

Late 19th century
Beginning of the 20th century



Alfred, Lord Tennyson
In Memoriam (1850)
Idylls of the Kings (1859)
“The Lotos-Eaters”
“Ulysses”

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“In Memoriam A. H. H.”

from stanzas 54-56

O, yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroyed,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete (...)

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems
So careless of the single life (...)

“So careful of the type?” but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, “A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

“Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.” And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

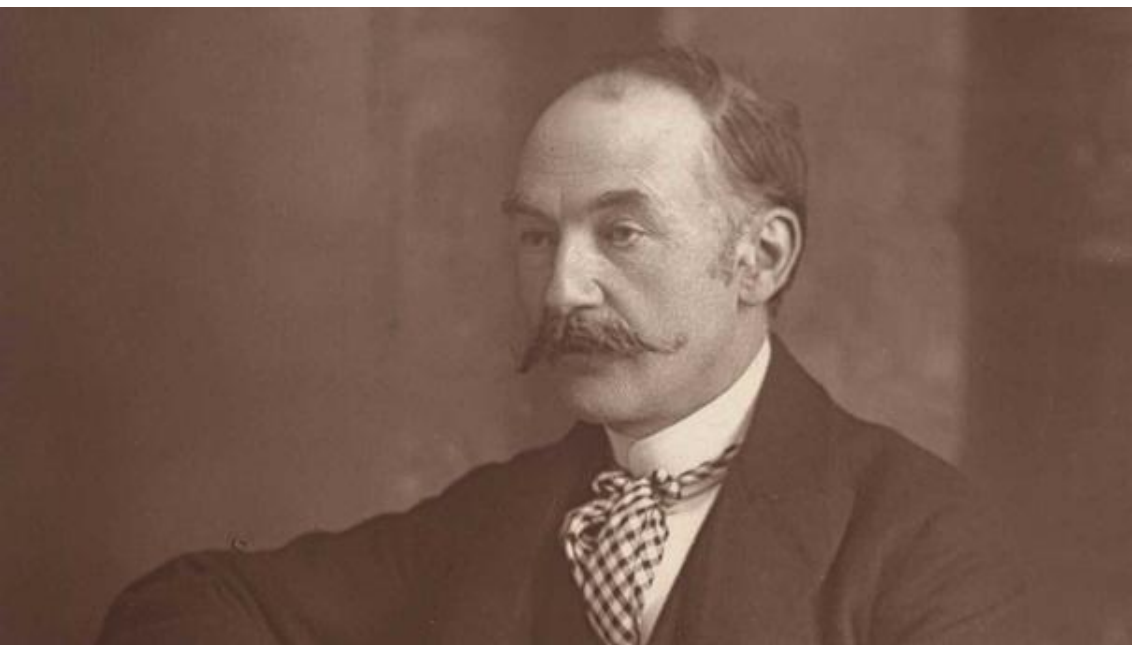
Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.



Thomas Hardy

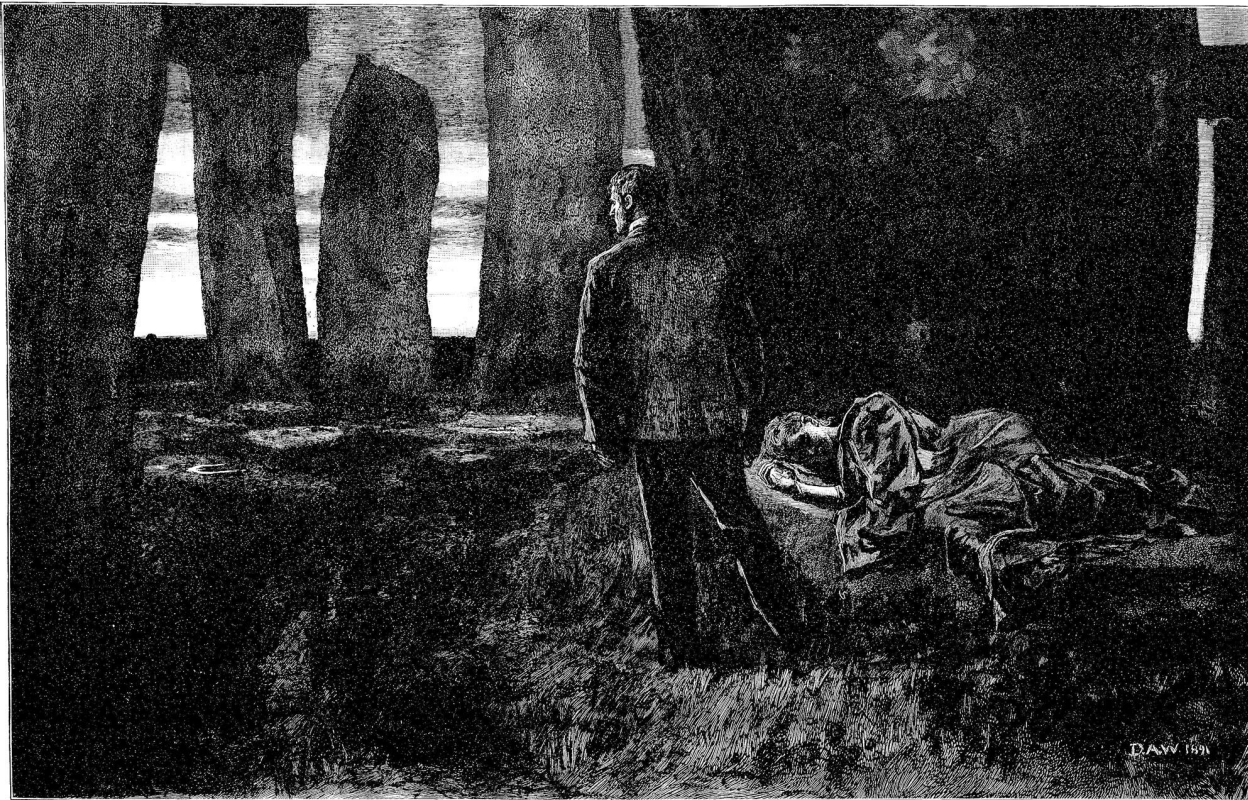
*Far from the Madding
Crowd* (1874)

Tess of the d'Urbervilles
(1891)

Jude the Obscure (1896)

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

characters:
Tess Durbeyfield
Alec d'Urberville
Angel Clare



"Something seemed to move on the verge of the dip eastward—a mere dot. It was the head of a man approaching them from the hollow beyond the Sun-stone. Clare wished they had gone onward, but in the circumstances decided to remain quiet. The figure came straight towards the circle of pillars in which they were."

ILLUSTRATING MR. THOMAS HARDY'S STORY, "TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES"

illustration for the first edition

image: bl.uk

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

Tess confesses to Angel that she was seduced by Alec d'Urberville

“In the name of our love, forgive me!” she whispered with a dry mouth. “I have forgiven you for the same!”

And, as he did not answer, she said again—

“Forgive me as you are forgiven! I forgive you, Angel.”

“You—yes, you do.”

“But you do not forgive me?”

“O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case! You were one person; now you are another. My God—how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque—prestidigitation as that!”

(...)

“I thought, Angel, that you loved me—me, my very self! If it is I you do love, O how can it be that you look and speak so? It frightens me! Having begun to love you, I love you for ever—in all changes, in all disgraces, because you are yourself. I ask no more. Then how can you, O my own husband, stop loving me?”

“I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you.”

“But who?”

“Another woman in your shape.”

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

ending: Tess is arrested at Stonehenge

“Let her finish her sleep!” he [Angel] implored in a whisper of the men as they gathered round.

When they saw where she lay, which they had not done till then, they showed no objection, and stood watching her, as still as the pillars around. He went to the stone and bent over her, holding one poor little hand; her breathing now was quick and small, like that of a lesser creature than a woman. All waited in the growing light, their faces and hands as if they were silvered, the remainder of their figures dark, the stones glistening green-gray, the Plain still a mass of shade. Soon the light was strong, and a ray shone upon her unconscious form, peering under her eyelids and waking her.

“What is it, Angel?” she said, starting up. “Have they come for me?”

“Yes, dearest,” he said. “They have come.”

“It is as it should be,” she murmured. “Angel, I am almost glad—yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!”

She stood up, shook herself, and went forward, neither of the men having moved.

“I am ready,” she said quietly.

Neutral Tones

We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
– They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles of years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro
On which lost the more by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the deadeast thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing....

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.



E. M. Forster

A Room with a View (1907)

Howards End (1910)

A Passage to India (1924)

Maurice (1971)

A Passage to India

ending

Then [Aziz] shouted: “India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sorts! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India! Hurrah! Hurrah!”

India a nation! What an apotheosis! (...) Fielding mocked again. And Aziz in an awful rage danced this way and that, not knowing what to do, and cried: “Down with the English anyhow. That’s certain. Clear out, you fellows, double quick, I say. We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don’t make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it’s fifty or five hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then”—he rode against him furiously—“and then,” he concluded,

half kissing him, “you and I shall be friends.”

“Why can’t we be friends now?” said the other, holding him affectionately. “It’s what I want. It’s what you want.”

But the horses didn’t want it—they swerved apart; the earth didn’t want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single-file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn’t want it, they said in their hundred voices, “No, not yet,” and the sky said, “No, not there.”

A Passage to India

Adela and Aziz at Marabar Caves

But as she toiled over a rock that resembled an inverted saucer she thought, “What about love?” The rock was nicked by a double row of footholds, and somehow the question was suggested by them. (...) She and Ronny—no, they didn’t love each other.

“Do I take you too fast?” inquired Aziz, for she had paused, a doubtful expression on her face. The discovery had come so suddenly that she felt like a mountaineer whose rope has broken. Not to love the man one’s going to marry! Not to find it out till this moment! Not even to have asked oneself the question until now! Something else to think out. Vexed rather than appalled, she stood still, her eyes on the sparkling rock.

There was esteem and animal contact at dusk, but the emotion that linked them was absent. Ought she to break her engagement off? She was inclined to think not—it would cause so much trouble to others; besides, she wasn't convinced that love is necessary to a successful union. If love is everything, few marriages would survive the honeymoon. “No, I'm all right, thanks,” she said, and, her emotions well under control, resumed the climb, though she felt a bit dashed.

“Are you married, Dr Aziz?” she asked, stopping again, and frowning.

“Yes, indeed, do come and see my wife”—for he felt it more artistic to have his wife alive for the moment. (...)

“And have you children?”

“Yes, indeed, three,” he replied in firmer tones.

“Are they a great pleasure to you?”

“Why, naturally, I adore them,” he laughed.

(...) [Adela thinks:] Probably this man had several wives—Mohammedans always insist on their full four, according to Mrs Turton. And, having no one else to speak to on that eternal rock, she gave rein to the subject of marriage and said in her honest, decent, inquisitive way: “Have you one wife or more than one?”

The question shocked the young man very much. It challenged a new conviction of his community, and new convictions are more sensitive than old. If she had said, “Do you worship one god or several?” he would not have objected. But to ask an educated Indian Moslem how many wives he has—appalling, hideous! He was in trouble how to conceal his confusion. “One, one in my own particular case,” he sputtered, and let go of her hand.

Quite a number of caves were at the top of the track, and thinking “Damn the English even at their best” he plunged into one of them to recover his balance. She followed at her leisure, quite unconscious that she had said the wrong thing, and not seeing him she also went into a cave, thinking with half her mind “Sightseeing bores me” and wondering with the other half about marriage.



Joseph Conrad

The Nigger of Narcissus
(1897)

Heart of Darkness (1899)

Lord Jim (1900)

Nostromo (1904)

from *Heart of Darkness*

Marlow thinks about the impossibility of conveying truth by words

(...) that Kurtz whom at the time I did not see—you understand. He was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream—making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams....

He was silent for a while.

... No, it is impossible; it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence—that which makes its truth, its meaning—its subtle and penetrating essence. It is impossible. We live, as we dream—alone....

from *Heart of Darkness*

Marlow first sees the effects of white exploitation of native people

My purpose was to stroll into the shade for a moment; but no sooner within than it seemed to me I had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno. The rapids were near, and an uninterrupted, uniform, headlong, rushing noise filled the mournful stillness of the grove, where not a breath stirred, not a leaf moved, with a mysterious sound -- as though the tearing pace of the launched earth had suddenly become audible.

Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair.

Another mine on the cliff went off, followed by a slight shudder of the soil under my feet. The work was going on. The work! And this was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die.

They were dying slowly -- it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now -- nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund shapes were free as air -- and nearly as thin. I began to distinguish the gleam of the eyes under the trees. Then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand.

The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died out slowly. The man seemed young -- almost a boy -- but you know with them it's hard to tell.