THE LUSHINGTON FAMILY the beginning of their six-year period of almost unrelenting heartbreak and debilitating anxiety must have seemed, if less than gladdening, at least uneventfully typical. On the first day of 1854, a Sunday, Emily and Venables walked to and from Boxley church "with rather pleasant & friendly talk." Henry was out skating on a nearby pond. Edmund departed for Glasgow on Monday, again without his family. Venables on the eighteenth found Eddy "very pleasant & in excellent spirits" as they traveled together to his school at Shirley. A day or two later, Henry departed for Malta, accompanied as always by his youngest sister, Louy, who was nearing her thirtieth birthday. (Edmund's Glasgow colleague, William Ramsay, would eulogize her as the most "remarkable" combination he had ever known, "of high intellect and varied accomplishments with extreme gentleness of temper and kindness of heart.") Never had Henry been on Malta without her. Maria, usually of their party, would join them again in the spring. Unfortunately Henry and his sister would experience "an uncomfortable journey," being for some reason obliged, as Venables learned, "to post all the way" from Boulogne to Avignon, "a great pity," and would reach Malta in "a very bad state."

Alfred and Emily Tennyson in late November had finally turned their backs upon Twickenham for their new residence, Farringford, on the Isle of Wight,
where, as Emily recorded, she had been delighted immediately with the view from the drawing-room window, and soon with “the snowdrops & primroses in the plantation & by the cooing of the Stock-dove & the song of the Red-wings.” For the remainder of their lives, Farringford would be one of their homes.

Early in April, two days after Eddy returned from school, Edmund came down from Glasgow and took Cecilia back with him for his remaining month at the college, her first time there in five years. Eddy and his sisters remained at Park House. From there in mid-May, Edmund made his first visit to Farringford, where Emily Tennyson some two months earlier had given birth to another son, Lionel. Affectionately, Cecilia wrote her husband: “Thou hast been constantly in my thoughts since thou lewest me, & thy last kiss & parting look of love has filled my soul to overflowing. Get all the good thou canst with those dear creatures.” She was delighted that “Alfred is bringing that poem up again ‘Oh that twere possible.’ I always loved it so much.” (The poem, first published in 1837, was becoming the nucleus for Maud, to be published about a year later.) Baby Lucy was “jollier & better & chattering away on the sofa”; Emmy (soon to be five) “has come into the room and is kissing me so vehemently that I cannot go on . . . blessings on thee & those about thee.”

Disconcerting news from Malta reached Park House in early July. Louy had been unwell (Venables later spoke of “an indisposition”); and her doctors advised her to spend the summer in the Pyrenees. Frank and Ellen departed for the Continent to meet her ship and enjoy the Pyrenees with her. She sailed with a physician, Dr. Collings, and his wife, themselves quite ill during the voyage. A few hours out, as Frank wrote home on 19 July, Louy was “seized with violent diarrhoea,” but the Collingses did not learn until reaching Marseilles “how seriously ill she was.” That city being so “full of cholera,” Collings thought it “absolutely necessary” to press on to Avignon, although Louy was “much pulled down by the voyage.” The doctor was confident that she would soon recover but should change plans and return directly home “by easy journeys.” That same day, after Frank mailed the letter, her condition abruptly worsened, “the pulse became gradually feeble & the dear child sank about ½ past 10 . . . very peacefully & I trust quite painlessly.” An immediate interment was unavoidable, to be in the Protestant cemetery, although if Edmund and Emily wished, the remains could later be shipped home. (They remain at Avignon.) “God bless you all,” Frank ended, with pitying thoughts for their “poor old nurse.”

His next thought was of rushing as immediately as possible to Henry, knowing “what a shock it will be to him.” Frank would bring Ellen back to Paris, where someone would need to meet them to “look after her.” (All knew that
she broke down under strains.) The family sent the faithful Venables. No sequence of days in his forty-five years of journals carries more pathos than the record of his tender brotherly escorting of this near-prostrated woman back to her home. As she was coming with Frank from Avignon, between Lyons and Paris, her strength had given way. At Paris she lay in her hotel room in ninety-degree heat “almost like a skeleton . . . restless & feverish on the sofa,” but “unrestrained in her feeling & very kind in the midst of her suffering.” Next evening, she was “still hopelessly weak,” but the three started by train. There was “much talk sad & yet not without sweetness. Her sorrow softened by illness. Frank grave, calm, indefatigable, in nursing her.” On the boat from Boulogne, with Venables near, “Ellen lay on deck & was not ill, though there was a good deal of sea.” At Folkestone they “got comfortable rooms at the Pavilion,” and that evening “sat on the beach talking sadly but not unprofitably.” He “read to her before she went to bed & then went out again. The charge of such an invalid, with her perfect reliance, strangely consoling.” Henceforth between the two of them would remain a secure bond of sympathy until her death at sixty-four, two years before his own. At Park House, Emily was looking “hopelessly sad—even Edmund pale & depressed.”

From Henry soon came “the most painful letter . . . I have ever read,” written the day he had received the news, six days after the death. Venables had never known “such an expression of misery.” The original is lost, but Venables preserved parts of it in his memoir of Henry: “Perhaps I ought to have thought of it as possible; but I did not; nor could I have been more surprised if I had heard that her ship had gone down in the middle of the sea.” He could not “write much. I lay down my pen every minute. All one’s more serious thoughts run in one direction, and from that I turn them away when I can.” He could not “open the drawers in the room without seeing her handwriting. I can scarcely look round the room without expecting to see her.” Of his own future, “Seeing nothing very promising in the way, either of utility or of happiness, I wish, as far as I can, to find out what is, under all the circumstances, right to be done.” He was “far from sure that the most prudent thing would not be to turn this leaf of my life over decidedly”—leave Malta once and for all—“‘tis gone and let it go. It has brought little, yet not absolutely nothing; and it has cost much—how much more [than] it would have been worth, had it been tenfold what it was!” But, Venables explained, Henry finally decided to “remain at his post, at least during the continuance” of the Crimean War, since Malta was likely to become “the great depot of the army.” It is hardly an exaggeration to say that he himself, a half-dead patriot, would become one more casualty of the dismal war in which he so passionately believed. Venables was convinced, finally, that “although he soon resumed his cheerfulness of manner,” Henry “never entirely recovered the blow” of his sister’s death.
At least four of the Tennyson family sent letters of condolence, each poignantly revealing of its writer’s depths. Alfred had thought Louy “almost, as far as humanity can be,—perfection.” What could “be said in such a case?” what “comfort suggested? The blow must be borne.” Edmund should “kiss dear Cissy [Cecilia] for me & tell her to be of good cheer: the mother of a family must not give way.” Eloquently the poet’s letter touches upon two of his lifelong preoccupations—his friendship with Hallam, and his willed determination to believe in a personal life beyond the grave. He had entertained hopes of visiting Louy, Ellen, and Frank in the Pyrenees, “in the same places where I spent some of the happiest days of my life with Arthur Hallam 25 years ago, but you see, that which rules over us will not have it to be.” His wife, “Poor Emmy,” was “writing & weeping at once. Who must not weep to miss for ever so sweet & gentle a creature? but it is exactly in & through these losses that the human expectation of another life for the individual in a nobler world rises into a passionate assurance that will not be gainsaid.” They would meet Louy “again if we be worthy to meet her. Meantime we must bear.” Now Henry might possibly quit Malta and “return to us which will be some gain in the midst of so vast a loss. I dread to think of the effect upon him & poor Maria, so far off from home.” Ever “affectionately” theirs he was “in sorrow as in joy.”

Through her tears Emily Tennyson began, “She was indeed a good angel and we cannot doubt she is still. There are few I love so well scarcely any I admire so much.” Those that remained “must love each other all the more and her too for is she not with us still and in one way is she not nearer than ever and does she not bring us nearer to God. But indeed I cannot write. I beg of you to let us hear of you and especially tell us about Ellen. This seems all so sad and strange.” A postscript added, “Cissy dearest kiss poor nurse for me.”

Emily Tennyson Jesse had long mourned the sudden death of her first fiancé, Arthur Hallam, and was already inclining toward the mystical spiritism that would preoccupy her later years. “How earnestly & deeply do I sympathize with you all—how fully from fatal experience, independent of other feelings, can I enter into all suffering, and depths of anguish.” Louy had been “excellent and almost beyond compare . . . we cannot mourn, except for the loss of her sweet, and loved society, for her pure spirit has passed those dark gates which have been opened upon all that is illimitable, and glorious, and blessed.” The “dearest mother” of all the Tennysons was “well thank God, her eyes fill with tears a hundred times a day in thinking of you all.”

In a letter of her own, Mother Tennyson, a devout believer in the imminent Second Coming of Christ, combined loving sympathy with zealous exhortation. Louy had “constantly endeavoured to imitate the meekness & gentleness of her Saviour & trusted in his merits alone for acceptance with her heavenly Father. I have no doubt she is happy forever.” Meanwhile the “prize of ever-
lasting life is worth contending for, all pains both bodily & mental to cease for ever & happiness unspeakable. . . . " "Oh dear Edmund," she wrote, "it is probable that you & Cissy & many of our dear relatives & friends will live to see our Blessed Saviour return." The "Clergymen at Richmond" were earnestly pointing out "that the signs of the times" were "very striking." Some prophetic interpreters had "prayed fervently on their knees for ten or eleven years" to be shown "the truth of the Prophecies, and we are told that the prayer of the righteous availeth much." All should be "preparing for that solemn that glorious time, may we be amongst the number of the sons & daughters of our Heavenly Father—& be gathered into our Blessed Saviour's Fold to see his Face & sing his love for ever & ever."

Henry, "pale & thin," arrived at Park House with Maria in early September. Little information survives concerning that visit, fated to be his last, no indication whether he saw Tennyson. Probably he was more or less ill for most of his stay, although it was probably during these months that he wrote, or finished writing, an article for the January *Edinburgh Review*, concerning "The Siege of Rhodes in 1480," now authoritatively identified as his by the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*. Its vivid descriptions of the heroic defense of the island by the greatly outnumbered Knights of St. John against the Turkish attackers would have provided excitement for British readers during those early months of the Siege of Sevastopol. After he suffered a bilious attack at the end of November, his plans to sail for Malta on 12 December were postponed for a week by his physician. Even so, both he and Maria were ill when they departed on the eighteenth, with Frank going along to assist them. Ellen was "wretched," Emily "painfully anxious," and Venables gloomily reflecting, "It may have been the last time, as it was last year with Louy."

Cecilia with infant Lucy had gone up to Glasgow on 20 November to join Edmund, intending at last, after five years, to spend another winter with him. Unhappily, the experiment failed. As Edmund wrote Emily Tennyson on 11 January 1855, "Poor Cissy was made so ill with Glasgow that it was deplorable to see her." It was "very sad that she should be so knocked up after she had come so full of hopes & longing to help me." Nor did it seem to him "at all right not to have seen you & Alfred at Xmas, but I suppose as life goes on it grows harder to be as near to those we love . . . perhaps it is meant to be borne, if only we grow nearer to them in another way—as what has not to be borne?"

At Malta, Henry and Frank had been composing poems celebrating English and French victories in the two famous Crimean battles of 1854, Frank writing about Alma, Henry about Inkerman. Decades later a historian would write that Inkerman "defies description"; Henry in 410 trochaic lines, tensely swift, attempted to recreate the furious action through the voice of a surviving British footsoldier:
Come listen, you newcomers,  
You boys from the depot;  
You broke my tale of Alma  
With many a loud bravo:—  
But could I tell you truly  
What Inkerman was like,  
You’d clench your teeth in silence,  
As men before they strike.

In “the dim dank morning, / O’er soppy ground and still,” came the enemy:  
“Thousands, thousands, thousands / . . . creeping round the hill.”

Stealthy through the brushwood,  
Hidden to the breast,  
Crowds of points and helmets,  
Up the hill they prest:  
Misty columns looming  
Far and near all round,  
Cannon ready planted,  
Sweeping all our ground.

The Russians’ “great grey masses / Closed on our lines of red, / The rush, the roar, the wrestling, / The growing heaps of dead.” The fierce fighting struggled backward and forward, leaving the men no time “for loading— / One crashing musket peal: / The bullet for the foremost, / For the next the steel.” Still relentlessly came the enemy, vastly outnumbering the English:

Little then could aid us  
Bugle or command;  
Most was native manhood,  
And your own right hand.  
Back to back, each fighting  
For himself and all,  
Broken, yet together  
Like a shattered wall,  
In our ranks no bayonet  
Lacked its stain of gore,  
As through ten times our number  
Our bloody path we tore.

Opportunely then arrived reinforcements, the Zouaves: “side by side with Frenchmen / We met again the storm. / O battle-friends—oh brethren /
Across the chalky strait." The tide was turned, the Russians, though still stub­born, were doomed:

Tens of theirs and twenties
Are falling to our one:
Yet they turn and struggle,
Yet will not be gone;
Yet their staggering masses
Scarcely seem to thin,
Though their corpses cumber
Every step we win.

That night, with bitter thoughts, the English bivouacked "round the watch­fires." Next day burying parties searched out and buried their dead, digging "a mighty trench" and laying "them there like brethren / The English and the French." The Russian dead they buried too, and tended their wounded "as our own," although Henry's narrator claimed the Russians had earlier barbarously killed the English wounded. Yet the Russians had been good soldiers, "Men that did not blench." Their "serf-mothers" were mourning them. God alone "in mercy" would "Judge both us and them." By retaining its dramatic point of view "Inkerman" avoided the sentimentality and rhetorical stridency that marred the eight other war poems Henry published that year. Macmillan's in early February published "Inkerman" and "Alma" as a small book, *Two Battle Pieces.* Venables "sent away a good many copies," including one for the Queen.

At Park House, Eddy, now eleven, had begun studying Greek, and recited to Venables from Homer. In early February, Chapman took him back to school at Shirley, where he soon reported his progress to Edmund: "I have really been trying to do my lessons as well as I can, and I have often thought of what I promised you." Resolved not to waste his father's money, he was really going "to try to please you by getting on." On 7 April, back at Park House perhaps on holiday, he wrote again, apparently (but perhaps not) healthy, and delighted by the signs of spring. "We went into the woods the other day, and we found a great many primroses, and light violets, and a few dark violets, but only one white one." With "a little more wind it would be beautiful weather for sailing the Arrow," which was "very dusty, for she has not been afloat for ever so long." The boys at school had begun cricket, "and if it keeps like this, I shall soon begin it here." He was pleased that Edmund was "able to come back sooner than usual and I hope I shall be at home long enough to see you."

In reality, Eddy may have already been brought back because of threatening illness. On the nineteenth Cecilia anxiously wrote Edmund: "Impatient I
should think I am impatient for thee dearest but thou hast not yet told me on what day thou comest home. . . . Dearest my mind is very heavy about poor Eddy.” She was “very much afraid of this swelling, more afraid than I dare to tell anybody because I have known the dangers of such things on the back. God bless him poor little loving fellow & spare him to us—he is a dear child—so amiable so clever, so loving, so brave & so good. My tears stop me dearest I cannot go on.” Edmund did not arrive until the twenty-sixth, but by the twenty-first Horatio Tennyson had come to Cecilia, Eddy was alarmingly ill, and Emily Lushington took him to a physician in London. Although details are inconclusive, it seems that his condition soon evolved into what became a recurrent kidney infection, bringing on his lingering death a year and a half later.

On Malta the health of Henry, also, was steadily waning. In a strangely beautiful letter to Edmund, on 20 March, he almost too casually mentioned having “been for some time in a very poor condition, but I think I am getting a turn now.” His physician, Galland, was taking “infinite care of me, & manages his considerable medical business so as to give almost every afternoon at least two hours to going about with me, generally part in boat & part walking—he does not wish me to ride just now.” Edmund’s affectionate appreciation of his “Inkerman” had gratified him deeply. Even for Malta, which he had considered one of the world’s few ugly places, his letter found mellow words: it was “wonderful how much beauty, with the help of sea & sky & the present bursting out spring green one can find to admire, even near these towns.” He and Galland had “found, close to one of the harbours, one of the prettiest nooks of a ravine I ever saw: combining a foreground of gray rock, rough scrambling black green caruba trees, brilliant bright green almond trees, fresh springing grass, asphodels, barley &c, with a stretch of harbour shut in by high fortification masses.” Altogether it was “well worth seeing—even to one disposed to say of it, as Carlyle said of the starry night in answer to Leigh Hunt’s lively apostrophe, ‘Eh, it’s a sad sight.’” But most “nights—all perhaps here—are somewhat sad to me, still ‘the blue sky bends over all,’ & I sometimes hope, not without a meaning, though one which it will not explain.” Meanwhile, “the world moves on, & its work is to be done.” In the harbor was “a great steamer screwing out—where for? The Crimean; what has she aboard? Among other munitions of war an enormous gun: the biggest, it would seem, yet cast:—God speed her to her destination, & may they point her well when there.” He had “no confidence in our rulers, but much in the spirit of the country: and I hardly think they dare make peace without something to show first. One wishes, in the meantime, that one could help more, but I can do little: it is all so purely military business.”

“Did I not tell thee,” Cecilia wrote to Edmund of this or another of Henry’s
letters that spring, "how much I liked Harry's note to thee ... full of deep &
true feeling, & brotherly love, which last Harry has in great perfection not only
in regard to thee & Frank & Tom but to mankind in general. Harry loves his
kind—and so dost thou I think great is thy love for all great thy sympathy for all
the greatest perhaps for the few which seems to me all right."

Henry's itch to be of greater help, the urgent impulse—perhaps under pre­
monition of early death—to release his deepest convictions, and influence his
countrymen to stand firmly for right, was impelling him to compose too hastily
and publish summarily another set of war poems. As he wrote Venables, he
knew his "natural bent" was for prose, for speeches and articles, but at Malta
his prose had been expended chiefly "by writing letters calculated to aid the
transport of mules." In that spring of 1855, after the death of Czar Nicholas
and during the course of a would-be peace conference at Vienna, zealous be­
lievers in the absolute righteousness of the fight feared premature peace almost
more than military defeat. Indeed, for them, to propagandize for "peace" before
Russia and all it stood for were soundly thrashed was tantamount to baseness,
an indication of mammonism, the lust for getting on again with business as usual.
The idea was more than implicit in an overwrought stanza from a poem pub­
lished by Frank:

Peace, peace, peace with the vain and silly song,
That we do no sin ourselves, if we wink at others' wrong,
That to turn the second cheek is the lesson of the Cross,
To be proved by calculations of the profit and the loss:
Go home, you idle teachers! You miserable creatures!
The cannons are God's preachers, when the time is ripe for war.

Henry's book was published by Macmillan in June, by which time the imme­
diate peril of negotiated peace seemed passed. It contained nine poems by
Henry, including the republished "Inkerman," and five appended poems by
Frank, including "Alma." Henry's eloquent preface—he considered it a "ser­
mon" on a text by Demosthenes—he considered it a "ser­
mon" on a text by Demosthenes—attempted a reasoned denunciation of com­
promise. England had no traitors, "except Indifference." Czarist Russia
represented

Mental enslavement, consisting in the departure of ennobling thoughts,
the growth of admiration for what is not admirable,—the passing of free
institutions into a by-word with those who have them not, and a thing
'suspect' with those who have them,—an Europe, in short, in full march,
with all its railroads and wealth, towards the condition of a larger and
more civilized China—this will be sufficient for a generation which grew
up with some hopes of the progress of man, some faith in their country.
The immediate danger was not a Russianized England but a largely Russianized Europe, specifically, a Russianized Germany. For the English the present danger was a diminished zeal for freedom, never ultimately a very strong urge in human beings. “The love of freedom has some analogy to what we call acquired tastes; it is not a mere instinct so much as a high capacity ... capable of being checked, capable of being developed; capable of being, and often having been, utterly unlearned.” The English had “a strong turn for it by nature; but what if we too found ourselves admitting the axiom affirmed even to-day by half-Europe—a free country cannot make war? It would be enough for one generation to be coerced or shamed into a lip-admission of that lie. Thank Heaven it is a lie!”

Henry’s shorter poems included a dignified memorial to the Sicilian exile Pietro D’Allesandro, who had died at Malta in January; an address to King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia, who had joined the English and French against Russia: “The Morn of Inkerman,” in which an English soldier dreams of his dead wife, who assures him he will survive the battle; and the to-be-popular “The Road to the Trenches,” with a dying soldier in the frozen Crimean wastes, bravely sending his comrades on (“So the soldier spoke, and staggering, / Fell amid the snow / And ever on the dreary heights / Down came the snow”). Three bitterly anti-Russian poems retain a shrillness that embarrasses now, and too little compensating merit. The 420-line “La Nation Boutiquière,” filling nearly a third of Henry’s pages, rang ironical variations upon Bonaparte’s notorious taunt that England was a “nation of shopkeepers.” They had shown that indeed they were:

“Traders, general merchants,  
’Sour title runs,  
‘Soft and hardware dealers,  
‘Firm, John Bull and Sons.  
‘Cottons and Colonials,  
‘Sugars, other trifles;  
‘Swords and spinning-engines,  
‘Howitzers and rifles.  
‘Ask your Spanish agents  
‘How our people there  
‘Recommend in handling,  
‘Certain of our ware.’

“Wellesley led their armies, / Watt and Arkwright paid, / And they quelled Napoleon / With their cotton trade.” What kind of shopkeepers would the British of 1855 be? Would they need “Half a coward’s faintness, / Half a world-
ling's sneer," whispering "'English friends! give ear: / 'Peace is cheap and pleasant, / 'War how hard and dear' '? The mammon-worshiping propagandists for peace were chanting:

'Mammon, grown and glorious,
Is no slave of Mars.

'Talk of Thor and Vikings?
'You? and at your age?
'Are your Gods so many?
'Is there more than one?
'He is ours, whom all men
'Slander and enthrone.
'No half-hearted worship,
'No ideal scheme:
'Our GREAT FACT is Mammon,
'Finite,—but no dream.'

But England, great of old, would spurn such "euthanasia": "First the peace of baseness / Then the years of gains, / Last the foreign soldiers / Trampling English lanes." Mammon was indeed great: "Great but not the whole. / Nay, at times, in Mammon / Wakes the sleeping soul." Surely England would persist and win, then get on with her divine commission to civilize the world.

The Crimean poems of Henry and his brother, being finished during almost exactly the same weeks as Tennyson's Maud, may stimulate our imagination to restore a historical context for Tennyson's part three, where in only fifty-nine lines he too unceremoniously dispatches his barely recovered lunatic protagonist off to the Crimea to some sort of personal regeneration (if only, as A. Dwight Culler suggests, through endurance of honorable death—"the doom assigned" of the poem's final words), to match the national regeneration of England. Another of Culler's observations is no doubt also correct, that the notorious blunders of the war, "the state of the hospitals at Scutari, plus modern pacifism have effectively ruined Tennyson's symbol, and it is idle to say that anyone can now read the last scene of Maud and like it." Well, if for no better reasons, the scene deserves to be disliked because it is too abruptly injected, too perfunctorily developed. But along with all else that it was not, its ideology in its time was, as Culler would no doubt agree, not in the least idiosyncratic, but rather, as the Lushington poems show, more nearly a commonplace among opposers of a "peace" that would have seemed to them no more than a craven cessation of hostilities. Like the Lushingtons and the idealized soldiers in their poems, Maud's protagonist "cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true";
he too saw the war as a redemption of England from base mammonism, and was sarcastically intolerant of the idealization of "Peace" ("... love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames, / Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told"):  

Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:  
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
And watch her harvest ripen, her herds increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
Shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

What we are observing is a jointly held conviction, not any kind of "influence" of the Lushingtons upon Tennyson. He and they, misguided or not, really did will to believe, along with countless other patriots, that the Crimean War offered a mammon-besotted English people a new salvation. Tennyson and Frank may have outlived the delusion. Henry did not. Nor would he ever read any part of Maud. Three days before its 28 July publication, he would be assisted, desperately ill, into the hotel in Paris where he would die on 11 August.

An ironical contretemps preceded the publication of his poems. He had concluded his preface with a joint dedication to "the friend of my life, George Stovin Venables,—and to an unnamed memory [Louy]. . . . The shadow of a wreath of lilies to the dead;—the shadow of a wreath of honour to the living."  

Venables saw the manuscript of the preface only after he had read the poems, disliked some of them, and sent off a letter to their physically depleted author, criticizing their workmanship. Venables, of course, was afterward filled with regret, Henry agitated because he had worked the hardest over some of the very parts that his dedicatee had liked least. In two lengthy letters he voiced his discouragement: "I suppose my taste is wearing out, as other faculties do." If "twenty-three instead of forty-three, if I had life & health before me, instead of a life which since eighteen has been one long failure behind me, I should care a good deal less for having written a few verses which I thought good and you thought bad—that is not much in itself." He was undecided about his future, but suspected that with all his recent poor health, he would soon "be ordered away" from Malta "if I did not volunteer it. Moreover I am in a condition that requires a good deal of consideration—not that I know that there is anything to be anxious about." Galland, his physician, had "repeatedly" told him "there is not: but my general health now was so shaken."  

On into the heat of summer he labored, growing weaker, waiting for the council to adjourn, which it finally did, "to the great disgust of the elective
patriots, for whom seven months of sessions is not enough to concoct rubbish in." He did not know how "far, or how ever I shall get right, the moment I get out of this evil climate. . . . What I mean to say is this: think of me as fully intending to get well, and to not look so ill when I meet you."13

Before he and Maria finally left, his body and legs were badly swollen;14 and he was requiring the daily attention of Dr. Galland, who stayed with them until after they reached Paris thirteen days later. When Venables met them at Arles on the eighteenth, Henry was so "alarmingly ill" and weak that Venables nearly despaired, "How we are to get over this journey I do not see." Next day, as they passed through Avignon, on the "exact anniversary" of Louy's death, Henry "pressed" Venables's "arm and pointed silently to the cemetery . . . adjacent to the railway."15 After five days, through "exceptionally hot weather," a short distance each day, and one day not daring to move at all, they reached Paris, where Edmund met them. Almost all Henry's nights were "bad," and would continue so at Paris.

The end would not come until eighteen days later. The three English physicians who attended Henry are all in the Dictionary of National Biography. Sir Joseph Oliffe (1808-69), who practiced in Paris, a Fellow of the Anatomical Society of Paris, had served as president of the Paris Medical Society and was physician to the British embassy. Sir Philip Crampton (1777-1858), a famous surgeon, had been surgeon general to the forces in Ireland and surgeon in ordinary to the queen. Marshall Hall (1790-1857) was a respected, if somewhat controversial, physiologist, skilled in diagnosis, who ultimately authored twenty-seven medical works. As we have seen, Cecilia before her marriage had consulted him concerning her headaches. Nothing in Venables's accounts indicates that any of the three ever arrived at a clear diagnosis. Hall, especially, was at first encouraging, stating "there was no proof of organic disease"; but Henry could eat little, slept poorly, grew steadily weaker, and at the last developed constant diarrhea. From his twenty-five-year medical history, and the widespread prevalence of the disease during his century, it seems probable that he had some form of tuberculosis, but proof is lacking. His death certificate at Paris gives no cause of death.16

During Edmund's vigil in Paris, Cecilia at Eastbourne sent him an open-hearted, rambling letter. She would have written oftener, but had been having "almost without ceasing a pain in my back, & head, continuing all night in constant restlessness till from utter exhaustion I have fallen asleep toward morning." However, he should "not make thyself uncomfortable about me, keep thy thoughts on dear Harry & on sleep for thyself . . . tell Harry I can so well pity him for those nervous feelings at night, well I know the horror of them." She loved Edmund, was wanting him as never before, but "would not
have thee leave Harry for worlds, but . . . want thee still more to get some sleep at night . . . for I am very anxious about it." It was not, she said pathetically, "as if thou hadst a healthy place to live in for the winter, & a good strong wife to take care of thee then, to fondle & comfort thee. Well dost thou deserve it dear kind husband & brother & father." Circularly, over and over again, she poured out the same sentiments—as if to reinforce them by persistent rehearsal—her love for him and for Henry, her anxiety that he get sleep, her sense of her inadequacies. "Thou knowest I am always trying to be well always selfishly looking after myself. . . . God ever help thee own darling & make thy wife a better wife to thee in the time to come. Ever thy very own, CL."

In an extraordinary manuscript document of nearly two thousand words, Venables described Henry's last hours, up to his death on Saturday afternoon, 11 August. Emily had arrived on Thursday evening. Franklin was coming from Corfu, where he had begun new duties as a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals in the Ionian Islands, but Henry would be dead when he arrived. On Friday evening, all hope abandoned, Edmund informed Henry that he was dying. Incredulous, he argued with Edmund, gestured for Venables, who "leaned over him and told him that it was true and . . . would be very soon." Henry said something like "'I did not wish to die, but if I must die I can bear it like any other man. . . . And if there is another life, which God grant' (then his voice sank)." He spoke farewells in turn to Edmund, to Maria, and then to Emily—motioning Venables away. Venables later "asked her what he said, & she said she could not tell me then. She told me something of it afterwards." (When she did, a month later, Venables wrote, "He meant something more; but her divine goodness made even what she said invaluable. I had partly guessed it before.") To Venables, Henry said that "no man ever had such a friend, and then he said that I had loved his family first for his sake", and then Venables "lost the thread of his speech, and I did not at that time fully understand his meaning." Edmund and Venables took a spoken last will: Henry's land to Franklin, his money and personal possessions equally to his brothers and sisters, his house at Malta with "the books & everything" to Venables. He was "much troubled with phlegm," laboring to breathe. Sometime before midnight "he said in a mournful tone, who will defend me against all the world? Edmund told him that we were all around him to defend him." Venables said, "That is not what he means, Emily speak to him. She leant forward . . . & told him in a few very simple sentences, that God would defend him & save him through Jesus Christ. Her words & her voice seemed to quiet him, but not quite to satisfy him." He looked appealingly to Venables, who said, "Listen to what Emily tells you." In the morning he whispered to Venables, "Is it impossible to do anything?" And another time "he said to me very earnestly something like—Matrimony—
proper condition of a man—my greatest mistake—then he spoke of India—
alluding probably to Tom's happiness [since his marriage]—this also I did not at
the time understand." (The inference seems clear that later, after talking with
Emily, Venables did believe he then understood what Henry had meant in
dying statements to each of them: that he wished they would unite in marriage.)
Several hours later, when Henry ceased breathing, "Emily's arm was round his
neck, & I hope he knew her to the end." 17

Emily Tennyson recorded that when Alfred heard from Edmund that Henry
had died, he read "Ecclesiastes" to her, "which he had once read to" Henry. 18
In early October, Venables wrote to assure her of Henry's deep regard for
Alfred. If "all the poems had been lost he could have supplied a large portion of
them from memory. Among thousands of admirers they had no more earnest or
worthy admirer, & I do not think any other man exercised so strong an attrac­
tion upon him, though I was from circumstances nearer." Venables confessed
that for years he had been "in some degree jealous & dissatisfied with a feeling
less warm than my own;—but not of late," not since the dedication of the
poems and "far more the wonderful & beautiful expression of feeling in his last
hours." Edmund was not likely to tell them "how very sad a place that home
[Park House] has become"—Ellen's despair, their anxiety about Frank's health
when he returned to Corfu, Eddy's illness, "and Mrs L seems to get worse
instead of better. Emily as usual takes charge of all & comforts all, but she had a
peculiar affection for him & she grieves deeply for him." The Tennysons would
be gratified at the comfort she had derived from In Memoriam: "If that poem had
had no one else to appreciate it, it would have been worth writing." Venables
hoped the Tennysons would not "blame me for once more dwelling on myself
to you & on him." 19 Emily wrote back: "Blame you dear Mr Venables. No,
trust me, I owe you real gratitude for speaking out to me if ever so little of what
is in your heart." She would tell him what Maria had written of him since he
went to Wales: "We feel a great blank without him the great gulph between
the present & the past hardly seems so impassable while he is here. . . . There
is no one with whom we have so much in common now." Emily Tennyson
herself believed Venables's "irreparable loss has left you fresh a bond to Alfred
in your memory of the past." They appreciated his "precious assurances" of
Henry's "love and admiration" of Alfred. She supposed "we all must have our
jealousies where there is much love and much separation also." They had
"sometimes thought" Henry "did not care for" Alfred "as he used but what
you say and what Maria says quite removes any such painful thought." 20

During that fall Edmund had yearned to visit the Tennysons "to speak with
you of Harry as one only longs to speak of the most dear to the most dear, I can
hardly tell you what I miss in not coming"; but Cecilia's health—terrible boils
The Shadow Feared of Man

on her face, constant pain—had allowed him neither to take her to Farringford nor leave her alone. Now, on 1 November, he was departing again for Glasgow. More than a year later, Alfred admitted to Venables, “I have not yet written anything to his memory & perhaps never may, so it will be as well not to mention to any of the Ls that I ever spoke of such a thing but I do not suppose that you have mentioned it.” Long afterward, in 1870, he would to an extent memorialize Henry as one of the “three dead men” whose shadows walked with him “In the Garden at Swainston,” the other two being Arthur Hallam and the recently deceased Sir John Simeon:

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee:
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be:
Three dead men have I loved and thou art the last of the three.

During the months following Henry’s death, Venables received several angry letters from B. L. Chapman, long his close friend and Henry’s. His attempts to answer them were repulsed by Chapman. Although the two men met infrequently thereafter at Park House or in London together with mutual friends, their estrangement widened, and they would never become reconciled. A letter from Monteith to Milnes on 12 November carries a clue to Chapman’s grievance. Edmund had paid Monteith “a flying visit”—“I am grieved by his account of that true hearted gauche Chapman. He seems unable to bear up after the loss of Harry following the, to him, still greater loss of Emily Lushington. When C. was here some time ago I was astonished at the crush he had got—& even before this account of L’s feared he mt. never be the same man again.”

Monteith had also learned that Edmund was “not so pleased with Maud as the British public seems to be: & the same, he says, is the case with Alfred’s wife & most of his friends.” Edmund’s classical reservations concerning so innovative a poem would continue. In the following July, after a visit to Farringford, he wrote to Tennyson, “You took my criticism on Maud like an angel, wh was very good indeed of you—I wish only you could be as glad whenever I thoroughly admire your poems as I am sorry whenever I cannot.”

Later Edmund would effectively influence Tennyson’s handling of his Arthurian poems. By June 1857, having completed the idylls now entitled “Merlin and Vivien” and “Geraint and Enid,” Tennyson had trial copies set up in type and was planning to publish. In one of these F. T. Palgrave wrote, “... Owing to a remark ... which reached him, he at once recalled the copies out: giving me leave, however, to retain the present,” The “remark” (or remarks) was Edmund’s. He was “much grieved,” he wrote Alfred on 13 June, if any-
thing in his recent letter to Emily Tennyson "distrest you. I said it all in love, & only my love could have prompted me to say it." His "tenderness" for Alfred's "fame will not let me be silent when I fear anything that may tend to cast a shade upon it, & few things can be more certain to me than that these 2 poems coming out by themselves would not receive their due of admiration." It would be "quite different if they were as I hope they will be supported by others of varied matter & interest, giving more completeness and beauty of circular grouping and relation." He wished Alfred to publish such a work, which "would surpass all you have written yet. Surely my speaking frankly is a proof how much I honour you if indeed any proof of that can be needed by you." If they could talk together, he would "be better able to say what I mean . . . in writing one may fail to touch the mood of a friend just as one ought." Already, on the twelfth, Emily Tennyson had written in her journal, "A. resolved not to publish 'Nimue' ['Vivien'] & 'Enid' until he has a bigger book." And Venables kept an undated note that Tennyson wrote him: "I have taken E.L.L.'s advice in the matter of the Poems: therefore I beg you to destroy my proofs which my wife sent. I shall wait till I have a bigger book." But in 1859 Tennyson disregarded Edmund's philological objection to his calling the poems "Idylls"—"almost any title that could be given wd convey a truer notion. If Alfred wishes a Greek diminutive Epylls or little epics wd answer the case better—but it will be hard if for a subject so English an English name cannot be found." Tennyson's incomparable ear for euphony could never have tolerated "Epylls of the King." Lexicographers of the future, although not the OED, were obliged to compose a definition of idyll that would embrace Tennyson's practice.

Poor Eddy was devastatingly ill, less so at times than others, but already by the end of 1855 Venables suspected that he was "probably dying." Through the early months of 1856, he could walk only painfully if at all, requiring to be drawn in a chair. He was better in late April, able to go to the woods, on ponyback at least. But by mid-July he was suffering from "dropsy" (edematous swelling) in the legs; by the end of August, family members and Venables were nursing him in relay around the clock, and an eminent physician who had examined him told Venables there was no hope. Other doctors confirmed the verdict. As October came with the boy still lingering, Edmund applied to the Glasgow faculty for permission to obtain a substitute teacher: "In the painful tendance on my dying son there are various things to be done both by day and by night which no one else could do so well as myself, and though he may linger on a few weeks more his weakness is so great that if I am to leave him at any time for a few days all might be over before I could return."

"So one must go on in vague darkeness," Edmund on 6 October agonized to
the Tennysons, as perhaps he might have done to no one else, "doing what little, alas, one can do for his comfort." It seemed "almost cruel to feel a throb of joy when his sweet thankfulness tells one that we have given him some slight relief, but indeed at present one's heart seems strangely dull and narrow to compass the hugeness of such a life sorrow as lies near at hand before one." He reflected that the "roots of love and sorrow are verily twined together abysmally deep—there is something very awful and astounding in the vast loveliness of this little child's soul—and to see this glorious beauty slowly fading from our view, to whom it might have been so full of glory and blessing." To Alfred and Emily he cried out, "Oh, my dear brother and sister, may you be ever spared such a tearing away of life from life, and love from love." 31

Eddy died on 20 October. Cecilia a week later was too ill from "head pain and depression" to leave for Park House for the funeral on the twenty-ninth, and did not appear, "depressed and quite silent," until three days later. There is no indication that during Eddy's final weeks she had been able to participate in nursing him. At the end her sister Matilda had been with her, the two of them probably living in a separate house. On the thirty-first Edmund informed the Tennysons that "her spirits fall & rise with wonderful rapidity." On the previous night she read aloud and talked about several poems of In Memoriam. "That book seems now dearer than ever." 32 Before the end of November, Edmund had returned to Glasgow, accompanied by Maria, and resumed his duties. Cecilia, who had "taken to" a new doctor at Eastbourne, returned with Matilda "to be under his care." The Tennysons having visited Park House, Emily Tennyson wrote Edward Lear, "... It is scarcely possible to express the sadness of the house... an almost hopeless sadness brooding over all things. I need not say this is hallowed and glorified by the divine light, and love in which they move and have their being." 33 At Christmastime Edmund returned, bringing Cecilia, but took her away again before going back to Glasgow.

Before the decade ended, the family would suffer yet another death and two alarming illnesses, one of which several doctors, fortunately mistaken, would predict to be almost certainly fatal.

In mid-May 1856 Tom with his wife, three sons, and a daughter arrived on furlough from Madras, his first visit in almost seven years. In 1850 he had married his half-cousin Mary, daughter of Charles May Lushington (1784–1841), who had been a judge and member of council at Madras. After the death of her father, she had remained in India, where her mother's family resided. (Interestingly, Mary's and Tom's descendants would carry double infusions not only of Lushington blood but of Christian family blood also, since both wives of their ancestor the Reverend James Stephen Lushington were descendants of that fam-
ily.) In June 1857 Tom's wife gave birth to their fourth and last son, who would be christened in Boxley church. In early August, with mutiny sweeping through India, Tom was ordered to cut short his furlough and return; but by then, as Edmund told the Tennysons, he was "not at all as well as he should be. A great many things worry him & make him anxious in connexion with return to India, & this no doubt tells upon his health very much." His doctor had given "such a decided opinion that he ought not return yet"—he could hardly walk a mile without fatigue—that undoubtedly the court would not insist. In early December, Venables saw him and his family off, watching the "ship swing round from the dock quays, & his kind cheerful face disappeared perhaps forever." By the end of March, the family learned that he had a fever. In the following weeks disturbing accounts arrived, including the news that he was returning to England by way of the Cape; but by the time that news reached England, he had already died on 17 July, and was buried in Ceylon. His death, the fourth in the melancholy succession, occurred just two days short of the fourth anniversary of Louy's.

By that time whooping cough had struck both twelve-year-old Zilly and nine-year-old Emmy. Zilly's case was alarming, with almost unceasing spasms of coughing recurring over a span of nearly four months. Not until late October was she able to talk again. During most of the summer and fall, Maria was also seriously ill. On 24 June she had received surgery on her eyes, which had been subject to cataracts since infancy. Recovery was not satisfactory, and then during the summer she developed another condition, probably gynecological, which by the end of the year had brought her to the point of almost certain death. Neither she, her doctors, nor any of the family thought she could possibly survive. Edmund came down from Glasgow, she expressed her resignation to dying, and on 28 December dictated her last will to Venables. On 9 and 10 January she went into delirium, "speaking in a kind of rhyme, knowing us all & generally with a kind of intelligible meaning." The disease dragged on, with other crises including more delirium, until late March, when she gradually began to improve.

Through those years of crisis, Edmund's friendship with the Tennysons grew ever stronger. He went to Farringford when he could, with or without Cecilia, who too often lacked the will to travel. On 17 May 1856 he found them in the midst of remodeling the house, on the day they had nervously awaited a visit from Queen Victoria, who did not appear. The two boys wore "their rose-coloured dresses," and the family waited in the garden "to receive HM, not liking to go into the house tho' we did have rugs spread on the narrow path left between packages in the entrance hall." Probably "because of the stormy morning," the queen did not come. "Edmund comes to dinner." Emily was
“shocked,” she wrote Venables, by Edmund’s “worn look.” He had consented to be a trustee for Alfred’s will, and they were asking Sir John Simeon to be another—would Venables be a third?37

Edmund’s letters to the Tennysons, while sharing his own worries and sorrows, were filled with concern for their welfare. Was Alfred getting enough “regular exercise, which Farringford is the last place in the world to excuse a man for not taking”? At Edinburgh recently Edmund had found that De Quincey (then in his seventies) “had not moved out of his house since Xmas day [more than two months], & his feet were becoming excessively painful—no doubt from this—but he took a walk of 4 or 5 miles with me & seemed rather the better for it.”38 After a visit to Farringford in July 1856, when Eddy’s illness was worsening, he thanked them for the comfort they gave him: “Fifty things which I wanted to say & did not say generally come upon me after I have left you. . . . A day with you seems more than a week elsewhere.”39 He told them how much he had come to appreciate Charles and Louisa Turner (Alfred’s brother and Emily’s sister): “. . . Their going seems to make a great blank. I had not seen so much of Charles for years, & he grew more to me every day—nor had I ever seen so much of Louisa before, or felt so fully all there was to admire & love in her.”40 In 1859 he thought Alfred’s “Maid of Astolat” (“Lancelot and Elaine”) “most beautiful” but wished that “instead of 4 poems of the Cycle there were 8 or 10, to show more of what Arthur was, but perhaps that may come in time.”41

Along with the deaths and near-fatal illnesses during that dismal half-decade came a sadly accelerated deterioration in Cecilia’s emotional health. When Eddy died, she was barely thirty-nine, with an oppressively long life ahead. In 1856, added to her grief concerning Eddy, was the circumstance that never since her marriage had she known any really stable living arrangement. Although she was nominal mistress of Park House, actual circumstances blocked her becoming so. With her initial concurrence it had been projected that for half of each year she would be at Glasgow—a city she came to detest, one that intensified her illnesses. And then for much of the remaining time, following the custom of the Lushingtons, she would reside at Eastbourne or some other seaside place. At most she would be in her home perhaps four months of the year. Her sisters-in-law, four of them, none ever to marry, had lived in the house since early childhood, had the feeling of its rhythms, provided its continuity, and themselves had no other home. In a sense Cecilia had always been a supernumerary in her own house.

When in 1849 she began wintering there without Edmund, it housed only two Lushington sisters, with two at Malta. But after Henry died, even with Louy dead before him, there were three—three to Cecilia’s one. Even with the
best will all around, she no doubt felt hemmed in. Furthermore, the house had always had a schoolroom, where children of the family, and of the servants, and at times other children would learn reading, writing, and other accomplishments. (One young woman, Kate Morgan, who with her sister had spent most of her childhood at Park House after her Cambridge-educated father had died, would become the wife of Franklin Lushington.) The Lushington sisters were teachers in the school, so that Eddy’s earliest schooling and all of Zilly’s and Emmy’s, would be under the capable tutelage of her aunts, or of persons assisting them. If Cecilia went to Glasgow or elsewhere, she left most or all of her children with the aunts. When the children fell ill, their aunts were their nurses. Zilly and Emmy would grow up being more the daughters of Park House than of Cecilia and Edmund. (Lucy, by contrast, would be first and last the child of Cecilia.) All the sisters-in-law seem to have been gracious persons, although admittedly almost everything knowable about them comes conveyed through their admirers, principally Venables, whose regard for Cecilia was slight. She herself would probably have seconded the general esteem for the sisters-in-law, and for much of the time would perhaps be, if not quite their peers under her roof and theirs, a fairly agreeable friend. But herself a victim of tic douloureux and recurrent depressions, she was also the daughter of Doctor Tennyson, carrying deep within her the childhood impress of him at his troubled worst.

Finally on 2 March 1856, with Eddy lame and already frighteningly ill and Edmund at Glasgow, Cecilia’s tensions reached the point of eruption. Details, as always in the frequent outbursts of the future, are lacking. Venables, present, wrote, “A misfortune broke out which may have incalculable consequences”; the next day, “All very low this morning ... I did not see Mrs. L., but another storm broke out”; and on the next, “The P.H. affair more & more grievous.” When in early April Eddy’s health seemed improved and Edmund came to take Cecilia for a month at Glasgow, Venables felt a “great relief as it was impossible to be sure that she would go.” They returned in early May, and on 17 June, Tom gave “an account of new misfortunes. The effect may be terrible on all”; next day, Venables’s forty-sixth birthday, was the “saddest birthday I have ever had with H. gone and Park House almost destroyed, Chapman alienated, and all things miserable. ... Letter at night from Ellen with somewhat more of an account of the miserable state of things at P.H.”

Devastated by Eddy’s death, Cecilia as we recall, began 1857 at Eastbourne in her sister Matilda’s company and under a doctor’s care. As Franklin viewed her situation from Corfu: “... The good of a new doctor is generally transitory enough. I should be very glad to hear she was going up to spend the rest of the session with Edmund. The only thing to do her any real good is the being
more constantly with him, and I believe, more constantly alone with him than she is at PH in the summer." Whether she went to Scotland at all that spring is indeterminable. In May, Venables found her health "as usual," and again "still worse." Where she was from October 1857 to June 1858 is again undiscoverable, but for almost nine months she and her sisters-in-law did not meet at all. Not impossibly, she may have been with Edmund, but improbably so, since she did not reappear with him in May. Some sort of medical superintendence seems more probable. The sisters were "naturally very much oppressed by the arrival," which at last took place at Folkestone, where Zilly and Emmy were suffering from their whooping cough, Emily nursing one, Ellen the other. Cecilia, nearby, saw the ailing children frequently. In October she went with Edmund to spend a full winter, where she remained throughout Maria's prolonged, near-fatal illness at Park House.

Ironically, on the same day, 26 March 1859, that Venables first found Maria visibly convalescent, the sisters received some sort of epistolary ultimatum from Edmund that left them "all in distress." Later, in April, came "another of the wretched Glasgow letters." From subsequent happenings it is clear that Edmund was specifying at least that Cecilia would spend future winters at Park House, and perhaps also that hers would be the upper hand. The prospect, a patent impossibility considering her health and disposition, dismayed all the other Lushingtons, although the actual meeting, on 8 June, had as Venables "expected gone off quietly."

Edmund wrote Emily Tennyson on 11 June that Cecilia seemed "greatly comforted & cheered by seeing the children again." The delight of little Lucy, who had been at Glasgow with her mother, and her sisters at Park House "in seeing each other is very pleasant." Rather pathetically, Edmund professed "trust" that Cecilia was "wishing to do what is right and kindly." Venables, going to Park House on 20 June, was "not ill received by Mrs. L.," but found the "state" of the sisters, "especially Ellen's, most pitiable," and feared that Maria was again "in a precarious state." On the twenty-fifth Cecilia was "civil enough," and the next day, "unwell, really so this time." On 13 August he saw her again "after several weeks, looking very ill."

On 21 October, Edmund was obliged to write the Glasgow faculty requesting a two-week leave because of his wife's "delicate state of health." A week later Venables had "distressing letters from Maria, Ellen, & Frank. I can think of nothing else." On the twenty-ninth Edmund wrote the Tennysons that he was again off for his "lonely sulk at Glasgow," where he would welcome frequent cheering letters. Cecilia was "in the main no doubt better & stronger, but at times suffers pains wh bring terrible depressions. She strongly assures me that she will try not give way to this, but be as cheery & kindly as she can, & I
fully believe she wishes this earnestly." (No doubt she did.) Emily Tennyson "must sometimes write her to keep her up to this." Her doctor had confidently declared that "there is nothing of disease about her nor any thing that may not come right under proper management—but she some times frightens herself with fancying she cannot have found out half her complaints." On 19 November from Glasgow, he reported, "Cissy has been very low about the pains she suffers, & fancying there is some incurable evil, but this passes away, & she writes cheerfully & most lovingly. She is trying I am sure to take heart & do all I can wish her, & the tone of her letters is a true comfort." But in sad reality, on the day before at Park House Venables had recorded, "Old troubles broke out painfully." Soon came "fuller shocking details . . . confirmed by Frank." Edmund, informed, sadly telegraphed ahead for a room in London and rushed down, arriving on the twenty-sixth. On 2 December, after "apparently a crisis, which must be very painful," Edmund and Cecilia departed for Glasgow. Venables at Park House on the fourth found "A great relief compared with last time." In the decade to come, Cecilia would spend most (most probably all) of her winters in Scotland, but unhappily, her return to Park House in the spring would become an almost annual occasion for general apprehensiveness there. Possibly, fears of such intensity may have tended to become self-fulfilling.