CHAPTER XXXIV

THE POETRY OF LORD DE TABLEY

OUR last lecture* was about a poet difficult of appreciation by the common reader, and our present lecture will treat of another poet of the rare class—very different indeed from Bridges, but in some respect more exquisite; indeed, he is one of the most exquisite poets even of a period which included Tennyson and Rossetti. Perhaps some of you have not even heard of his name; I confess that he is not widely known, except to men of letters. But that is because he is too exquisite for the general reader. As for his real position in poetry, it will be enough to observe that Tennyson, who was very economical about his admiration, greatly admired this man; and in some respects De Tabley's work is really equal to some of Tennyson's work. Perhaps you will think that we are taking up rather difficult poets. This is true; but it seems to me important that the highest poetry, no matter how little generally known, should be somewhat more than known to university students. A word about the poet himself, who commonly wrote during his lifetime under the name of Lancaster. His real name was John Byrne Leicester Warren, Lord De Tabley; and he was the last of an illustrious and aristocratic race. He was born in 1835 and died in 1895—not quite six years ago. He was an Oxford man, and a distinguished scholar, not only in one but in a multitude of directions. He was also distinguished as a numismatist, as a book-collector, as a student of classical antiquities, and as a botanist. But he was one of the shyest men who ever lived, sometimes disappearing altogether for many years at a time. In later life it was said of

* *On Poets,* Chapter XXXIII "Robert Bridges."

him that he had only two friends, and that he had not seen one of them for five years nor the other for six years. This was perhaps partly due to a remarkably sensitive organization; but I have an idea that the sensitiveness must have been greatly aggravated by life at English public schools. A sensitive boy is certain to be made extremely unhappy at an English public school, and the unhappiness may often be of a kind that poisons life. The misfortunes of Shelley and other distinguished men have no doubt been partly due to the treatment they received in public schools. There are exceptions, of course, as in the case of a sensitive boy who happens to be uncommonly strong and uncommonly aggressive. Some day, when it is sensibly recognized that a boy having a delicate and artistic temperament ought not to be subjected to the brutality of English public schools, fewer lives will be spoiled.

Lord De Tabley's peculiar character, however, must have been in part hereditary; his delicacy was the rare delicacy we find in members of old princely families that are becoming extinct. No better illustration of his capacity for affection need be mentioned than the fact that when a college friend of his was accidentally killed, many years passed before he recovered from the grief of this misfortune; and even late in life, he could not bear to hear the name of his dead friend mentioned, for it caused him too much pain. To such a nature, the least unkind word or look, the least vulgarity or egotism of manner, necessarily gave great pain. He could not mingle with men without hurt; and therefore he eventually resigned himself to doing without them, locking himself up with his books, his statues, his rare coins, and his botanical specimens. He was the friend of nearly all the great poets and thinkers of the time; but he saw them only at long intervals.

Of course a man who thus shut out the nineteenth century could not very well reflect it in his work. Lord De Tabley, although one of the latest and most exquisite poets of the century, did not belong to it in feeling. He seems to

have inherited an intense love for the artistic principles of the classic age. He did not indeed care for classical form, as the school of Pope understood it; he did not write much in the heroic couplet. On the contrary he liked better, infinitely better, the Elizabethan form and the later romantic form; and the poet who of all poets most influenced him, even while shocking him, was Swinburne. What I mean by his affinity to eighteenth century poetry is the importance which he attaches to the form of the rhymes, to the melody of the verse, quite irrespective of subject and feeling. The modern high art in poetry makes the form the secondary, not the primary, consideration. In the eighteenth century the rule was exactly the opposite; and Lord De Tabley observed that rule. Since he was in all his heart and soul a true poet, the result was beautiful; for we find the thought as exquisite as the verse in the best of his work. You must not expect, however, much original thought from Lord De Tabley; he was not a great thinker. His originality lies in the musical colour of his verse, and in a certain delightful tenderness and vividness in his expression of emotion or of feeling for Nature. Where he sometimes equalled Tennyson was in the description of natural scenery and animal life.

I must also tell you that not all of De Tabley's poetry is excellent. A great deal of what he wrote in early life, both dramatic and narrative, is worth nothing at all. He acknowledged the fact himself. For many years after, he actually gave up all hope of being a poet, and returned to the art only in the evening of his career. But the little volume published only two or three years before his death, under the simple title of "Poems," represents the essence of all that was best in him. It is a wonderful work. I believe that his failure as a poet in early life was principally due to his natural timidity—his instinctive fear of saying something that might seem unconventional, incorrect, not according to the canons. This timidity does not appear at all in his little collection of lyrical verse.

De Tabley must be studied quite as closely as Tennyson,

perhaps even more so; for he has not always Tennyson's clearness. To quote much from him is difficult, and I do not wish to quote more than will be necessary to interest you. But I think that you will understand his value better through a close study of a dozen selections from his best pieces. We may begin with an exquisite composition of which the subject is a morning visit to the grave of some beautiful woman, loved and lost. It is entitled "A Woodland Grave."

> Bring no jarring lute this way
> To demean her sepulchre,
> Toys of love and idle day
> Vanish as we think of her.
> We, who read her epitaph,
> Find the world not worth a laugh.
>
> Light, our light, what dusty night
> Numbs the golden drowsy head?
> Lo! empathed in pearls of light,
> Morn resurgent from the dead:
> From whose amber shoulders flow
> Shroud and sheet of cloudy woe.
>
> Woods are dreaming, and she dreams:
> Through the foliaged roof above
> Down immeasurably streams
> Splendour like an angel's love.
> Till the tomb and gleaming urn
> In a midst of glory burn.

No ordinary poet could write such magnificent verse as this; in such stanzas Lord De Tabley becomes for a moment the equal of Tennyson. Only for a moment. The other stanzas of the poem are indeed scarcely less splendid in workmanship; but they are much less satisfactory in thought and sentiment. Let us look back at the three stanzas just read.

The first, declaring that no music should be played at the woodland grave, because her loss has taught the mourner the emptiness of all life and all art, needs no explanation.

The second, with its beautiful but quite legitimate obscurity, is so contrived as to give you, after careful reading, the exact sensation which the morning hour of the visit to the grave makes within the speaker's mind.

Already you may have noticed the love of this poet for curious and beautiful words, such as "empathed;" also for sonorous Latin words, which are used only when they can give a fine effect, like the word "resurgent." This is an exquisite word here, when we remember that the Latin "resurgo" (I rise) and the Latin "resurgam" (I shall rise again) are commonly used in inscriptions upon tombs, so that the corresponding English "resurgent" here takes a singular *mortuary* value. But the art of Lord De Tabley's verse is, I think, best shown in a splendid ode to the Heavenly Venus with which the final collection of his poems opens.

This ode certainly shows the influence of Swinburne. We know that it never could have been written by him if Swinburne's "Dolores" had not been written first. Lord De Tabley was one of those timid poets who worked best with a model before him; and in spite of the influence of the model he is never a plagiarist. On the contrary he always manages to make his subject appeal to us in a perfectly original way. No English verse was ever written superior in melody and sensuous charm to the wonderful poem of Swinburne just mentioned. Lord De Tabley was too wise to attempt the same kind of measure. He never imitates other men's form. What he has really done, however, is to magnify the subject chosen by Swinburne, and to treat it in an equally powerful, but very different, way. The Venus of Swinburne's "Dolores" is Venus the Prostitute; the Venus of Lord De Tabley is Venus Astarte, the Venus of Lucretius, the all-pervading creating power of the universe, of the universe as comprehended by the modern mind. This subject, I need scarcely tell you, is very grand as well as very terrible; but Lord De Tabley had the greatest Roman poets and philosophers to suggest to him how it should

be treated. I am sure that you will admire some of these stanzas from the "Hymn to Astarte."

Regent of Love and Pain,
  Before whose ageless eyes
The nations pass as rain,
  And thou abidest, wise,
    As dewdrops in a cup
    To drink thy children up.

Parent of Change and Death,
  We know thee and are sad,—
The scent of thy pale wreath,
  Thy lip-touch and the glad
    Sweep of thy glistening hair:
    We know thee, bitter-fair.

Empress of earth, and queen
  Of cloud: Time's early born
Daughter, enthroned between
  Gray Sleep and emerald Morn;
    Ruler of us who fade:
    God, of the gods obeyed!

Divine, whose eye-glance sweet
  Is earth and heaven's desire:
Beneath whose pearly feet
  The skies irradiate fire,
    And the cold cloud-way glows
    As some rain-burnished rose.

Heaven, dumb before thy face
  With fear and deep delight,
Tingles thro' all its space:
  The abysmal shuddering night,
    Breaks, as in golden tears,
    Into a thousand spheres.

You must understand the classical and philosophic fancy, however, to understand more than splendid form and sound. It is the Creating Power that is thus addressed, the Love

that is older than all gods, that made the heavens and the worlds before making the gods themselves and making the hearts of men. And this power acts equally in the attraction of sun by sun and in the attraction of the heart of man by the beauty of woman. Only the philosopher, the deep thinker, can perceive the infinite character of this power, can identify it with all that men have justly named Divine; but all men feel in some sort the influence of it upon their lives, in the pleasures and in the pains of affection. However, few think to themselves that the force which they call love is really the same thing that fills the great night of space with the millions of the stars. Now love and death are really very closely related, just as the Greeks supposed them to be and as the mythology of India also represented them. In fact, they are but two different modes of the same infinite force. That which creates is also that which destroys; therefore in the Indian myth the most formidable personification of divinity is represented with the symbol of life in one hand, and a skull, the symbol of death, in the other. Life is possible only because of death—death is like the rhythm of life; we decay because we grow, and we die only because we are born. Just why these things should be we do not know, probably never shall know; but we can perceive the law. It is this mysterious law, at once beautiful and terrible, tender and cruel, which the poet is really representing. So the greatest of Roman poets and thinkers, Lucretius, represented it nearly two thousand years ago. The subject is the most imposing that a poet could touch. Lord De Tabley was not perhaps enough of a thinker to express with sublimity the profounder phases of the mystery as a greater philosopher might have expressed them. But he had before him the thoughts of greater men; and the splendour of his verse makes up for the philosophical weakness he might be accused of.

When you look into the sky on a beautiful clear night, without a moon, you see a long white trail reaching over the heavens like a ghostly bridge; you know that all ancient

religions taught poetical legends about this apparition. In some mythologies it is a Celestial River; in others it is a Road of Souls, the pathway of the dead. The Egyptians represented it, however, in the most weird of all forms, as the white body of a woman bending across the sky, her feet touching one horizon and her hands the other, the highest part of the arch figuring her flanks and breast. This was Neit, mother of the gods and of all worlds. Very curious are the pictures of Neit painted by the old Egyptian artists. The Greeks had a less sublime but more tender fancy about the white track; they said that it was formed by milk that had dropped from the breasts of the mother of the gods, and they were the first to call it the Milky Way, a term which in the Latin translation we still use—*Via Lactea.* Now the Egyptian and the Greek and many other myths were in the later times of the Roman Empire fused together, in explaining the attributes of deity. Eastern teachers had shown the Romans how to make their divinities infinite in conception; and Astarte, as the Romans came to know her, became a blending of thousands of divinities and divine attributes. Lord De Tabley takes this later conception of Astarte, containing both Greek and Egyptian elements, for his theme; and it has enabled him to create the following wonderful stanzas:

Rise, pressing Love to rest
  Against thy shoulder pearled:
Each dewdrop of thy breast
  Becomes a starry world,
    And the vast breathless skies
    Are strown with galaxies.

Nurse of eternity,
  Thy bosom feeds the sun.
From thy maternity
  All breasts in nature run.
    Astarte, to thy ray,
    Sick of all gods, we pray.

The sublime imagery here is a magnification both of the

ancient Egyptian fancy and of the Greek dream of Cybele, the All-nourishing Mother, making all fruitful. I suppose you will see that the magnification is chiefly due to the introduction of modern astronomical ideas. To us the heavens have become incomparably vaster than they were to the ancients; therefore, when we apply to the celestial vision any of the strange or beautiful ancient similes, those similes become immensely magnified and infinitely more imposing. The poet also addresses Astarte as a divinity of destiny, of love-destiny—the fate that makes the union of every one with the chosen woman.

Ah, could a mortal gaze
In thy mysterious eyes;
And, thro' their mirrored maze
And treasured secrecies,
See rising like a star
The soul he wants afar!

This is very beautiful, the wish that one could see within the eyes of God the image of the woman desired, the one soul in all things harmonious with the soul of the seeker, the ideal woman that every man dreams of, but that so few ever find. Here I may quote a few verses from the description of Love's temple, because of their musical and luminous beauty.

I have seen thy silver fane
And trod thy slippery stair,
Red with a crimson rain
And foot-worn with despair.
Pale as dead men, ah, sweet,
We kneel to kiss thy feet.

We have leave one little hour
In thy white house to doze:
Broad passion-flowers embower
The portals amber-rose,
And lotos lilies keep
Guard at thy shrine of sleep.

As drowsy flies which bide
  In some gray spider's snare;
Sleep-locked yet open-eyed,
  Glad yet in half despair,
    Lovers and maidens sit
    In the yellow gates of it.

The suggestion here is of the eternal illusion that urges men to all desperate things, causing death and crime and suicide for the sake of an ideal. Therefore is the shrine described as red with the blood of men. The reference to the passion flowers needs no explanation; but I may remind you that the Greek lotus flowers signify sleep, a sleep like that of opium, in which the eyes see and ears continue to hear and the body is free to move, yet all things seem unreal and far away. In the third of the stanzas quoted the lovers are represented as being helpless like flies in the web of spiders, caught in the great spider-web of their passion. They are at once both glad and sad; everything seems to them very beautiful, more beautiful than it really could be; and the gates of the shrine at which they worship appear to be of purest yellow gold. But all this is only dream, fascination, folly; nothing lasts, beauty withers, youth vanishes, and death ends the passion and the illusion. What then is the meaning of this love power, this irresistible attraction that comes upon men? And what is death?

Ah, girl-mouth, burning dew
  That made the violet faint,
What shall become of you,
  My silver-breasted saint?
    What morning shall arise
    Upon those darkened eyes?

In other words, what is the use of loveliness and love, beauty and worship, charm and youth, since all these pass away like smoke? Will the face that charms, the voice that caresses, ever be seen, ever be heard of again? Religions change or die, the gods themselves die and are for-

gotten, but the tremendous mystery of the universe remains —the mystery of love creating all things, only to give them to death. What does it mean?

> Locked in blind heaven aloof,
> The gods are gray and dead.
> Worn is the old world's woof,
> Weary the sun's bright head.
> The sea is out of tune,
> And sick the silver moon.
>
> The May-fly lives an hour,
> The star a million years;
> But as a summer flower,
> Or as a maiden's fears,
> They pass, and heaven is bare
> As tho' they never were.
>
> God withers his place,
> His patient angels fade:
> Love, on thy sacred face,
> Of tear and sunbeam made,
> In our perplexity
> We turn, and gazing die.

This is only another way, though a sublime and very weird one, of stating the great mystery of life. We do not know where we came from, nor why we exist, nor where we are going to; and we see that perpetual change is the order of the universe. But one thing ever remains the same—the attraction of sex for sex, the desire of the male for the female, the perpetual illusion of love, with all its joys and all its pains. What the creating power may be, the power that shapes, the power that dissolves, we do not know. But it is surely the same power which makes suns burn, that also makes the beauty of woman seem of all things the fairest to the heart of a young man.

I would next call your attention to a fragment of the poem of Circe. Perhaps I had better first say something about Circe hereself, though this has very little to do with

the poem. Circe, in old Greek story, was a beautiful witch, who lived on an island of which she was the supreme ruler. All men who came to that island were hospitably invited to her home, and feasted on their favourite foods. Some of them were even allowed to make love to her, to share her bed. But sooner or later each of them was given a cup of magical wine to drink, and when he had drunk this wine he was changed into a beast. In the story of Circe, as told by Homer, the companions of Ulysses were turned into swine by this means; Ulysses himself, however, was cunning enough not to let himself be bewitched. I suppose you see the moral, the inner meaning which we can take from the myth. The name Circe is still given to that kind of wanton woman who can make men not simply foolish, but wicked and worthless; the love of a bad woman really can change a man into a beast, morally speaking. The story has inspired hundreds of artists, both in ancient and in modern times. Lord De Tabley treats the subject only artistically, not morally; he gives us only a word-picture of the interior of Circe's palace, and the strange things that could be seen there. The descriptive passage which I am going to quote is a very fine example of goldsmith work in language, the very jewellery of verse,

> . . . Reared across a loom,
> Hung a fair web of tapestry half done,
> Crowding with folds and fancies half the room:
> Men eyed as gods and damsels still as stone,
> Pressing their brows alone,
> In amethystine robes,
> Or reaching at the polished orchard globes,
> Or rubbing parted love-lips on their rind,
> While the wind
> Sows with sere apple leaves their breast and hair.
> And all the margin there
> Was arabesqued and bordered intricate
> With hairy spider things
> That catch and clamber,
> And salamander in his dripping cave

Satanic ebon-amber;
Blind worm, and asp, and eft of cumbrous gait,
And toads who love rank grasses near a grave,
And the great goblin moth, who bears
Between his wings the ruined eyes of death;
And the enamelled sails
Of butterflies, who watch the morning's breath.
And many an emerald lizard with quick ears
Asleep in rocky dales.
And for an outer fringe embroidered small,
A ring of many locusts, horny-coated,
A round of chirping tree-frogs merry-throated,
And sly, fat fishes sailing, watching all.

This is a description of the tapestry in the detailed Greek manner, reminding us of the famous classic description of the shield of Achilles. But the charm of the work is in the effectiveness and suggestiveness of the word-choosing. "Polished orchard globes" means of course only apples, but the phrase gives you the exact idea as to what kind of apple is referred to. "Ebon-amber" is the best expression possible to describe the semi-diaphanous dark body of the salamander; and the adjective "Satanic" joined to this, suggests the fantastic ugliness of the strange creature. I do not know whether any of you have seen the death's-head moth, which is very common in England and is a great enemy of bee-hives. Upon the back of this moth you can see very plainly the figure of a human skull; the insect has therefore naturally been associated for hundreds of years with superstitious fancy. The thing about a skull which first especially strikes the observer is the absence of eyes; the aspect of the great hollow cavities has something sinister which startles and sometimes terrifies. By using the phrase "ruined eyes of death" instead of the term skull, a very powerful image is produced. Notice also the delicate use of the word "shells" to describe the wings of the butterfly; it has been used by very old poets, but not to describe such small pinions as those of an insect. Its effectiveness here is

especially in the suggestion of the slow flight peculiar to the butterfly, whose wings move so slowly that you can always see them beating the air, and to the eye they really look like tiny shells, whereas the wings of a dragon-fly or of a bee in motion are not seen at all except as a kind of haze about the creature's back.

Speaking of insects, one of the most remarkable of all poems ever made about insects is Lord De Tabley's "Study of a Spider." This poem I found to be much too elaborate for the general lecture on insect poetry which I gave lately in another class; it would have required too much explanation. But in this class we can very well study its extraordinary and fantastic charm. All the words here are chosen with a view to producing one general effect of horror. The spider suggests a great many things to poets. It suggests beauty, curiosity, and terror, and the poet may take his choice among these characteristics. Lord De Tabley has chosen to take the grimmer aspect, just as Browning chose to take the ghostly one when he wrote in "Mesmerism" the famous lines—

And the spider, to serve his ends,
    By a sudden thread,
    Arms and legs outspread,
On the table's midst descends,
Comes to find, God knows what friends!—

Really the spider is an awful creature in a certain way; and the very ugliest fact about it is the sexual relation of the insect. The female spider is much larger than the male. After the male approaches and fecundates her, she turns upon him and devours him. After I have told you this fact, you will not perhaps think that Lord De Tabley is too severe in his judgment of the spider.

From holy flower to holy flower
Thou weavest thine unhallowed bower.
The harmless dewdrops, beaded thin,
Ripple along thy ropes of sin.

Thy house a grave, a gulf thy throne
Affright the fairies every one.
Thy winding sheets are gray and fell,
Imprisoning with nets of hell
The lovely births that winnow by,
Winged sisters of the rainbow sky:
Elf-darlings, fluffy, bee-bright things,
And owl-white moths with mealy wings,
And tiny flies, as gauzy thin
As e'er were shut electrum in.
These are thy death spoils, insect ghoul,
With their dear life thy fangs are foul.
Thou felon anchorite of pain
Who sittest in a world of slain.
Hermit, who tunest song unsweet
To heaving wing and writhing feet.
A glutton of creation's sighs,
Miser of many miseries.
Toper, whose lonely feasting chair
Sways in inhospitable air.
The board is bare, the bloated host
Drinks to himself toast after toast.
His lip requires no goblet brink
But like a weazel must he drink.
The vintage is as old as time
And bright as sunset, pressed and prime.

Ah, venom mouth and shaggy thighs
And paunch grown sleek with sacrifice,
Thy dolphin back and shoulders round
Coarse-hairy, as some goblin hound
Whom a hag rides to sabbath on,
While shuddering stars in fear grow wan.
Thou palace priest of treachery,
Thou type of selfish lechery,
I break the toils around thy head
And from their gibbets take thy dead.

In the first two lines the words "holy" and "unhallowed" are of course used as synonym and antonym. You may ask why a flower should be spoken of as holy, sacred.

It is because flowers represent in Western symbolism virtues, excellences, and proprieties—things divine and things beautiful. Thus the white lily signifies chastity; the violet, maidenly modesty; the rose, ever so many things which are holy—to mention only the highest circle of heaven, the symbolic name of the Mother of God, and the charm of womanhood. Among these flowers, emblems of all pure and holy things, the spider's nest does indeed represent all the contraries,—hell as compared with heaven, the devil with angels, crime as contrasted with the highest and most beautiful expression of life. Even the frail beauty of the dew, as indicated in the next couplet, ceases to seem beautiful on the strings of the deadly snare of the spider. The reference to the fairies must be understood in relation to the pretty superstitions that good fairies lived in flowers. In the next few couplets there is nothing to explain, but please notice the delicate power and beauty of the adjectives. "Fell," the old word signifying deadly, has a fine quality here as coupled with the word "gray" to describe the web, rightly termed a "winding-sheet," the wrapping of the dead. "Fluffy" gives us the idea of something cottony or flossy, like silk waste; the bodies of many beautiful insects look as if they were covered with a kind of silk or cotton floss. The verb "winnow" here expresses especially the visible motion of the butterfly's wings. Why is the moth compared to an owl, in the line about "owl-white moths"? Because both are night creatures and fly about at the same time. The white owl has a very beautiful plumage, and looks like a mass of snow. So does the white English night moth, which has a remarkably plump body, covered with something like snowy down. Moths and butterflies may both be said to have "mealy wings"; you cannot touch the wing without getting your fingers smirched with something that appears to be like flour but is really composed of beautiful scale-feathers. A little further you read of flies being shut into "electrum"; perhaps you will not be so accustomed to this word as to the word "amber." Of course you know that in amber

there has been preserved for us many kinds of insects, some of which do not now seem to exist. "Ghoul" ought to be familiar to everybody who has read the Arabian stories. The word is of Arab origin; the ghoul is a creature supposed to live in cemeteries, to devour the bodies of the dead, and to entice the living to destruction. Sometimes the ghoul takes the form of a beautiful woman sitting by the road side and inviting the caress of travellers. But whoever approaches her is devoured. Next we have a spider described as a felon or criminal anchorite—that is to say, hermit. The solitary habit of the spider could hardly be better described by any two words. The hermit is supposed to pass part of his time in singing hymns; the spider hermit is silent, but he makes his victims sound harsh music—meaning the buzzing of the captured flies, whose struggles are excellently described by the words "heaving wing and writhing feet." The words "toper" and "bloated" refer commonly to drunkards, the latter word picturing the swollen appearance of the face and body of the habitual drinker. The spider has indeed a bloated look, but it is blood that he drinks, not wine; therefore his drink is spoken of as being old as time and bright as sunset—that is, bright red like the sinking sun. The weasel does not eat the flesh of its victims, but sucks the blood; the spider is especially a sucker, so his drinking is compared to the drinking of the weasel. The last ten lines of the composition include comparisons of the spider to all ugly things, coupled in all monstrous contrasts. Notice the word "shaggy" in the first of those lines; it means much more than hairy—a shaggy surface is one covered not with smooth but with long rough hair. The back is compared to a dolphin's only because it is humped; and round shoulders refer to deformed shoulders. A round-shouldered person is a person who cannot stand straight. "Goblin hound"—that is to say, goblin dog—is a comparsion that will scarcely be familiar to some of you unless you have seen pictures of the witches' Sabbath. In some of the finely illustrated German editions of

"Faust" you will be able to find such pictures. The witches are represented as going to attend the wicked sacrifices at night, riding through the air upon goblin animals, such as goats and dogs. These spectral animals are really evil demons, and the witches are mostly represented as very ugly old women, called "hags." Next we have the term "palace priest of treachery," probably because many of the famous intrigues of history were managed by priests who in virtue of their sacred character were trusted in the palaces of kings. In the last line but one, remember that the word "toils" is often used by old poets to signify the lines of a snare or the meshes of a net.

With this hasty analysis of the description, I believe that you will be able to find some pleasure in studying the lines for yourselves. No poem in the book gives a fuller illustration of Lord De Tabley's skill as a master of fine language. With "The Study of a Spider," we may close this lecture about him. If you can appreciate the few selections which I have made, I think you will like to return at a later time to the study of him.