

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

by

Lelia Z. Moore

Submitted to the Department  
of English and the Faculty  
of the Graduate School of  
the University of Kansas in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts

Approved by:

*Edwin M. Hopkins*  
.....  
Instructor in Charge

*R. D. Leary*  
.....  
Chairman of Department

March, 1924.

## PREFACE

This thesis does not assume to be an exposition of a discovery in the field of letters: it is an attempt to specialize in the study of a poet whose fame has steadily increased with the years since his death; an attempt to present an especially notable element of his work, hitherto but slightly emphasized, and to show that his poetry and his life have a message for us in the importance he attaches to the value of the inner life, and the need of the world for the application of Christian principles.

The inspiration of the character and the teaching of Dr. Edwin M. Hopkins, of the University of Kansas, with whom I studied American Literature and other courses, together with the approval of Dr. Hardin Craig of the University of Iowa, under whose direction I completed a course introductory to graduate study, has determined my choice of this subject for a master's thesis. To them, and to Dr. Josephine Burnham and Professor Lulu Gardner of the University of Kansas, I wish to express my gratitude for

direction and criticism in beginning and completing  
this study.

L. Z. M.

Lawrence, Kansas.

July, 1923.

## CONTENTS

	Pages
Chapter I.	Influences upon Lanier's
	Early Life..... 6
	Environment..... 6
	Relation to his period..... 8
	Relation to his locality..... 8
	Antecedents, heredity, home training..... 9
	Education..... 10
	An estimate of the man..... 11
Chapter II.	Religious Sentiments in
	Lanier's Prose..... 14
	The divine mission of the poet..... 14
	The power and immanence of God..... 17
	Belief in Divine guidance..... 21
	The efficacy of Love..... 23
Chapter III.	Religious Sentiments in
	Lanier's Poetry..... 25
	Not a religious mystic..... 25
	The spiritual element, the "Love" of the New Testament..... 29
	Social consciousness, a phase of religious feeling..... 33
	Conception of Christ..... 37
	Sense of relationship to the Divine..... 40
	Attitude towards death..... 44
	Attitude towards music..... 46
	Attitude towards nature..... 47
Chapter IV.	Autumnal Gold..... 51
	Intellectual..... 51
	Spiritual..... 51
Bibliography.....	53
I.	Primary Sources..... 53
Prose.....	53
Poetry.....	53
II.	Secondary Sources: Biography and Criticism..... 55

## CONTENTS

	Pages
III. Mysticism.....	57
IV. Magazine Articles (from Poole's Index and Reader's Guide, 1882 to May, 1893).....	59
Index of Authors and Titles.....	66

# THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

## Chapter I

### Influences Upon Lanier's Early Life

Lanier, whose life covers the brief span from February 3, 1842, to September 7, 1881, was a poet of the South in the dark days after the Civil War. That means that he wrote without the stimulus of a literary background, nay, even in the face of positive opposition; for poets in the South were regarded with ill-concealed contempt, which, though not wholly shared by his father, at least caused him to discourage his son's choice of literature as a profession.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, literature was so little in repute that Richard Henry Wilde, author of "My life is like a summer rose", did not acknowledge the authorship of it until twenty years after the lines were written,<sup>2</sup> and then only because they were claimed by others.

.....  
1. Mims: Sidney Lanier, p. 124.

2. Julian W. Abernethy: American Literature, p. 305.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

A strange solitary figure in American literature, Poe alone, of Southern writers, arose to fame with an influence strong, permanent, and far reaching.<sup>3</sup> The Southern environment tended to retard intellectual and literary development, for the South lacked cities with their accompaniment of competition and mental stimulus, and an efficient public school system to create an intelligent reading public. A writer had to go North to secure publication of his work and an audience. There was literary taste and culture on isolated plantations, but these were unproductive, and bound by the rules of eighteenth century England. South of Virginia, Charleston was the only literary centre. The entire section was untouched by the wave of transcendentalism (1830-1865) that swept New England with its inspiring, elevating influence on letters. Literature can not thrive in an atmosphere of intolerance and insincerity. In the South there was no tolerance of any opinions which differed from those of the mass, and no genuine sincerity, since writers could not describe society truly, because of the existence of the institution of slavery, antagonistic to the highest sentiments of a civilized world. They could represent only the amiable side

.....  
 3. Julian W. Abernethy: American Literature, p. 310.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

and never the harsh cruelty of slavery.<sup>4</sup> Southern planters were country gentlemen, a class which in no country or age has made very valuable contributions to the artistic and scientific development of the world.<sup>5</sup> Southerners would rather stand before a crowd and speak than write a book. Law and politics were their open sesame to fame, because lawyers and orators of the rarest talents were demanded to defend slavery, a question of vital consequence to them, the matter of gaining their living.

Such were the conditions before the war. After the war followed the black period of reconstruction. The rancor of party strife, dire poverty, trouble with negroes and Northern politicians, are not conducive to literary production. Out of the tragedy and desolation of the Civil War arose a very few lyrists endowed with genuine poetic gifts. Lanier, the greatest of these, was not the product of his period. He was a reconstructionist with a new idea of nationality, a pioneer of the New South. The Old South was stagnant intellectually and economically, Lanier was always alert, a life-long student of books

.....  
4. E. S. Nadal: Southern Literature, Independent, 72: 294-8.

5. Mrs. L. H. Harris: Southern Writers, The Critic, 47:260-262.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

6

and men, and an investigator in the modern sense. Fighting and party politics, the suffering and injustice of reconstruction, have no place in his work. To him North and South were merged in one great America. He writes no war lyrics, no passionate appeals from his experiences in prison or on the battlefield, no outcries against disease and poverty and the fight with Death. No experience, however bitter, could shake his faith in man and God, or divert him from his purpose of presenting beauty and truth in the guise he revered.

In certain other qualities he was the product of his locality; for like other Southern lyrists, Timrod, Hayne, and Father Tabb, his verse displays the luxuriance of Southern foliage and flowers, the contrasts of light and shade, color, silvery cadences, emotions, imagery, Southern landscapes with fields of cotton and corn, murmuring rivers, marshes with waving grasses whispering to the winds, the Georgia pines, and oaks, and the melody of Southern birds.

Lanier's descent, home, and college environment fashioned his life and directed the trend of his poetry. His artistic and religious bent may be traced to his ancestry and the influence of his home.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

By religious persecution the Laniers were driven from France to England where they became court musicians and singers of more than ordinary talent at the courts of Elizabeth, Charles I., Charles II., and James II. Later, branches of the family migrated to Virginia as French Huguenots<sup>7</sup> with an adherence to religious principles that defied martyrdom. On his mother's side was Scotch Presbyterianism with its unshakable confidence in God and an acquiescence in every exaction to be placed on the soul.<sup>8</sup> His mother was kept alive for months by the strong conviction that God would spare her life until both her boys returned to her from the war. The spirit of Lanier's home not only harmonized with the deep message of Christian faith, but placed a value on knowledge and culture, inspiring in his mind the worth of large ideas through books of genuine literary merit.<sup>9</sup>

He was sent to Oglethorpe College, a Presbyterian school at Midway, Georgia, the avowed purpose of which was "to cultivate a strong religious faith in the students, and foster a spiritual growth". All the faculty were religious. One professor's home was spoken of as a "Bethel, God's house and Heaven's gate".<sup>10</sup> The piety of these men confirmed in Lanier

.....  
7. Mims: op. cit., p. 9.

8. Ibid., pp. 10-18.

9. Ibid., pp. 62-63.

10. Ibid., p. 26.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

a natural religious fervor. The teacher influencing him most was James Woodrow, who accepted both evolution and the fundamental ideas of Christianity.<sup>11</sup> This influence is reflected in Lanier's later insistence upon the inter-relation of science, poetry, and religion. Almost a year of tutoring in Oglethorpe, after his graduation, continued the same influence in his life, further steeping him in Southern Puritanism.<sup>12</sup> In Macon, his home town, religious spirit ran high, expressing its ardor in revivals recalling the "Great Awakening" in New England in the time of Jonathan Edwards.<sup>13</sup> Slight wonder, under such influences, that as a boy of eighteen Lanier wrote in his note book, "The point which I wish to settle is merely by what method I shall ascertain what I am fit for, as preliminary to ascertaining God's will with reference to me".<sup>14</sup>

Let no one draw the hasty conclusion from these facts that Lanier was in any sense a fanatical religionist or a narrow sectarian. Far from it. To be sure, he was not the modern utilitarian who wants merely enough religion to make his property safe, and to clothe himself in the garb of smug other respectability. He was a combination of two types,

- .....
11. Mims: op. cit., p. 28.
  12. Ibid., p. 22.
  13. Ibid., p. 22.
  14. Ibid., p. 28.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

the man of feeling, who is literary, artistic, creative, philanthropic, and religious, and the rational man who hates ignorance, quackery, advertising, and exploiting and who, above all, has a passion for truth. The artistic side of Lanier's nature found expression in his verse, in his musical compositions, his mastery of many musical instruments, particularly the flute, with little instruction, his original ideas on the relation of music and verse, and his religious and altruistic tendencies; the rational side manifested itself in his insatiable thirst for knowledge - for he studied the Old English language, mastered Old English poetry from the Anglo Saxon period to Ben Jonson, pursued courses in French and German, and carried on scientific research under the direction of a professor of science in Johns Hopkins University.<sup>15</sup> His range of literature was almost as wide as Lowell's, though he lacked Lowell's systematic scholarship.<sup>16</sup> He knew Elizabethan musicians and Elizabethan music, with all its madrigals, dances, and catches, as well as the classical types played by the Peabody orchestra of which he was a member.<sup>17</sup> A man of interests so wide and varied:

- .....
15. Mims: op. cit., 34, 56, 58, 96, 108-11, 203-205, 218, 220, 313.
16. Moses: Southern Literature, pp. 358-383.
17. Mims: op. cit., p. 139.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

could not be a religious fanatic or narrow sectarian. He was, as has been shown above, a catholic man of marked intelligence, if not of intellectuality, and as such gave his religious life full nurture as well as his intellectual. Neither was he a religious poet in the strict sense, but like the shepherd poet of Judea he had lifted his eyes unto the hills from whence came his help, and righteousness gave him "assurance, quietness, and peace". His religious life was intertwined with all his other activities.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

Chapter II

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS IN LANIER'S PROSE

The Divine Mission of the Poet

Throughout Lanier's prose are scattered sentiments showing his serious, moral, and religious bent. Though he wrote stories from Froissart, Malory, Percy, and Mabinogion primarily to entertain his children, even in these are evidences of the value he placed upon ethics, and of his over-mastering tendency to moralize. He declares, ".....our time cries out to every young American man, as Chaucer to his prince, to

'Do law, love truth and worthiness, 18  
And wed thy folk again to steadfastness.'

Literature he conceived as having a high mission to be an agent of transformation in the spirit and soul of man until he incarnates a little section of the celestial kingdom.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

"It is the poet who must sit at the center of things here, as surely as some great One sits at the center of things yonder, and who must teach us how to control with temperance and perfect art and unforgetfulness of detail all our oppositions."<sup>19</sup>

He would have every writer aglow with the nobility and responsibility of his art. Thus, he thinks, one can say with authority to the young artist, whether he works in stone or in character forms of the novel, that he need not dread that his moral purpose will interfere with his beautiful creation; can bid him go forward in the clear conviction that unless he is suffused with such moral purpose as finds the largest expression in love, unless he is suffused with beauty, truth, wisdom, goodness, and love, he should abandon the hope that the ages will accept him as an artist.<sup>20</sup> For the sense of the loveliness of morality is destined to spread, the attractiveness of all that is pure and lovely to grow in power, and the race to progress until law will depend upon love and desire.<sup>21</sup> With no less assurance he avers, "The requirement has been

.....  
19. Shakespeare and his Forerunners, p. 329.

20. The English Novel, p. 289.

21. Music and Poetry, p. 21.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

from time immemorial that, where-ever there is a contest between artistic and moral beauty, unless the moral prevail, all is lost."<sup>22</sup>

"We may say that he who has not yet perceived how artistic beauty and moral beauty are convergent lines which run back into a common ideal origin, and who, therefore, is not afire with moral beauty just as with artistic beauty - that he, in short, who has not come to that stage of quiet and eternal frenzy in which the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty mean one thing, burn as one fire, shine as one light within him, he is not yet the great artist."<sup>23</sup>

"The halfway good man is the halfway artist."<sup>24</sup>

"To serious thinkers, truth, beauty, wisdom, goodness, love, appear as if avatars of one and the same essential God; fine and beautiful souls finally lose all sense of distinction between the terms beauty, truth, love, wisdom, goodness, and the like."<sup>25</sup>

The English novel from the beginning was the vehicle of moral purpose. The authors of such books as Pamela, Clarissa Harlowe, and Tom Jones insist that their object in writing was to improve man's moral

.....  
22. The English Novel, p. 282.

23. Ibid., p. 282.

24. Music and Poetry, p. 21.

25. The English Novel, p. 288.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

condition by setting before the world the plain  
 26  
 examples of vice and virtue.

## The Power and Immanence of God

It needs but a cursory view of his letters to understand that the stamp of his early religious training was neither effaced nor dimmed throughout his life; rather did it grow clearer in lettering and color under the steady chisellings of physical fatigue, and the hammerings of adverse fortune. A letter to his wife dated October 18, 1874, comments upon the life of Robert Schumann, the German musical composer, as follows: Schumann's soul was not large enough to appreciate the magnificent designs of God, nor tall enough to stand in the trough of the awful cross waves of circumstances and look over their heights along the whole sea of God's manifold acts, nor deep enough to admit the peace that passes understanding. Lanier could not imagine Schumann caring for his land,

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

27

for the poor, for religion, for humanity. His studies in German philosophy, literature, and music evoked the opinion that in whatever the Germans have done, they have shown a lack of the consciousness that God has charge and that the world is in his hands. <sup>28</sup> Man cannot escape God. From of old every attempt to draw near to the substance of things has ended in quickly bringing the investigator to the same awful term, God, though the investigator has often named it far otherwise. <sup>29</sup> Moreover, man has always striven to place himself in relation, not only with definite forms which go to make up the finite world, but alas with that indefinite something up to which every process of reasoning, every outgo of emotion, inevitably leads to the God, the Infinite and the Unknown. <sup>30</sup> Our thoughts and our emotions persistently seek the Infinite. <sup>31</sup>

Nature he recognized as an expression of the love and power of God.

"Pines always preach. They are religion carved into trunks and branches and cones." <sup>32</sup>

.....  
27. Letters of Lanier, pp. 103, 104.

28. Ibid., p. 107.

29. Music and Poetry, p. 27.

30. Ibid., p. 17.

31. Ibid., p. 17.

32. Florida, p. 72.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

"In the lily, the sunset, the rosy hues of all  
life, it is easy to trace God." <sup>33</sup>

"I know that thou art the word of my God, dear  
Violet." <sup>34</sup>

Writing to his wife from Alleghany Springs,  
July 12, 1872, he described the effects of mountain  
scenery. "It brings one into the sweetness of the  
heartier moods of God, and reveals the tender,  
sportive, loving moments of the Father. A bewildering  
sorcery is over the commonplace. The songs and  
cries of birds acquire a strange sound." <sup>35</sup> Familiar  
stream sounds fill him with wonder, but new strength,  
new patience, new serenity, new hope, new faith, and  
new love flash out of the gorges. <sup>35</sup>

"In the mountains one's soul may climb as upon  
Pisgah and see the land of peace, beholding Christ who  
made all these beautiful things." <sup>36</sup>

Nature is finite in herself but infinite in  
her suggestions. She helps us see that we must fly  
not to her but to the great Christ. As a practical  
man, seeking something to live by through day and  
night, Sundays and all, he said, that he did not want  
other proof of Christ and his purifying faculty through

.....  
33. Century, 76:878, October '08. Quoted from his  
notebook.

34. Ward's Memorial, p. XXXVIII.

35. Mim's Life of Lanier, pp. 112-114.

36. Tiger Lilies, p. 34.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

love than that offered by the spectacle of a glowing  
 37  
 sunset.

Day by day he found the influence of nature  
 ever his personality growing more intense and individ-  
 ual.

"Who in some day when life has seemed too  
 bitter, when man has seemed too vile, when the world  
 has seemed all old leather and brass, when some new  
 twist of life has seemed to wrench the soul beyond  
 the straightening - who has not flown at such a time,  
 to the deep woods, and leaned against a tree and felt  
 his big arms outspread like the arms of the preacher  
 that teaches and blesses, and slowly absorbed his  
 large influences and so recovered one's self as to  
 one's fellow men and gained repose from the ministra-  
 38  
 tions of the Oak and Pine."

Nature is a friend and comforter. The man  
 who rightfully understands Nature, he thinks, is ever  
 in sight of the morning and in handreach of God.

.....  
 37. Tiger Lilies, pp. 108-14.

38. Shakespeare and his Forerunners, p. 73.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

## Belief in Divine Guidance

A great preacher once asked, 'Why cannot we, slipping our hands into His, each day walk trustingly over the day's appointed path, thorny or flowery, crooked or straight, knowing that the evening will bring us home?' Lanier answered this question by the practice of his life in his utmost reliance upon spiritual guidance. This belief armed him against all emergencies and the many adversities against which he struggled. The thought of personal divine care came to him with the warmth of revivifying spring suns, and the good cheer of long loved friends, lending him an untiring spirit. No man can remain permanently miserable whose faith rests on Deity as a defence, or as a guide pouring light upon his pathway. Our poet lived in the light of the faith that God gives power to man to rise above hard circumstances so that he can learn to be content in poverty and sickness. He knew happiness is half in the soul within, an outcome of the practice of Christian virtues; thus he says wherever love and forgiveness rule in behavior there is a blue sky, a quiet heaven full of sun, and stars shining over every tempest.

39

Particularly in his letters he testifies to his confidence in this belief. To his wife he wrote,



## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

45

to men.

Again he voices man's dependence on a stronger Power in the following excerpt: "I have seen no man who did not suffer from the shock of these wars (the lower nature against the higher) unless he got help from that One Man whom it is not unmanly to acknowledge our superior."<sup>46</sup>

## The Efficacy of Love

In his first prose publication, the novel "Tiger Lilies", he strikes the key of all his philosophy of life in the opinion that Divine Love offers the only explanation of life, and human love the solution of all world problems.

"Love for man, love for woman, love for God, these three chime like bells in a steeple and call us to worship."<sup>47</sup>

"In so much as we love, in so much do we conquer death and flesh; by as much as we love, by

.....  
45. Shakespeare and his Forerunners, vol. I, p. XIII.

46. Tiger Lilies, p. 41.

47. Ibid., p. 26.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

so much are we gods. For God is love and could we love as He does we could be as he is." <sup>48</sup> This love he manifested in a glow of sympathy for men who are hurt by pressing ills. "I used to see men in the army whose silent endurance of cold, a dead unbelief in torment, brought more tears to my eyes than all the hunger and the wounds." <sup>49</sup> With the sympathy sprang a corresponding gratitude for his own fortunate escapes from any misfortunes. Knowing what it is to be cold, he says, "I have a new revelation of the possibility of suffering and am able to find a paradise in a common wood fire."

In whatever he has written, he directly or indirectly reveals a real, abiding relationship with God and shows us a life lived on spiritual heights above the multitude. This subtle, indefinable something we vaguely term spirit life lifted him above the plains of the commonplace into the golden mist of the mountain peaks.

Both in the thought of his works and in his noble character he served the world.

.....  
48. Tiger Lilies, p. 26.

49. Shakespeare and his Forerunners, p. 55.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

Chapter III

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS IN LANIER'S POETRY

Lanier not a Religious Mystic

In considering the religious element in any poet of the last two centuries, the mind almost unconsciously travels back to our most distinctive group of English religious poets, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw, and Donne for norms of poetical attainment in the expression of religious experience. These poets the judgment of the years has placed in the class of religious mystics. Close reading and comparison of the writings of these men with those of Lanier clearly forbid the inclusion of the latter in the class of religious mystics "al though no 50 deeply religious man is without a touch of mysticism". Mystics are seers of visions. They believe they can become inmates of the heavenly city for ineffable moments and have glimpses of the invisible back of 51 the visible. In this state they are capable of

.....  
50. Underhill: Mysticism, p. 84.

51. Ibid., p. 84.

immediate communion with God, and can receive  
 messages from the spiritual world. <sup>52</sup> This union  
 with the Absolute is conscious, personal, and  
 complete. <sup>53</sup> The mystic, for a time, is borne out  
 of himself. He cries out in ecstasy that he sees  
 heights and depths vouchsafed to no other eyes. <sup>54</sup>  
 He views a world invisible, touches a world  
 intangible, knows a world unknowable, <sup>55</sup> but nothing  
 external to the soul is consciously and clearly  
 perceived and firmly grasped. He possesses a  
 peculiar faculty for states of mind not commonly  
 enjoyed by the multitude, a knowledge and experience  
 inexplicable on natural grounds. <sup>56</sup> The will becomes  
 passive in order to transcend the sense world and  
 join the self to God. Powers of the imagination  
 are loosed and regarded as the organs of union with  
 Deity. <sup>57</sup> Reason is in abeyance and mystical  
 cognition is like sensation. We do not reason to  
 find whether we are hot or cold; we are simply aware  
 of it. <sup>58</sup> Coleridge says that when a man refers to  
 inward feelings and experiences of which men at  
 large are not conscious as evidences of the truth of  
 any opinions, he is a mystic; for he grounds his

.....  
 52. Underhill: Mysticism, pp. 26, 28.

53. Ibid., pp. 86, 87.

54. Burr: Religious Confessions and Confessants, p. 330.

55. Thompson's Poems: The Kingdom of God.

56. Neenan: Mysticism, pl. 17.

57. Herrmann: Christianity vs. Mysticism, p. 19.

58. Sharpe: Mysticism, p. 67.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

theories and beliefs on individual sensations and  
 59  
 fancies. To the mystic "every bush is a burning  
 bush and the whole world aflame with God".

In the light of this exposition of phases of mysticism it is clear that Lanier's poems cannot be classed with those of the religious mystics. They do not show spiritual flights in which there is almost a loss of the sense of the concrete world. No strange, gorgeous, mystical, and secret symbolisms dominate his lines. Never does he seem to feel that the only realities lie where human foot never trod, and mortal eyes never beheld. His was not an unreal world of spirit and vision. He did not think with Francis Thompson that we tread the floor of a whole sea of spirits; that spirits ebb and flow in the air - "drift upon the populous breeze and throng the twinkling leaves that twirl on summer trees," but his experiences were those of which the majority of Christians are conscious. For creeds and narrow sectarianism he had little sympathy. His attitude may be sensed in the poem, "How Love Looked for Hell," Mind or Sense representing the distorted or biased view of the dogmatist. In the poem "Remonstrance", his expression is vigorous as he commands "Opinion" and "Prim. Creed" not to measure his Lord by rule, but

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

leave him free to love by heart, free from pressure of law. A brother on the left says "Religion hath blue eyes and yellow hair"; on the right, "Religion hath black eyes and raven hair". All this bars him from banquets that his heart could make with every man, every day of life. Opinion, too, by Church, by throne, by hearth, handed Socrates his hemlock, saved Barabbas, stabbed Christ, tossed boys and girls to lions, headed civil wars, and assumed to interpret the true opinion of Christ.

"I would thou left'st me free, to live with  
 love,  
 And faith, that though the love of love  
 doth find  
 My Lord's dear presence in the stars above,  
 The clods below, the flesh without, the  
 mind  
 Within, the bread, the tear, the smile.  
 Opinion, damned Intriguer, gray with guile,  
 Let me alone." 60

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

## The Spiritual Element, the "Love" of the New Testament

Religious feeling is so woven and intertwined in the web of Lanier's life that its bright thread is seldom invisible. This feeling of the supreme need of God in human life, which gives the spiritual perception and fervor to his poems, has its origin in a belief in the basic principles of the New Testament.

Postulates of the New Testament system of religion are a belief in a personal communion with God through Jesus Christ, a faith that there is a plan for man and in nature, a belief that this Divine Being, the creator of stars and suns, the encircling blue dome, the vast panoramic picture of Nature, and man with the understanding heart, is reflected in the human soul. A belief in Love with all that the term connotes - love for God and man and Nature.

"I am persuaded", Lanier says, "that love and love only is the line flung out by heaven for the salvation of us unfortunate castaways upon the ocean of life."

Love for family, for man, for nature, for music, for God, - these were the well springs of his life. Through love for his wife he saw "the large Form of Love", "Faith that smiles immortally", and

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

61

Charity and Hope.      Eternal Love was to him the explanation of life's mysteries.

"And ever to solve the discords true -  
Love alone can do." 62

Love listens to the wailing of the poor and weak.  
The Psalm of the Future shall be

63

"The Psalm of Love with the brotherly eyes."

"Thou God, whose high eternal Love  
Is the only blue sky of our life." 64

the

Love, too, is the remedy for heartlessness of  
trade. He believes that

65

"The Time needs heart - 'tis tired of head"  
and that Love puts man in harmony with God and man,  
and is an incentive to a nobler life. Spiritual  
and ideal conditions cannot exist apart from Love,  
and political questions should be solved on that  
principle.

Lanier's warm affection for all men was  
unusual. That this was owing not alone to the  
natural warmth of his Southern temperament, but in

- .....
61. Poems, My Springs, p. 71.  
62. Poems, The Symphony, p. 70.  
63. Poems, Psalm of the West, p. 130.  
64. Poems, Wedding Hymn, p. 233.  
65. Poems, The Symphony, p. 60.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

part to his religious tendencies is indicated in these excerpts:

"I am one with all the kinsmen things  
That e'er my Father fathered." 66

"For ye are all mine by the gift of God,  
Ye belong to me by the right of my love,  
I love  
With a love that is father and mother to men,  
Ye are all my children." 67

"I stole in the night . . . .  
To my window of the world where man slept  
light,  
And I sang 68  
Oh, my Love, my fellowman, my Love."

69  
"Later, a sweet Voice Love thy neighbor said;"

and the bounds of neighborhood outspread beyond its old confines making all men neighbors in spite of race prejudice.

"When life's all love, 'tis life: aught else,  
'tis naught," 70

66. Poems, Florida Sunday, p. 145.

67. Scherer, The Holy Grail, p. 103, Quoted from Lanier's note.

68. Ibid., Quoted from Lanier's note.

69. Poems, The Symphony, p. 65.

70. Poems, In Absence, p. 75.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

Even with art he associates the idea of love. All art should be the embodiment of truth and love. Unless one is suffused with a moral purpose which finds its expression in the love of all things in their proper relations he should not meddle with beauty. In other words Lanier thinks that the poet has a divine mission. The world we live in is the world the poets have made for us. The poet should be an inspiration to his readers for

"The artist's market is the heart of man;  
The artist's price, some little good of  
man." 71

His mission from God is to 'tame war, oppression, false faith, and bring in tolerance, virtue, honor, truth, loyalty, faith, and charity.'<sup>72</sup> He should rebuke sordid aims, feel and voice the needs and griefs of men, and combat brutality and commercialism. Right living also is a necessity for good writing; though he realizes how hard of attainment the standard is:

"For none of the singers ever yet  
Has wholly lived his minstrelsy,

Or clearly sung his true, true thought,

.....

.....

71. Poems, Clover, p. 22.

72. Poems, Psalm of the West, p. 138.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

Or lived and sung, that Life and Song  
Might each express the other's all."

73

Yet, "both were one to stand or fall".

In the poem "Corn" the tall corn captain is the type of the poet soul who leads his time teaching the "yeoman" selfless chivalry and courtesy, and obliterating a sense of distinction between the terms beauty, truth, love, wisdom, and goodness.

"It is the poet who must sit at the centre of things here as surely as some great one sits at the centre of things yonder and teach us how to control with temperance and perfect art all our oppositions."

## Social Consciousness a Phase of Religious Feeling

Not alone his poems but his addresses and letters to friends show that Lanier was keenly alive to the social and industrial problems pressing for solution, and to the necessity of service. "Nobilities" are workers worshipful in the "Court of Gentle

73. Poems, Life and Song, p. 94.

74. Poems, Corn, pp. 54-55.

75. English Novel, p. 288.

76. Shakespeare and his Forerunners, vol. II, p. 39.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

Service".<sup>77</sup> Even the river hears the voice of duty calling it downward to toil, to water the dry, burnt plain, to turn the mills, and to refresh the myriad flowers.<sup>78</sup>

Especially was he interested in the improvement of industrial, educational, and literary conditions in the South. He had dreams of a time when every village should possess a library, a neighborhood club, and a village orchestra; when the school system should be improved, the negro be educated, and become the owner of his home.

"Trade", the poet avers, "is the most<sup>79</sup> boisterous god of all the false gods under heaven". It has had possession of the world for four hundred years, guiding our national and individual life with its principles. It is more tyrannical, more oppressive, than the worst tyrannies of Feudalism; therefore, there must arise a new chivalry which is a revelation from God of justice, fair dealing, and which must scorn mean advantage, and overthrow the despotism of industrialism. It must condemn selling stock which one knows will fall to a man who believes<sup>80</sup> it will rise. It must condemn any form of rascality and injustice.

.....  
77. Poems, Clover, p. 21.

78. Ibid., Song of The Chattahoochee, p. 25.

79. Mims: op. cit., p. 104.

80. Ibid., op. cit., p. 158.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

The Symphony is usually thought of as a poem expressing the deadening effect of Trade upon Art. It is more than that; it is the poet's cry for fair play for the laborer; a plea for the practice of the Golden Rule and the extension of religious theory over into the practice of social services.

The poet speaks through the tones of the orchestra. The violin pleads,

"Yea, what avail the endless tale       81  
Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?"

Up and down the land the poor stand wedged against an inward opening door by the pressing hand of Trade. They sigh for liberty, moan at the monotonous "old year-long", "drear-long way" of weaving in mills under conditions little above those of beasts. Men say, "Trade ills have no remedy".

"Does business mean, Die, you - live, I?  
Then 'Trade is trade' but sings a lie:  
'Tis only war grown wiserly." 82

"But who said once, in the lordly tone,  
Man shall not live by bread alone  
But all that cometh from the Throne? 83

"Alas for the poor to have some part  
In yon sweet living lands of Art." 84

.....  
81. Poems, The Symphony, p. 60.

82. Ibid., p. 61.

83. Ibid., p. 61.

84. Ibid., p. 61.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

The flute, "half song, half odor", floating  
forth "As if a rose might somehow be a throat" flutes  
the words of the Master that all men are neighbors,  
admonishing trade, the king of modern days, to

"Change thy ways,  
Change thy ways;  
Let the sweaty laborers file  
A little while,  
A little while, 85  
Where Art and Nature sing and smile."

The horn inquires,

"For aye shall name and fame be sold,  
.....  
And smirch-robed Justice feebly scold  
At Crime all money-bold,  
Fair Lady?" 86

In spite of the fact that "trade interprets  
87  
the Bible" and suffering and sorrow exist every-  
where, in the end, there shall be contempt for ill-  
gotten gains; Love will heal the ills and make  
adjustments.

"I doubt no doubts; I strive, and thrive my  
clay,  
And fight my fight in the patient modern way."

"God doth right and God hath might", and "God shall  
88  
right thy grievous wrong". Lanier's philosophy  
is like that of Browning:

.....  
85. Poems, The Symphony, p. 65.

86. Ibid., p. 68.

87. Mims: oö. cit., p. 158.

88. Poems, The Symphony, pp. 67-69.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

"I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ  
 Accepted by thy reason solves for thee  
 All questions in the earth and out of it."89

Lanier also offers this same solution for sin:

"If I do ask, How God can dumbness keep  
 While Sin creeps grinning through His  
 house of Time,  
 Stabbing his saintliest children in their  
 sleep,  
 .....  
 Somehow by thee, dear Love, I win content: 90  
 Thy Perfect stops th' Imperfect's argument."

## Lanier's Conception of Christ

The moral fibre of a man's life is unknown even to himself, if life has been easy for him. The strength we associate with the oak and the cliff-towering pine is never the result of unchanging, clear skies and sunlit days, but of the sturdy buffetings of the winds that bear the trunks low to earth. Lanier, tested by the storm winds of poverty and physical weakness, maintained a wonderful firmness of spirit through an unswerving trust in infinite Love. - "His faith saved him from being

.....  
 89. Death in the Desert.

90. Acknowledgment, p. 78.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

despondent in his dire poverty and through the  
 bitter days of reconstruction in the South".<sup>91</sup> His  
 creed was "God doth right and God hath might."<sup>92</sup>

He was one "who hath mightily won God out of  
 knowledge and good out of infinite pain."<sup>93</sup>

".....Thee,  
 God, whom my roads all reach, how e'er they  
 run,  
 My Father, Friend, Beloved, dear All-One,  
 Thee in my soul, my soul in Thee, I feel,  
 Self of my Self." 94

95  
 "Healer of hurts, free balm for bitter wrongs."  
 .....

"Divine Tranquility."

".....oh, to me  
 All questions solve in this tranquility." 96

Two of his best poems directly express his  
 idea of Christ and man's relation to Him. One,  
 "The Ballad of Trees and the Master", touching in  
 its tenderness, shows not only the solace of nature  
 to a "forspent soul", but also a belief in the  
 personality and humanity of Christ.

.....  
 91. Moses, Literature of the South, p. 380.

92. The Symphony, p. 69.

93. Poems, Marshes of Glynn, p. 17.

94. Ibid., A Florida Sunday, p. 144.

95. Ibid., p. 142.

96. Ibid., p. 145.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

"Into the woods my Master went,  
 Clean forspent, forspent.  
 Into the woods my Master came,  
 Forspent with love and shame.  
 But the olives they were not blind to Him,  
 The little gray leaves were kind to Him;  
 The thorn-tree had a mind to Him  
 When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,  
 And He was well content.  
 Out of the woods my Master came,  
 Content with death and shame.  
 When Death and Shame would woo Him last,  
 From under the trees they drew Him last;  
 'Twas on a tree they slew Him - last  
 When out of the woods He came." 97

The other poem, "Crystal", conveys an exalted sense of the crystal beauty of Christ's life and teachings. In Shakespeare, Homer, Socrates, Buddha, Dante, Milton, Emerson, and many other exponents of greatness, he finds some flaw.

"But Thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,  
 O perfect life in perfect labor writ,  
 O all men's Comrade, Servant, King or Priest, -  
 What if or yet, what mole, what flaw, what  
 lapse,  
 What least defect, or shadow of defect,  
 What rumor, tattled by an enemy,  
 Of inference loose, what lack of grace  
 Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's or  
 death's, -  
 Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee, 98  
 Jesus, Good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ?"

.....  
 97. Ballad of Trees and the Master, p. 141.

98. The Crystal, p. 32.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

## Lanier's Sense of Relationship to the Divine

While the spiritual element in Lanier's poetry is not so readily apprehended at first as his beautiful imagery from nature, it enlarges in one's perceptions as acquaintanceship with his life and work deepens.

"His song was only living aloud,  
His work, a singing with his hand." 99

It was said of him;

"Eyes smiled truer for his radiance clear,  
And souls grew loftier where his teachings  
fell." 100

Religion was his refuge in the whirl of life. His soul rested in a peaceful calm beneath a spiritual sky that brought joy and contentment to his heart. He was the exemplar of the truth that, though youth fades and strength decays, the spiritual sense cultivated, grows keener and gives renewed strength to battle with obstacles, soothes pain, consoles sorrow, educates to a larger view of life, teaches the lessons of patience and forbearance, and makes a man adequate for all circumstances. Often he expressed fervent gratitude that the Lord had made

.....  
99. Poems, Life and Song, p. 95.

100. Mrs. Lawrence Turnbull, Poem read at the presentation of the Lanier bust to John Hopkins University.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

the earth so good. "Acknowledge Him as Creator who wrought with love and tenderness," he admonishes.

In the last spring of his life when the doctors had ordered him to the mountains of North Carolina, his publishers gave him a commission to write an account of that region as a railroad guide. His comment was, "It seems as if the good Lord always took care of me".<sup>101</sup> On the way across the mountains the family visited with friends. Watching the sunset glow deepen into twilight over Mt. Pisgah, Lanier sat at the piano and poured forth the sorrow, joy, pain, hope, and triumphs of his soul. His listeners felt in that twilight hour that he had risen to an angel's song.<sup>102</sup> Long before, he had written,

"And Oh, the ladder is not long that to my  
heaven leads.  
Measure what space a violet stands above  
the ground:  
'Tis no further climbing that my soul and  
angels have to do than that.'"<sup>103</sup>

.....

"Oh, thou'rt the Height of heights, the  
Eye of eyes.

.....  
Not hardest Fortune's most unbounded stress  
Can blind my soul nor hurl it from on high,  
Possessing thee, the self of loftiness."<sup>104</sup>

.....  
101. Mims: op. cit., p. 331.

102. Spann: Manhood of Sidney Lanier: Independent,  
June 28, 1894.

103. Ward's Memorial, p. XXXIX.

104. Poems, Acknowledgment, p. 79.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

His faith in divine guidance was as steadfast as that of the early Puritans.

".....on the heartache sea,  
God, thy God, will pilot thee." 105

"And ever by day shall my spirit, as one that  
hath tried thee,  
Labor, at leisure, in art." 106

"I work in freedom wild  
But work, as plays a little child, 107  
Sure of the Father, Self, and Love, alone."

This sense of divine guidance is not merely personal but applies to the nation as well.

"Long as thy God is God above,  
Thy brother every man below,  
So long, dear Land of all my love, 108  
Thy name shall shine, thy fame shall glow!"

He had an ardor and an exuberance that come only from a large compass of soul. No struggles could long mar his cheerfulness, his hope or ambition. His serenity, his joy, his sweetness of disposition, depth of emotions, absolute purity of life, were apparent to all. In the poem "Opposition" he declared -

109  
"The dark distils divinest dew"

- .....  
105. Poems, Psalm of the West, p. 127.  
106. Ibid., Sunrise, p. 9.  
107. Ibid., Individuality, p. 13.  
108. Ibid., The Centennial Cantata, p. 251.  
109. Poems, Opposition, p. 51.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

and

"Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,  
Complain thou not, O heart; for these  
Bank-in the current of the will  
To uses, arts, and charities." 110

We also have a concept of his relation to  
God in the poem, Clover:

"God's Clover, we, and feed His Course-of-  
things;  
The pasture is God's pasture; systems  
strange  
Of food and fiberment He hath, whereby  
The general brawn is built for plans of His  
To quality precise." 111

Never does he reach rarer heights under the  
religious impulse, never does he present deeper and  
nobler emotions of the soul, nor finer qualities of  
spirituality, than he expresses in "The Marshes of  
Glynn".

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the  
watery sod,  
Behold I will build me a nest on the great-  
ness of God:  
I will fly in the greatness of God as the  
marsh-hen flies  
In the freedom that fills all the space  
'twixt the marsh and the skies:  
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends  
in the sod  
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the  
greatness of God:  
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the  
greatness within  
The range of the marshes, the liberal  
marshes of Glynn." 112

.....  
110. Poems, Opposition, p. 51.

111. Ibid., Clover, p. 22.

112. Ibid., Marshes of Glynn, p. 17.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

His biographer believes Lanier's personality is one of the rarest and finest we have yet had in America. <sup>113</sup> Can anyone doubt what was the Power that shaped a character so rare?

## Lanier's Attitude towards Death

The ultimate test of a man's faith rests not alone upon the way he meets life, but also upon his attitude towards death. Lanier faced death more admirably than Browning. In him there was no bravado, but the quiet assurance of a man who knew. "Christ," he says, "will walk ahead and clear the road." <sup>114</sup>

"He (Death) but unfetters me to fly."

.....

"Death, thou'rt a cordial old and rare:

.....

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:  
Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;  
H'll drink it down right smilingly." 115

Whether he contemplated the ill-fortunes of life, or death, he could say:

.....

113. Mims: op. cit., p. 4.

114. Poems, Strange Jokes, p. 217.

115. Poems, The Stirrup Cup, p. 45.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

"But I fear not, nay, and I fear not the  
 thing to be done;  
 I am strong with the strength of my lord,  
 the Sun;"

The sun in this part of the poem typifies God, for he asserts later:

".....yonder beside thee  
 My soul shall float, friend Sun,  
 The day being done." 116

He believed in immortality:

117  
 "Your dead stand happy in yon Gate,"

".....but in God's Land  
 Their intervals (of Space and Time) are not,  
 save such as lie  
 Betwixt successive tones in concords bland  
 Whose loving distance makes the harmony." 118

A poem published in the Outlook in 1906 aptly pictures the poet's feeling.

"But even amid the darkness his fair face  
 Ever turned eager towards the eternal light;  
 He saw the bright beams of the coming day  
 Far through the blackness of the enshrouding  
 night.  
 Wounded and fallen, still he struggled on,  
 Brave hearted, valiant to his latest breath;  
 With cypress, mourners came; but laurel-crowned  
 They found him smiling in the arms of death." 119

117. Poems, The Golden Wedding, p. 208.

118. Ibid., In Absence, II, p. 74.

119. J. W. Jenkins, Poem, Outlook, 82: Apr. 21, 1906.

116. Poems, Sunrise, p. 9.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

## Lanier's Attitude toward Music

Although Lanier was a musical genius and was devoted to the study of music all his life, yet few passages in his poetry indicate his conception of its ethical value. He says,

"Music on earth much light upon Heaven had  
thrown." 120

"Music means harmony, harmony means love, love means  
121  
God!"

In his prose he declared, "Music helps man  
from the known into the boundaries of the unknown.  
As music increases, the sense of the loveliness of  
morality will spread, and the pure and lovely grow  
122  
in power." Music, he said, created in him a  
123  
great, pure, unanalyzable love after God. It  
was a gospel of which the people were in great need  
and by which a soul might fare easily to the Lord.  
Music will help redeem the people from commercialism.

.....  
120. Poems; Psalm of the West, p. 117.

121. Ward's Memorial, XXXII.

122. Music and Poetry, p. 19.

123. Mims: op. cit., p. 145.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

## Lanier's Attitude toward Nature

"The Art of mysticism is to be mystical in spots." 124

Was Lanier a nature mystic? Surely not in the same sense as was Vaughan, who compared natural with spiritual processes, or as Blake, who lived in a realm of spirit and vision, seeing a "world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower", nor as Wordsworth who is ranked first among nature mystics, and who looked upon Nature as the "mystical Mother  
125  
whose every gesture was fraught with import"; but there are examples showing that his works are "mystical in spots".

Nature mysticism assumes that Nature in all its mysterious forces is the work of God; that God  
126  
is reflected in Nature, and everything is a manifestation of divine life. Lanier saw God in the marsh, in live oaks, the pine, the sun, and the joy of birds. All nature was an inspiration, insight, comfort, and strength to him. The beauty of nature fascinated him, because that beauty suggests the unseen Eye that beholds it, and the Hand that supports it. Emotions of sublimity,

.....  
124. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 16.

125. J. C. Shairp, On the Poetic Interpretation of Nature, p. 152.

126. Neenan, Mysticism, p. 18.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

solemnity, and tranquility come from a spiritual communion with the Great Being who is the spirit of Nature.

"...my soul all day hath drunken the soul of  
the oak,  
And my heart is at ease from men, and the  
wearisome sound of the stroke  
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of  
trade is low,  
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know  
that I know,  
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great  
compass within," 127

.....

"...my soul seems suddenly free  
From the weighing of fate and the sad  
discussion of sin" 127

Again he is

"Holding the hills and heavens in my heart  
For contemplation." 128

"For Love the dear woods' sympathies,  
For Grief the wise woods' peace." 129

The glory of the seen suggests the glory of the unseen, symbolizing the transcendent beauty and unimaginable power of God.

His feeling for nature was intimate and religious:

.....  
127. Poems, Marshes of Glynn, p. 15.

128. Ibid., Clover, p. 19.

129. Ibid., Psalm of the West, p. 119.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

"Oh! as Thou liv'st in all this sky and sea  
That likewise lovingly do live in thee,  
So melt my soul in thee, and thine in me." 130

The woods are

"Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer  
to the soul that grieves." 131

"And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle  
doth seem  
Like a lane into heaven." 132

After the manner of true mystics he endows  
Nature with the qualities of sentient life; thus,  
the woods are "pure with the sense of the passing of  
133  
saints". The leaves are "lispers, whisperers,  
singers in storms", "consciences murmuring faiths  
134  
under forms". They "winnow wisdom from the  
135  
winds". Wood smells bring breath from the  
136  
heaven side bank of the river of death. A  
137  
passionate shiver bends the blades of marsh grasses.  
The embracing boughs express a mighty tenderness;  
the beech dreams balm; expirations throb from young  
hickories; muscadines breathe ambrosial passion from  
138  
their vines. Dewdrops and morning gray "live" a

- .....
131. Poems, The Marshes of Glynn, p. 14.  
132. Ibid., p. 15.  
133. Ibid.  
134. Ibid., Sunrise, p. 4.  
135. Ibid.  
136. Ibid.  
137. Ibid., p. 6.  
138. Ibid., Corn, p. 53.  
130. Ibid., Florida Sunday, p. 143.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

139  
 lucid day before their souls exhale away with the sun.  
 Speaking of the chestnut, he says,

140  
 "We could not dream but that he had a soul."

Again, he shows his kinship with the mystics  
 in contemplating the mystery of nature.

"How may the death of that dull insect be 141  
 The life of yon trim Shagbopere on the tree?"

He starts at fragmentary whispers blown from  
 142  
 under stalks of leafy souls. There is mystery  
 in the leaves; earth, air, and his heart are athrill  
 143  
 at the mystery of sunrise.

the  
 This sense of mystery and wonder of the world;  
 this endowment of nature with the power to thrill,  
 to shiver, to enjoy, to be capable of moods almost  
 human make our poet kindred in spirit with the nature  
 mystics of all ages.

"Always he found  
 Worship in trees; religion in each song,  
 And in the wood 144  
 Sermons that breathe the universal God."

- .....
139. Poems, Sunrise, p. 7. Chestnut,  
 140. Ibid., Under the Cedarcroft, p. 149  
 141. Ibid., The Mocking Bird, p. 27  
 142. Ibid., Corn, p. 53.  
 143. Ibid., Sunrise, p. 6.  
 144. Poems of Madison Cawein.

# THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

## Chapter IV

### AUTUMNAL GOLD

#### Intellectual

Lanier's study of English with the aid of the Peabody Library in Baltimore marks a distinct advance in his intellectual life, a study which bore fruit in the production of his most important prose works, "The Science of English Verse", dealing with methods of metrical composition, and "The English Novel and its Development". After this period, he also wrote "Marshes of Glynn", "The Crystal", "The Ballad of Trees and the Master", and "Sunrise", a group in which expressions of his sense of God's love appear most frequently and with the greatest fervor, indicating a contemporaneous progress in his spiritual life.

#### Spiritual

One of the remarkable things about him was his consciousness of God, which shone in his face and glowed in his life. Friends and acquaintances

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

alike testified that his goodness was something felt at once, and once felt was never forgotten. "Nobler songs than his own life never rose to heaven." <sup>145</sup>

His whole philosophy of life, in so far as it is expressed in his works, rests upon a religious basis, on a belief in a personal God so near that he could sense His Presence; on a belief in Love as a solution of perplexing industrial and social problems. In his notebook he says, "It may be the world can get along without God, but I cannot." <sup>146</sup> This inner wealth enabled him to sing his songs sweetly and cheerfully, though Death lurked grimly in the shadows at his door.

## Estimate

Had he lived the allotted time of man's age, it would have been too short to compass what he planned, but all that he did affords a glimpse of what he might have done, had his life been more than a fragment. His last poems make a treasure of verse, ranking him safely among the lyrical poets of America. He has delivered a worthy message to

.....  
145. Living Age, 217:411.

146. Century: 76:849, October, 1908. Quoted from his Notebook.

## THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SIDNEY LANIER'S WORKS

men voicing his belief in the sacredness of duty, the efficacy of Christian principles to bring about social justice whereby every man may have his chance in the distribution of the advantages of society.

A hero in meeting physical suffering and poverty, Lover of Immortal Love, uplifter of the human heart, without bitterness and resentments he turned his adversities into successes.

Brave-hearted Lanier! The "Sir Galahad of American Literature". To behold your heroism sets the soul afire with ideals worthy the Saxon race.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note. This list aims to give all the books and magazine articles read in the preparation of this paper, and a complete bibliography of magazine articles relating to Lanier published from 1882 to May 1893. However, references to histories of American literature have been generally omitted, although all works of this kind treat of Lanier's life and writings.

### I. Primary Sources: Prose

Boy's King Arthur: Being Sir Thomas Malory's History of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1880.

Boy's Froissart: Being Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of Adventure, battles and customs in England, France, and Spain. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1878.

Boy's Mabinogion: Being the earliest Welch tales of King Arthur in the Famous Red Book of Hergest. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1881.

English Novel and the principles of its development. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1883.

Florida: Scenery, Climate, History. J. B. Lippincott and Company, Philadelphia, 1876.

Letters of Sidney Lanier, Selections from his correspondence, 1866-1881. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1914.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Letters: Selections in The Atlantic Monthly.

- Vol. 74: 14-28.  
 " 74: 181-193.  
 " 83: 791-807.  
 " 84: 127-141.

Music and Poetry: Essays upon some aspects and interrelations of the two arts.  
 Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1909.

Retrospects and Prospects, Descriptive and Historical Essays. Second Edition. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899.

Science of English Verse. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1897.

Shakespeare and his forerunners, Vol. 1 - 2.  
 Doubleday, Page and Company, New York, 1902.

Tiger Lilies: A novel. Hurd and Houghton, New York, 1867.

Primary Sources: Poetry

Poems of Sidney Lanier, Edited by his wife with a memorial by William Hayes Ward.  
 Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1901.

Select Poems of Sidney Lanier, Edited with an introduction and notes by Morgan Calloway, Jr., University of Texas. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1895.

Poem Outlines: Current Literature, 43:572, Nov. '07.

Notebook. Century, 76:847-50, Oct. '08.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## II. Secondary Sources: Biography and Criticism

- Abernathy, J. W. Southern Poets. Maynard, Merrill and Company, New York, 1914.
- Baskerville, W. M. Southern Writers. Nashville, 1898.
- Blanc, Mime. Sidney Lanier. Living Age. 217:411-517.
- Bowen, Edwin. Makers of American Literature. pp. 348-370. The Neale Publishing Company, New York, 1908.
- Bradford, Gamaliel. American Portraits. pp. 61-82. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1922.
- Burton, Richard. Literary Leaders of America. pp. 216-309. Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1904.
- Cambridge History of American Literature. Vol. 2, pp. 331-346. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1918.
- Clarke, George H. Some Early Letters and Reminiscences of Lanier. Independent, LXI, pp. 1092-8, March 8, 1906.
- Foerster, N. Lanier as a Poet of Nature. Nation, 108:961-3, January 21, 1919.
- Harris, Mrs. L. H. Southern Writers. The Critic. 47:260-263.
- Higginson, Thomas W. Contemporaries, pp. 85-101. Houghton, Mifflin Company, New York, 1899.
- Hubner, Charles W. Representative Southern Poets, pp. 15-54. The Neale Publishing Company, New York.
- Jenkins, J. W. Poem on Sidney Lanier. Outlook, 82, April 21, 1906.
- Le Gallienne. Lanier. Living Age, 224:840-843, March 31, 1900.
- Mabie, W. H. Estimate of Lanier. Outlook, 71:235-39, May 24, 1912.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Macy, John. Spirit of American Literature. Boni and Liveright, New York, 1913.
- Mims, Edwin. Life of Sidney Lanier. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, New York, 1905.
- Moses, Montrose J. The Literature of the South, pp. 358-383. Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, New York, 1910.
- Nadal, E. S. Southern Literature. Independent, 72:294-8.
- Northup, Milton H. Sidney Lanier, Recollections and Letters. Lippincott's, LXXV: 302-14. March, 1905.
- Painter, F. V. N. Poets of the South, pp. 81-101, 184-197. American Book Company, Chicago, 1903.
- Pattee, F. L. History of American Literature since 1870. Century Company, New York, 1917.
- Payne, Wm. M. American Literary Criticism. Longsman, Green and Company, New York, 1904.
- A Poet's Musical Impressions from his Letters by H. W. L. Scribner's Magazine, 25:622-745.
- Scherer, Jas. The Holy Grail. J. B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1906.
- Shakespeare and his forerunners: A Review. Atlantic, 91:266-7.
- Shepherd, H. E. Sidney Lanier. Current Literature, 32:108-10, January, 1902.
- Spann, Minnie. Sidney Lanier's Youth. Independent, XLVI. 789, June 21, 1894.
- Spann, Minnie. Sidney Lanier's Manhood. Independent, XLVI: 821, June 23, 1894.
- Ward, W. H. Sidney Lanier as a Poet. Century: 5:816.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## III. Mysticism

- Bailey, Margaret Lewis. A Study of German Mysticism in Seventeenth Century England. Milton and Jakob Boehme, Oxford University Press, New York, 1914.
- Butterworth, Adeline M. William Blake, Mystic. Liverpool Booksellers Company, L.T.D. Liverpool, 1911.
- Burr, Anna Robeson. Ch. VIII, pp. 329-394. Mysticism and its Interpretation, in "Religious Confessions and Confessants". Houghton, Mifflin Company, New York, 1914.
- Carpenter, W. Boyd. The Religious Spirit in the Poets. Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, New York, 1901.
- Cambridge History of English Literature. Ch. XII. Vol. IX. Law and the Mystics.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica. Mysticism.
- Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Edited by Jas. Hastings. Vol. IX. Mysticism, pp. 83-84-89-90-101-103.
- Harnack, Adolph. Mysticism, pp. 85-117 in History of Dogma, Vol. VI. Williams and Norgate, London, 1899.
- Herrmann, Willibald. Ch. 1, 2, Mysticism, pp. 3-40. The Communion of the Christian with God. Williams and Norgate, Oxford, 1895.
- Lilly, W. S. Mysticism, pp. 631-639 in Religious Systems of the World. Swan, Sonnenschein and Company, London, 1899.
- Meynell, Everard. Life of Francis Thompson. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1913.
- Neenan, Mary Pius. Some Evidences of Mysticism in English Poetry of the Nineteenth Century. Catholic University of America. Washington, D.C., 1916.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Nicholson, D. H. S. and Lee, A. H. E. The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse; Poems of Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, Traherne, Blake, Wordsworth, Russell, Patmore. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1917.
- Raleigh, Walter. Introduction to Sampson's Edition of Blake's Lyrical Poems. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1905.
- Shairp, J. C. Chapters VI-VIII, pp. 77-86. The Mystical Side of Nature, in On Poetic Interpretation of Nature. Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1877.
- Sharp, M. A. Mysticism. Chapters I-V. Sands and Company, London, 1910.
- Santayana, George. Interpretations of Poetry and Religion. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900, New York.
- Spurgeon, Caroline F. Mysticism in English Literature. A. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1913.
- Thompson, Francis. Complete Poems. Boni and Liveright, New York, 1913.
- Underhill, Evelyn. Mysticism. E. P. Dutton and Company, New York, 1916.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## IV. Magazine Articles

(From Poole's Index and Reader's Guide, 1882 to May, 1923)

## 1882 - 1886

Browne, F. F. Sidney Lanier, Dial, (Ch.) 5:244, Jan. '85.

Chamberlain, D. H. Poems of New Eng. 44:227.

Hayne, P. H. Critic, 8:77, 89.

Seemple, P. B. Southern Bivouac, 5: 661.

Some Memories of Lanier. Southern Bivouac, 5: 760.

Stedman, E. C. Critic, 1: 298.

Ward, W. H. As a Poet. Century, 5: 816.

Walker, George W. A Political Genius. Quarterly Review M. E. Church-South, 7: 193-206, April 1885.

## 1887-1891

Burton, R. E. Memorial of Lanier. Critic, 12: <sup>63 and</sup> 224.  
Literary World, 19: 56. Boston.

Gates, M. E. Presbyterian Reformed Review, 8: 669.  
Spectator, 65: 828.

Gilman, David C. A Memorial of Sidney Lanier.  
Baltimore, 1888. Georgia Historical Society,  
Savannah, Georgia.

Hayne, W. H. Tribute to Lanier, a poem. American,  
21: 356.

Higginson, Thomas W. Chautauquan, 7: 416.

Scott, W. J. The Life and Genius of Sidney Lanier.  
Quarterly Review M.E. Church-South. New  
Series, 157-171, October, '88.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Semple, Patty B. Sidney Lanier. Southern Biyouac,  
11: 661-67, April '87.

Turnbull, Mrs. Lawrence. The Catholic Man, A  
Study. Boston, 1890.

## 1892 - 1896

Allen, A. Sidney Lanier. Mid-Continent, 6: 81.

Basherville, W. M. Poems, edited by Calloway.  
Dial, 18: 299.

Kent, Chas. W. A Study of Lanier's Poems.  
Publications of Modern Language Association,  
VII. No. 2. 33-63, 1892.

Lanier, Clifford. Sidney Lanier. Chautauquan,  
21: 403.

Sladen, Douglas. An American Rossetti. Library  
World, XLVIII, 378-9, November, 1893.

Spann, Minnie. Sidney Lanier's Youth. Independent,  
XLVI, 789, June 21, 1894.

Spann, Minnie. Sidney Lanier's Manhood. Independent,  
XLVI. 821-2, June 28, '94.

## 1897 - 1901

Blanc, Mime. Sidney Lanier. Littell's Living Age,  
217: 411-517.

Burton, R. E. Essays, Book Buyer, 18: 144.

Goodwin, A. D. A Singer of Sunrise. Poet-Lore,  
9:407.

Kaufman, M. S. Poet Laureate of the South.  
Methodist Review, LXXXII, Fifth Series,  
XVI. 94-107, January '00.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- King, F. A. Sewanee Review, 3: 216.
- Lanier, H. W. Correspondence of Lanier and Bayard Taylor. Atlantic, 83: 791; 84: 127.
- Le Gallienne, R. Academy. 58: 147.  
 Same Article. Living Age, 224: 840-843, March 31, '00.  
 " " Eclectic Magazine, 134: 631.
- Poet's Musical Impressions, from his Letters. H.W.L. Scribner's Magazine, 25: 622-745.
- Snoddy, J. S. Color and Motion in Sidney Lanier's Poetry. Poet-Lore, 12: 558.
- Swayne, E. Poet and Musician. Music, 16: 125.
- Swigget, G. L. Conservative Review. 5: 187.
- Wolf, W. P. As revealed in his letters. Sewanee Review, 8: 346.

1900 - 1904

Lanier, Sidney:

- Ballad of trees and the master, Poem, Book Buyer, 21: 281, November '00.  
Evening Song, Poem, Current Literature, 30: 352, March '01.
- Letters. Review. Dial, 28: 55, January 16, '00.
- Music of Shakespeare's Time. Lippincott's, 69: 106-14, 235-49. January-February, '02.
- Origin of the English Theatre. Current Literature, 34: 181-6, February '03.
- Shakespeare and his forerunners, Review. Atlantic, 91: 266-7, February; Outlook, 74: 475-7, January '20; Atlantic, 1903: 1: 649-50, May 23.
- Song of Love, Poem. Current Literature, 31: 225, August, '01.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Song of the Chattahoochee, poem. Current Literature, 30: 480, April '01.
- Mable, H. W. Estimate. por. Outlook, 71: 235-9, May 24, '02.
- Portrait. Independent. 52:2796, November 22, '00.
- Shepherd, H. E. Character of his work. Current Literature, 32: 108-10, January '02.
- Tolman, A. H. Dial. 35: 168-9, September 16. Nation, 76: 401, May 14, '03.
- Wolf, W. P. Sidney Lanier as Revealed in his Letters. Sewanee Review, VIII, 346-64, July 1900.
- 1905 - 1909
- Burton, R. E. Life and Literary Genius of Lanier. Literary Leaders of America, 216-309.
- Book of a Hero. Outlook, 81: 650.
- Brown, W. A. To Memory of Sidney Lanier. Independent, 63: 1101, November 7, '07.
- Clarke, G. H. Early Letters and Reminiscences. Independent, 61: 1092-8, November 8, '06.
- Few, W. P. As a Student of English Literature. Southern Atlantic Quarterly, 2: 157.
- Fiske, I. H. Sidney Lanier, Poem. Current Literature, 43: 572, November '07.
- Gilder, Jeannette L. Critic, 48: 355.
- Gilman, D. C. Southern Atlantic Quarterly, 4: 115.
- Henneman, J. B. Mim's Biography of Lanier. Sewanee Review, 14: 352.  
In a Poet's workshop. Century 76: 847-50  
October '08.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Jenkins, J. W. Sidney Lanier, poem. Outlook, 82: 887, April 21, '06.
- Lanier, Clifford. To Sidney Lanier, poem. Independent, 67: 1073, November 11, '09.
- Lanier, Sidney.  
Corn. Poem. Journal of Education, 66: 375, October 10, '07.
- Lanier and Music. Reader, 8: 218, July '06.
- Lanier. Poem Outlines. Current Literature, 45: 572, November '08.  
Review. Poet-Lore, 19: 482-7, November '08.
- Mabie, H. W. Outlook, 71: 236.
- Northrup, M. H. Recollections and Letters. Lippincott's 75: 302-15, March '05.
- Payne, L. W., Jr. Lectures on Shakespeare. Sewanee Review, 11: 452.
- Place of Lanier in American Poetry. Current Literature, 40: 36-8, January '06.
- Simonds, W. E. Dial. 40: 120.
- Swiggett, G. L. Conservative Review, 5: 187.
- Tolman, A. H. Lanier's Science of English Verse. Views about Hamlet. 107-13.
- White, E. L. Nation, 82:60.
- Wolf, W. P. Poetry of Lanier. Sewanee Review, 10: 325.

1910 - 1914

- Brooke, C. F. The Deceptive Illustrations in Shakespeare and his forerunners. Dial, 51: 245-6, October 1, '11.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cady, F. W. Writings of Sidney Lanier. Southern Atlantic Quarterly, 13: 156-73, April '14.
- Lanier, Sidney. Texas Trail in the 70's. Outlook, 105: 582-5, November 15, '13.
- Macy, John A. Spirit of American Literature. pp. 309-323.
- Mims, Life of Sidney Lanier. Review. Independent, 60: 109-10, January '11.
- Pickett, L. C. Sunrise Poet. Lippincott's 88:851-8, December '11.
- Stedman, E. C. Eulogy, Genius and other Essays, pp. 250-3.

## 1915 - 1918

- Harman, H. E. Study of Sidney Lanier's "The Symphony". Southern Atlantic Quarterly, 17: 32-39, January '18; 14: 301-306, October, '15.

## 1919 - 1921

- Bradford, A. Portrait of Sidney Lanier. North American Review, 211: 805-17, June, '20.
- Foerster, N. Lanier as a poet of Nature. Nation, 108: 981-983, June 21, '19.
- Silliard, P. A. Sidney Lanier and his poetry. American Catholic Quarterly, 44:33-39, January '19.

## 1922

- Peattie, E. W. Lanier in the Valley, poem. Scribner's Magazine, 72: 625, November '22.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1923

Nothing to May.

## Secondary Sources Not Otherwise Listed

Carroll, Chas. C. The Synthesis and Analysis of the Poetry of Sidney Lanier. Published by the Author. Owensboro, Kentucky, 1910.

Link, S. A. Pioneers of Southern Literature.

Pickett, LaSalle Corbell. Literary Hearthstones of Dixie. Philadelphia, 1912.

Rutherford, Mildred. The South in History and Literature.

Wayland, J. W. Sidney Lanier at Rockingham Springs. Where and how the Science of English Verse was Written. A New Chapter in American Literature. Dayton, Virginia, 1912.

## INDEX OF AUTHORS AND TITLES

	Pages
Abernethy, Julian W.....	6, 7
Acknowledgement.....	37, 41
American Literature.....	7
Ballad of Trees and the Master.....	37
Browning, Robert.....	36
Burr, Anna Robeson.....	26, 27
Cawein, Madison.....	50
Centennial Cantata, The.....	42
Century, The.....	51
Christianity vs. Mysticism.....	26
Clover.....	32, 34, 43, 48
Corn.....	33, 49, 50
Crashaw, Richard.....	25
Crystal, The.....	39
Dante, Alighieri.....	39
Death in the Desert, A.....	37
Donne, John.....	25
Edwards, Jonathan.....	11
Emerson, R. W.....	39
English Novel, The.....	15, 16, 17, 33

## INDEX

	Pages
Florida: Scenery, Climate, History.....	18
Florida Sunday, A.....	31, 38
Froissart, Boy's.....	14
Golden Wedding, The.....	45
Harris, Mrs. L. H.....	8
Hayne, Paul Hamilton.....	9
Herbert, George.....	25
Herrmann, Willibald.....	26
Holy Grail, The.....	31
Individuality.....	42
In Absence.....	31, 45
Interpretations of Poetry and Religion.....	47
Jenkins, J. W. Poem.....	45
Kingdom of God, The.....	26
Letters of Lanier.....	18, 22
Life and Song.....	40
Literature of the South.....	12, 38
Living Age.....	56
Marshes of Glynn, The.....	38, 43, 48, 49
Nanhood of Sidney Lanier.....	41
Milton, John.....	39

## INDEX

	Pages
Mims, Edwin. Life of Sidney Lanier.....	6, 9, 10, 11 12, 19, 22, 34, 36, 41
Mocking Bird, The.....	50
Moses, Montrose J.....	12, 38
Music and Poetry.....	15, <sup>16</sup> 18, 46
My Life is Like a Summer Rose.....	6
My Springs.....	30
Mysticism.....	25, 26, 47
Nadal, B. S.....	8
Neenan, Mary Pius.....	26, 47
Notebook of Sidney Lanier.....	19, 31, 51
On the Poetic Interpretation of Nature.....	52
Opposition.....	42
Poe, Edgar Allan.....	7
Psalm of the West.....	30, 32, 42, 46, 48
Religious Confessions and Confessants.....	26
Religious Poets.....	25
Remonstrance.....	28
Santayana, George.....	47
Scherer, James.....	31
Shakespeare, William.....	39
Shakespeare and his Forerunners.....	15, 20, 21, 23 24, 33
Shairp, J. C.....	47
Sharpe, M. A.....	26

## INDEX

	Pages
Socrates.....	39
Song of the Chattahoochee, The.....	34
Southern Literature.....	7, 12
Southern Writers.....	8, 9
Spann, Minnie.....	41
Stirrup Cup, The.....	44
Strange Jokes.....	44
Sunrise.....	42, 49, 50
Symphony, The.....	30, 31, 35, 36, 38
Tabb, Father.....	9
Thompson, Francis.....	26
Tiger Lilies.....	19, 23, 24
Timrod, Henry.....	9
Turnbull, Mrs. Lawrence.....	40
Underhill, Evelyn.....	25
Under the Cedarcroft Chestnut.....	50
Vaughan, Henry.....	25
Ward's Memorial.....	19, 22, 41, 46
Wedding Hymn.....	30
Wilde, Richard Henry.....	6