her life and seems very natural indeed. The reader's mind immediately turns to one he has known or heard about, whom the picture almost seems to fit.

"Edith in 'Aylmer's Field' is a beautiful study of a noble woman, but since she does not belong to the middle or lower classes we shall not stop to discuss her except so far as she is related to those who are not so blessed with the world's goods as herself. Tennyson has emphasized in several poems such a relationship and it seems he believed this to be the ideal one.

* Memoir Vol. 2 p. 313
** Lyall p. 120
existing between rich and poor. He says her favorite strolls were among the poor by whom she was much loved and where. "Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought About them!"

Instead of "sowing hedgerow texts" as she passed or "dealing goodly counsel from a height" she was "a voice Of comfort and an open hand of help. A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves To ailing wife or wailing infancy Or old bedridden palsy,- was adored!"

Again he says of her, **

"Had you one sorrow and she shared it not? One burden and she would not lighten it? One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?

The story of "Dora" contains two women but the character of the heroine completely over shadows the other. Her love, fidelity, forgiveness, unselfishness, gentility and refinement make her not only memorable but also one of the best loved of Tennyson's female characters. She is hardly a characteristic country maiden but nevertheless is very real and possible one.

The old lady in "Rizpah" is another woman who stands out prominently, though perhaps, it is as much on account of the story itself, horrible as it is throughout, and the way in which it is told, the long lines suggesting the sound of moaning, as it is the traits of her character. The situation is one that has probably never been made use of anywhere else in English poetry and being a unique one, necessarily her character would have to accord with it and be also out of the ordinary, a thing which the poet has been successful in realizing.

But not many of Tennyson's women are thus individualized and often they are merely conventional figures representing a certain type rather than human beings with certain marked traits.

* Poems p. 143
** Poems p. 152
Among these might be mentioned Katie Willows, in "The Brook," the Gardener's daughter in the poem by the same name, Letty in "Edwin Morris, or The Lake" and Miriam Lane in "Enoch Arden." Even the wife of Enoch stands for little else than fidelity to the man she loved.

Of the five classes of people, clerks, sailors, fishermen, cobblers and schoolmasters, each is represented in but one or two poems, so while no generalizations can be made in regard to their treatment by the poet, yet we know that it was not mere fancy or a desire to try something new that led him to write of them, for with such men he loved to converse and to tell stories which were neither too high nor too low for them to understand and appreciate. Jowett says that he especially liked to seek out "the poor old men, from whom he always tried to ascertain their thoughts upon death and the future life". In a review of the Lincolnshire dialect poems it was remarked that they must have been difficult for him to accomplish as being out of his way, but he wrote to a friend that they were easy enough for, he says, 'I knew the men, by which I meant the kind of men and their manner of speaking, not that my poems represented individuals whom I knew'. "The Village Wife" is the only one of these that is in any way a portrait. The incident referred to in the two lines of the poem is said to have really happened to some of the most valuable books, in the great library formed by Johnson's friend Bennet Langton.

"Heaps and 'heaps o' books, I ha' see'd 'em belong'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teard out leaves i' the middle to kindle the fire",

"The Northern Cobbler" was founded on a fact that he had heard while a youth, that a man set up a bottle of gin in his window when he gave up drinking, to defy the drink. This powerful portrayal of the result of intoxicating liquors upon those who have become a slave to their use might have been a strong argument for total abstinence, but Tennyson did not mean it to be, although he was opposed to excessive drinking and was much disgusted with the drunkenness he saw at elections and with those who spent their wages at

****** Memoir Vol. 2 p.251.
He seems never to have thought of it as one of the great problems of the day but to have expected each man to solve it for himself as the cobbler did. **

Tennyson during his cruise to Tintagil and the Channel Islands in Sir Allen Young's yacht in the summer of 1887 was very much interested in the stories told him by the sailors, many of whom had been to the Arctic regions. *** He was very much impressed by their love for their wives and families. In "Enoch Arden" we have both sailor and fisherman embodied in one character. The nobility of the man is so familiar to all that nothing need be said in regard to him, other than that Tennyson wisely chose for the hero of such a poem a man from a class of people noted for bravery and unselfishness. His description of the fishing village, and of the children at play among the nets and cordage are very realistic and show his familiarity with the life that they lived. He himself said that he used no similes which might not have been used by simple fisherfolk **** and quoted this as one of the tenderest he had written;

"She heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musking on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow" ******

In a very short time sixty thousand copies of the poem had been sold and he was not infrequently called "The Poet of the People", ****** At a meeting of poor people to whom a visitor had distributed tracts and read a part of "Enoch Arden", an old lady arose and said, 'Thank you, ma'am, but I' give all I had for that other beautiful tract which you read t' other day. It did me a power of good', which sentiment was echoed by the others. ****** The thought that he had done the poor some good gave Tennyson much ******* pleasure. In the preface to a selection of his poems he made which were to be sold in three penny numbers he wrote, "Therefore not without the hope that my choice may be sanctioned by their approval I dedicate this volume to the Working Men of England", In "The Village Wife" Tennyson had shown the attitude of the poor and ignorant toward an educated person but this is further exemplified in "The

**** " 2.p.341. ***** Memoir Vol.2 p.8 ****** Poems p.467
******* Memoir Vol. 2 p.8 ******** Memoir Vol.2 p.9
********* Memoir Vol.2 p.8.  # Memoir Vol.2 p.19
Promise of May" where Dobbin tells Mr. Wilson that he can never find a Mister in his mouth for him because "thou be nobbut schoolmaster".

Something has already been said of the church or rather the clergy as Tennyson has portrayed it for us but this cannot be complete without including the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, and of these there are all kinds. In "Robin Hood" the three friars lie about their money then deliver it up to Marian and Kate disguised as Robin Hood's men. He says to them, "one of you Shamed a too trustful widow whom you heard In her confession; and another worse;
An innocent maid",
Robin Hood also says that he robs only those who are enemies of King Richard or priests; friars and monks who have themselves robbed the people. Cranmer tells of going to the poor flock-women and children- when he was archbishop, and tells the rich people to "Give to the poor.
Ye give to God". Becket fed the poor and was much loved by the people. He exclaims. "Call in the poor from the streets and let them feast, - - - - Call in the poor! The church is ever at variance with the kings and ever at one with the poor".
Sir John Oldcastle speaks of being "emptier than a friar's brains" and of "the poor man's money gone to fat the friar". In "Maud" we have, "The snowy-banded dilettante, Delicate handed priest", But quite different from these are the figures of the Sister of Mercy in "The Promise of May", who coming from the death-bed of a pauper, found the unfortunate Eva, listened to her story, got her a place to work, finally persuaded her to go home and ask her father's forgiveness, and that of the monk, Ambrosius, in the story of "The Holy Grail". He, it seems, is as nearly an ideal man as is to be found anywhere. He has never been far from his hermitage and consequently knows the outside world only

* Poems p. 902 ** "Robin Hood" p. 357 *** Poems p. 745
**** Poems p. 860 ***** Poems p. 5775 ****** Poems p. 5 78
******** Poems p. 446 ********* Poems p. 926
through his books, except as he get occasional glimpses
of it from strangers who come along as did Sir Percival.
He listens with delight to their stories and sometimes
sympathizes with them in sorrows which in reality he
knows nothing about. But this commonplace, though very
useful and blessed life cannot better be described than
in his own words. *

"Knowing every honest face of theirs,
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
And every homely secret in their hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
That have no meaning half a league away;
Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the market cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs."

So however dark and ugly some of the descriptions of
church officials may be they are made up for by those of
such a man and woman as were Ambrosius and the Sister of
Mercy. We must remember too that Tennyson was trying in
most of these instances to present the historical church,
and especially that of Medieval times, so it is not to be
wondered at if the picture sometimes seems very dark
indeed. His faith is always with the church, however,
and he always speaks of it lovingly, reverently, never
slightingly or satiscally.

Tennyson has left us almost nothing of the life
of the poor in towns and cities, obviously for the reason
that little of his own life had been spent there and
consequently he was not familiar with it, but of those
in the ordinary walks of life perhaps none were better
known to him than the farmers and countrymen of his own
England, for as is well known he never went outside of
England for his poetical material except in the poems
that are derived from classical sources.

In a postscript at the end of one of Alfred's
letters to Browning, Mrs. Tennyson writes, ** "A. and
I went to our ploughman to congratulate him on his
having won the first ploughman's prize in the Isle of
Wight. All the family radiant with the prize money.
The wife went off with it to buy winter shoes for her
husband and children". When the old shepherd on the
Tennyson farm died, Alfred who had had many long talks

* Poems p.324 ** Memoir Vol. 2. p. 29
with him, had placed on his tombstone, "God's finger touched him and he slept". Such things as these are a proof that Tennyson knew whereof he wrote when describing country working men, and that he had been more or less intimately connected with them.

It is generally admitted that the best characterization he ever did was in the two Northern Farmers. Aubrey de Vere says of "The Northern Farmer, 'Old Style'": "A heart hard as stone and a mind that seems but animated matter, and yet with a single spot of tenderness in him, one for the soil itself, from which he seems to have risen fullgrown, on which he has labored so long and over which we cannot hear that the new-fangled steam-plow and the hiss of the 'kettle' should ever pass". The other poem is the cry of a man whose mind is set on "propputy" and who is desirous of his son giving up the girl he loves in order to marry a rich man's daughter. "It is said that the Lincolnshire dialect poems are so true to life in dialect and feeling that when a farmer's daughter in that country heard them first read, she exclaimed, 'That's Lincoln laborer's talk and I thought Mr. Tennyson was a gentleman'. Mr. Creyke also reports that one evening after he had repeated "The Northern Farmer" at a farmhouse where he was staying, the owner exclaimed 'Dang it, that caps owt. Now, sur, is that i' print, because if it be I'll buy t' book, cost what it may?' Mr. Creyke said, 'The book contains things you mayn't like as well so I'll write it out for you. He did this, gave it to the farmer who put it into his vest pocket and the next day while out hunting was observed to take it out many times to read it.

In "The Promise of May" the farm laborers are of considerable importance in the action. Most of them do not own farms of their own but work for other men. Such a one is Allen who says that he "were b'urn afour schoolin'-time". Farmer Steer also explains that he had "no time to make himself a scholar" while he was making himself a gentleman. Nowhere does Tennyson bring out the prejudice that such men have for an educated person better than in this play. Edgar is an artist and has said that the land belongs to the people, which is enough to make Dobson believe he has no heart under his waistcoat, "no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the

*** Memoir Vol.2. p.10 **** Memoir Vol.2. p.32
***** Poems p.921. ****** Poems p.903
the poor. Queen Guinevere as a penance for her sins devoted her life to nursing the sick and doing charitable acts among the needy. The Duchess of Edinburgh is praised because her hand at home was gracious to her poor * and Lady Clara Vere de Vere is scorned for her idleness and told how to make herself useful in the world. **

If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan boy to read,
Or teach the orphan girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go".

It will be noticed that all the suggestions for helping the poor are very practical ones and in line with modern theory.

He recognized that the problem was largely one of education and that by means of it the tyranny of ignorance might be done away with and classes fused together for it is ignorance that divides one class from another. ***

It also abolishes cruelty * ***and when the chartist and Socialist movements were becoming very serious in England, instead of imprisonment, he advocated among other things a more wide spread national education and especially hoped that the Bible would be read and studied by all classes and expounded simply by the teachers. ***** Mrs. Tennyson in her diary for July 29th, 1871 writes ***** "A. is rejoiced that the National Education Bill has been passed; he admires Mr. Forster's courage, 'No education, no franchise is A's epigram".

The University Extension department, which was developed in order to bring education to the poorer classes, and he always approved of heartily.********

He is said to have believed 'that the two great social questions impending in England were the housing and education of the poor man before making him our master, and the higher education of women'.******** He saw that the deplorable condition of the poor was due partly to their dwellings and in a large part to their ignorance of Sanitary Laws.******** In "The Promise of May" Dan Smith complains of "the walls so thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowd".

*"Welcome to Marie Alexandrovna" In Poems p.173
** Poems p.5 4. *** "Freedon" In Poems p.638.
In "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" poverty in the city is described in the lines:

"Is it well that while we range with Science, gloring in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?
There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street,
There the Master scrimps his haggard semptress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead,
There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

In "Maud" the speaker rails against the treatment of the poor by the wealthy classes who sell them alum and chalk and plaster enstead of bread.

The Northern Farmer says "the poor in a loomp is bad" but Tennyson's own sentiments are expressed in the lines:

"Kind hearts are more than coronets
And simple faith than Norman blood"

and again in:

"Plowmen, shepherds have I found, and more than once and still could find,
Sons of God and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind".

Such expressions as these show that Tennyson recognized the nobility of man wherever he found it, among the poor or among kings and princes. He recognizes no class distinctions in his love poetry but allows his heros to marry the object of their affection, whether they be rich or poor.

* Poems p.646  ** Poems p.441  *** Poems p.180  
**** "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" In Poems p.54  
***** "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" In Poems p.643.
A king swears, "This beggar maid shall be my queen!" Lord Ronald marries a girl knowing that she is the daughter of a nurse and has nothing and the Lord of Burleigh disguises himself as a landscape painter in order to win the love of a village maiden. Tennyson seems to have desired to see all classes fused together and all men brothers, working for the highest development of the race which he expresses very well in the "Ode at the Opening of the International Exposition".

"Till each man finds his own in all man's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood;
Breaking their mailed fleet and armed towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers;
And gathering all the fruits of earth and crowned with all her flowers".

* "The Beggar Maid" In Poems p. 130.
** "Lady Clare" In Poems p.124 ff.
*** Poems p.171.
Bibliography.


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