

A New Form of Expression: Julia Margaret Cameron's Photographic Illustrations of Alfred Lord Tennyson's Poetry

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Abstract

This article considers how the early British photographer Julia Margaret Cameron used the aesthetic language of the Pre-Raphaelites to illustrate Tennyson's *Idylls of the King and Other Poems*, and looks at how Tennyson's poem *The Lady of Shalott* had a vast impact on visual culture of the time. Since the advent of photography, interesting debates have arisen about its place within the hierarchy of the arts in the Victorian era.



Figure 1. Julia Margaret Cameron, *The Parting of Lancelot and Guinevere* (1874).

Albumen silver print from glass, 33.2 × 28.8cm. David Hunter McAlpin Fund, 1952.

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Taking their cue from Ruskin and the developing art of photography, the Pre-Raphaelites can be seen to capture nuances and detail in their paintings. In turn, their art affected photographers who looked for structure and subject matter for this new medium, thus a dialogue was formed between these two forms of art, meaning the traditional approach to making pictures was completely overturned.¹ It is important to consider this connection as it reveals how the two art forms merged and interacted with one another, as well as challenging the narrative we are told about modern art. Pre-Raphaelitism is often perceived as a 'literary' art form, and indeed the movement was greatly influenced by contemporary poets such as Shelley, Keats and Tennyson, in addition to medieval manuscripts and Arthurian legend. Tennyson's poem *The Lady of Shalott*, first published in 1832, was a source of inspiration for virtually all the major figures associated with the Pre-Raphaelites.² This article considers how both the poem and the pictures can be read in terms of Victorian attitudes towards women and the act of creativity itself.

Invented in 1839,³ photography had been in use for just over twenty years when Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) was given her first camera. Born in India, Cameron remembers news of photography reaching Calcutta; the days of the Talbot-type and autotype, when scientific discoveries were received 'like water to the parched lips of the starved'.⁴ She was forty-eight when she began her short eleven-year career, and in the letter that accompanied the gift her daughter said, 'It may amuse you, Mother, to try to photograph during your solitude at Freshwater'.⁵ As a woman perhaps, she was not expected to have an impact much further than her glasshouse studio, a converted chicken coop. Yet, Cameron would go on to create images that remain some of the most evocative and powerful in the history of photography. She took up this new medium with enthusiasm and strove to capture beauty in her work, and wrote that the camera, 'added more and more impulse to my deeply seated love of the beautiful, and from the first moment I handled my lens with a tender ardour, and it has become to me as a living thing, with voice and memory and creative vigour'.⁶ At the time, photography was not seriously considered an art form. However, her photographs were more than a family album; her aim was to elevate photography to 'high art', and in Cameron's hands, it did indeed become something else. In his essay 'Of Ideas of Truth in Their Connection with Those of Beauty and Relation,' John Ruskin wrote that 'the artist not only *places* the spectator, but *talks* to him; makes him a sharer in his own strong feelings and quick thoughts, hurries him away in his own strong enthusiasm; guides him to all that is beautiful; snatches him from all that is base; and leaves him more than delighted'.⁷ This seems to be how Cameron's photographs make the viewer feel; swept away into another world of her envisioning.

With the help of David Wilkie Wynfield, who photographed many of the Pre-Raphaelite painters in medieval or oriental costume, Cameron learnt the basic techniques of soft-focus, which later effectively became a signature of her work. Within a year of picking up the camera she became a member of the Photographic Societies of London and Scotland, and had her first exhibition the following year. On the Isle of Wight, Alfred Lord Tennyson was her neighbour, and often brought friends to see the photographer and her work. She took many significant portraits of friends in the Victorian poetry and science circles, such as Browning, Darwin, and Sir John Herschel. At the time photography was a very labour-intensive art that depended on crucial timing. Cameron was sometimes obsessive about her new occupation, with subjects sitting for countless exposures in the blinding light as she laboriously coated, exposed, and processed each

¹ See Waggoner, Diane, and others, *The Pre-Raphaelite Lens* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

² Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, London: Tate Publishing, 2000, p. 223.

³ In 1839, Louis Daguerre developed an effective method of photography, the daguerreotype. In 1841, Henry Fox Talbot perfected his paper-negative process and called it a calotype; Greek for 'beautiful picture'.

⁴ Julia Margaret Cameron, 'Annals of My Glass House', first published in *Photo Beacon*, Chicago, 2, 1890: 157-60. Reprinted, by permission, from the original manuscript in the collection of The Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, London, p. 135.

⁵ Cameron, 'Annals of My Glass House', p. 135.

⁶ Cameron, 'Annals of My Glass House', p. 135.

⁷ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (London: André Deutsch, 1987), p. 24.

wet plate. The results were unconventional in their intimacy and their particular visual habit of purposely created blur, achieved through long exposures where the subject moved, leaving the lens intentionally out of focus.

Cameron had no interest in establishing a commercial studio, and never made commissioned portraits. She was merely an artist who strove to arrest the splendour that came before her.⁸ Her photographs aimed to capture the qualities of innocence, virtue, wisdom, piety and passion that made them modern embodiments of classical, religious, and literary figures. Her artistic goals for photography, informed by the outward appearance and spiritual content of fifteenth-century Italian painting, were original in the medium of photography. She aimed neither for the finished and formalised poses common in studio portraits, nor the elaborate narratives of other 'high art' photographers such as H. P. Robinson and O. G. Rejlander. She has more in common with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's close portraits; her images capture a specific feeling and sentiment, and are full of symbolism and connotations. Her approach was more to the psychological portrayal of her subject, the 'inner' as well as 'outer' aspects. Like Rossetti, Cameron had the ability to turn a seemingly 'plain' woman into a mythical goddess.

In 1874 Cameron's friendship with Tennyson led him to ask her to make photographic illustrations for a new edition of his *Idylls of the King and Other Poems*, a recasting of the Arthurian legends. Responding that 'it is immortality to me to be bound up with you',⁹ Cameron willingly accepted the assignment. Costuming family, friends, even serving maids, she made over two hundred exposures to arrive at the handful she wanted for the book. Her photographic illustrations often took on the quality of oil paintings of the same period, including rich details, historical costumes, and intricate props and draperies. It is clear that Cameron saw these photographs as art, comparable to the paintings they imitated. *Elaine 'the Lily maid of Astolat'* (Figure 2) recalls the emotion and detail of William Holman Hunt's painting, *The Lady of Shalott*. Yet Cameron chose instead not to illustrate Tennyson's popular earlier poem but his later, more refined and finished *Lancelot and Elaine*. According to legend, Elaine dies for love of Lancelot, after he champions her and wears her scarf at the tournament only to return to his beloved Guinevere. Here she is seen gazing at the shield she guards for him, while he uses her brother's plain white shield to disguise his identity. After the heartbroken Elaine dies, her body floats down the river in a boat to Camelot, where Lancelot, Arthur, and even Guinevere come together to recognise the sacrifice she has made for love and to pray for her soul.

In Cameron's depiction Elaine does not look out towards the viewer. Rather, she turns her gaze sideways, toward the shield of Lancelot and the cover that she has woven for it, on which her hand so lovingly grazes. It is that shield with its various emblems which symbolise Lancelot's chivalric excellence, explaining Elaine's infatuation with Arthur's best knight. Her dreamy stare confirms her romantic hopes. In the companion photograph *Elaine*, the model, May Prinsep, is sitting in almost the same position as before, but significantly Lancelot's shield is missing. Its absence is conscious: there is a large void in the background of the picture. Like the symbolic 'nesting bird' that Elaine embroidered on the shield cover (and Cameron actually scratched or etched onto the negative), Lancelot cannot be confined or contained for long. Once he leaves to return to his beloved queen, Elaine's girlish fantasy is dashed, and the rejection that she feels is evident in her eyes. Uplifted and cautiously hopeful in the first photo, they are downcast and sad in the second. Elaine's hand rests limply in her lap – a foreshadowing of her death – and reminiscent of Rossetti's mournful memorial painting *Beata Beatrix* (c.1864 –70).

⁸ Cameron, 'Annals of My Glass House', p. 135.

⁹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Online Collection <<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/269582>> [accessed 15 February 2015].



Figure 2. Julia Margaret Cameron, *Elaine the Lily-Maid of Astolat* (1874).

Albumen silver print from glass negative. 34.3 x 28.4 cm, David Hunter McAlpin Fund, 1952.

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Yet unlike Tennyson's Elaine whose sorrow is mitigated somewhat by the presence of her family, Cameron's Elaine is completely alone and isolated in her chamber.¹¹ The shield is a strong presence in the composition of Cameron's photograph, and Lancelot's absence is only more keenly felt. Notably, the majority of Cameron's illustrations for Tennyson's *Idylls* did not feature noble knights like Lancelot but rather women like Elaine and Vivien,

¹⁰ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Online Collection <www.metmuseum.org> [accessed 15 February 2015].

¹¹ Barbara Tapa Lupack, and Alan Lupack, *Illustrating Camelot* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), p. 41.

who she transformed from mere types into more active participants in the legend. And through such transformations, she reinvented the female characters and ultimately offered her own reading of Tennyson's text. According to Carol Hanbery MacKay:

Every time Cameron posed her models anew, she rewrote the specific passages of Tennyson's epic poem [rather than merely complementing them]...Not for her was it so simple as it was for the poet or his Age to blame womankind for the fall of Camelot; instead, Cameron provided her own reading of these women, whose faults and virtues commingle to create an in depth interpretation of the Arthurian legends she illustrated.¹²

She introduced subtle juxtapositions of illustrations and text into her Arthurian photographic series, and moved like Tennyson's sequencing between seasons. From its inception, Tennyson followed Cameron's *Idylls* project closely, appearing almost daily at her studio. Encouraged by his enthusiasm as well as her own, Cameron produced a large body of work within just a few months. Though the publisher Henry S. King chose only to include three of her images, including the one of Elaine, he was to reproduce them not as photographs but rather as small woodcuts in the style of the earlier Moxon Tennyson. Distraught, Cameron pushed him to print an album exclusively of her photographs, in their original full size. He agreed, and in late December 1874, his publishing company released *Illustrations to Tennyson's Idylls of the King, and Other Poems*, a folio-size edition, including Tennyson's favourite image of himself known as 'the Dirty Monk' as its frontispiece. The titles were written in Cameron's own handwriting, and the images paired with appropriate lines from Tennyson's poem. *The Morning Post* (11 January 1875), reviewed her book and called Cameron 'assuredly the most artistic of all photographers'.¹³ Her work was praised not only for its technical merit, but also for its imagination, tenderness, and grace. She immediately began work on the second identical volume, though only three images were Arthurian, *Elaine, The Corpse of Elaine in the Palace of King Arthur*, and *King Arthur Wounded Lying in the Barge*. With these few photographs in her Arthurian series, fifteen in all, Cameron managed not only to define photographic illustration and to introduce a feminist consciousness to the legends, but also to ensure her own artistic reputation. Amongst the boldest and most distinctive of her photographic techniques was the close-up, a shot so close, in fact, that it would cause Cameron's image to seem out of focus. Cameron described the technique herself in her autobiographical fragment, *Annals of My Glass House*; '[...] when focusing and coming to something which, to my eye, was very beautiful, I stopped there instead of screwing on the lens to the more definite focus which all other photographers insist upon'.¹⁴ That is to say, she followed her instinct with her own methods, uninfluenced by the norms of technique utilised by professional photographers. Cameron was thus able to create her own style and continue to pursue reproducing the images of her imagination. William Rossetti wrote, in *Fine Art Chiefly Contemporary* (1867),

Exceptional in the critical as in the photographic art are those productions which – like the surprising and magnificent pictorial photographs of Mrs. Cameron to be seen at Colnaghi's – well-nigh recreate a subject; place it in novel, unanticipated lights; aggrandize the fine, suppress or ignore the petty; and transfigure both the subject-matter, and the reproducing process itself, into something almost higher than we know them to be. This is the greatest style of photography [...]¹⁵

This reveals his appreciation for her photography, agreeing with her aspiration for its higher aim, yet like many Victorian viewers he remains aware of the 'operator'. He could not help wondering how the photographs were produced, and felt keenly aware of the process and its maker. W. Rossetti appreciated that like criticism, photography contributed by 'reproducing' the original object and transforming it to something 'higher'.

¹² Lupack and Lupack, p. 46.

¹³ 'Mrs Cameron's New Photographs,' *The Morning Post*, London (11 January 1875).

¹⁴ Cameron, 'Annals of My Glass House', p. 136.

¹⁵ Mike Weaver, *Whisper of the Muse, The Overstone Album and Other Photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron* (Malibu, LA: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1986), p. 9.

Cameron was perhaps one of the few who explicitly pursued photography with a seriousness and desire to elevate it to a status alongside the poets and painters she admired. According to most, the place of photography was not on par with painting and sculpture of the Academy. When O. G. Rejlander, known as the father of art photography, attempted to portray genre subjects and allegorical pictures in photographic form, he was criticised for abusing the medium of photography for something it was not meant for. In a feat of technical brilliance he pieced together over thirty negatives to create the combination print titled *The Two Ways of Life*,¹⁶ which was exhibited in 1857; one of the first occasions where photographs were displayed alongside paintings and sculptures.¹⁷ But many considered Rejlander's promotion of the medium as art to be an unacceptable encroachment on territory that was not his province. Rejlander gave physical form to his views in *The Infant Photography Giving the Painter an Additional Brush* (Figure 3). In this unusual, didactic photograph he uses the traditional painterly device of figures symbolising various concepts. Here 'photography' is personified as a young, cherubic child resting on a camera and passing a new brush to the older hand of 'painting' whose arm reaches through a curtain. Perhaps as a means of personalising his argument, Rejlander can be seen taking this photograph in a reflection in the mirror. *Infant Photography* was not simply a charming technical exercise; it expressed a view on the interplay of photography and the arts that Rejlander embodied.¹⁸

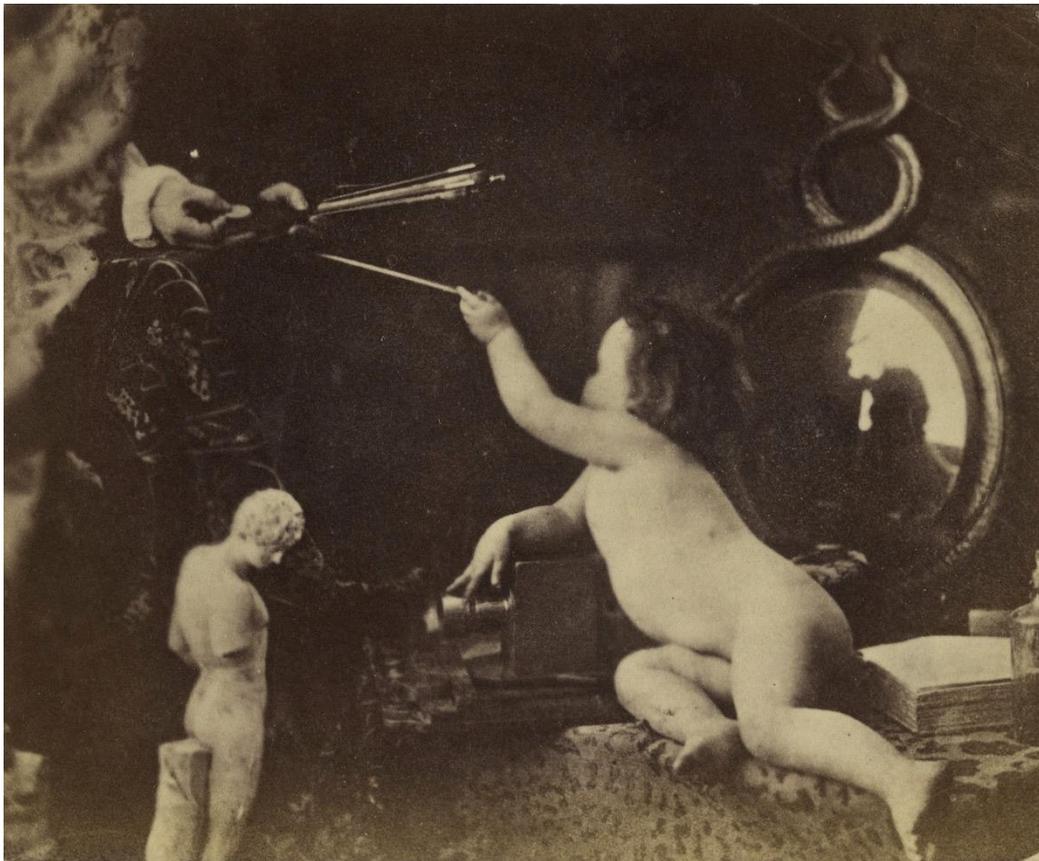


Figure 3. Oscar Gustave Rejlander, *The Infant Photography Giving the Painter an Additional Brush*, (c.1856). Albumen silver, 6 x 7.1 cm.
Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

¹⁶ Cecil Beaton, *British Photographers* (London: William Collins, 1944), p. 27.

¹⁷ Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 60.

¹⁸ Isobel Crombie, *The Madonna of the Future: O. G. Rejlander and Sassoferrato* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2004).

Rejlander's technique stimulated Henry Peach Robinson, a professional photographer who had been trained as an artist, to produce similar combination prints. The photograph *Fading Away* (1857), though praised, provoked controversy when first exhibited for conveying the family's anxiety as the consumptive child lies dying. It was also criticised for making such an upsetting subject seem too realistic. Robinson's work was often compared to the poetic manner of the Pre-Raphaelites, and in 1860 he also depicted Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott* as Elaine gazing at Lancelot's shield. However, unlike these photographers who excelled in 'tinkering', Cameron preferred her own intuitive approach.

It is clear that Elaine, the Lily Maid, became a favourite subject of late Victorian and early twentieth-century visual culture. Christine Poulson estimates that Elaine 'was the source for over eighty works of art in various media between 1860 and 1914'¹⁹ and possibly many more. She represents the Victorian ideal of femininity; innocent and sheltered, yet it also brings into question ideas of female desire; something that interested the Pre-Raphaelites in works like Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* and Rossetti's poem *Jenny*. In 1856, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had worked together on illustrations for Tennyson's Moxon edition of *Idylls*. A hallmark of the Pre-Raphaelite style was a preference for such poetic subjects drawn from literature. Like these artists, Cameron focused on intimate, emotional moments and strove for historical accuracy by carefully researching period costumes and settings, thus demonstrating that photography could equal painting in narrative potential.



Figures 4 & 5. William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Lady of Shalott*.
Published in *Poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson*, (London: Edward Moxon, 1857).
Wood engravings, 9.5 × 8 cm. Used with permission of the Royal Academy of Arts.

By the late nineteenth century, Ruskin claimed to regard photography as a worthless product symptomatic of the soullessness of industrial progress. Cameron's photographs make no pretence at realism in their attempt to render what Ruskin identified in *The Stones of Venice* as 'that inner part of the man, or rather that entire and only being of the man'.²⁰ In 1977, Gernsheim noted that although she was a great photographer Cameron had 'left no mark' on the aesthetic history of photography because her work

¹⁹ Lupack and Lupack, p. 144.

²⁰ Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 83.

was not appreciated by her contemporaries. Yet at the same time eminent photographer Imogen Cunningham commented, 'I'd like to see portrait photography go right back to Julia Margaret Cameron. I don't think there's anyone better'.²¹ Cameron's photographic portraits are now considered among the finest in the early history of photography, and her work demonstrates the highest aspirations of nineteenth-century photography.²² With her subtle use of lighting, complex characterisations, and effective compositions, she reveals a line of descent from Tintoretto through Rembrandt down to her friends and contemporaries, Watts and the Pre-Raphaelites.²³ Her pictures make an ambitious claim for photography, but the sheer strength of her example has been largely upheld.

With great foresight, Guillaume Apollinaire warned that 'one can predict the day when, the photograph and the cinema become the only form of publication in use,' and when that day comes, 'the poet will have a freedom heretofore unknown'.²⁴ The advent of photography with its ability to instantly register the world before it, also allowed art this freedom. It is no surprise then that painting began to move into the sphere of expression and concept, rather than the realism, nostalgia and emphasis on beauty of the Pre-Raphaelites. Yet as Apollinaire went on to say 'however far one advances on the path of new freedoms, they will only reinforce most of the ancient disciplines and bring out new ones which will not be less demanding than the old'.²⁵ Julia Margaret Cameron did much for the history of photography to elevate it to acceptance in the hierarchy of the arts. She has left us with some of the finest records of many notable figures and an alternative view into interpreting the art and literature of the time. The world of art, literature and photography has probably never before, or since, been so inextricably interwoven.

²¹ Helmut Gernsheim, *Julia Margaret Cameron: Her Life and Photographic Works* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1987), p. 5.

²² Weaver, p. 11.

²³ Weaver, p. 9.

²⁴ Guillaume Apollinaire, 'The New Spirit and the Poets', in *Art In Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 2nd edn (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), p. 229.

²⁵ Apollinaire, p. 229.

Appendix

The Lady of Shalott

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

1833 edition

Part the First.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky.
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To manytowered Camelot.
The yellowleavèd waterlily,
The greensheathèd daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
 Round about Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens shiver,
The sunbeam-showers break and quiver
In the stream that runneth ever
By the island in the river,
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls and four gray towers
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
 O'er the stream of Camelot.
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
Listening whispers, "'tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

The little isle is all inrailed
With a rose-fence, and overtrailed
With roses: by the marge unhailed
The shallop flitteth silkensailed,
 Skimming down to Camelot.
A pearl-garland winds her head:
She leaneth on a velvet bed,
Full royally apparellèd
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part the Second.

No time hath she to sport and play:
A charmèd web she weaves away.
A curse is on her, if she stay
Her weaving, either night or day,
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be;
Therefore she weaveth steadily,
Therefore no other care hath she,

The Lady of Shalott.

She lives with little joy or fear.
Over the water, running near,
The sheepbell tinkles in her ear.
Before her hangs a mirror clear,
 Reflecting towered Camelot.
And, as the mazy web she whirls,
She sees the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market-girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
Or longhaired page, in crimson clad,
 Goes by to towered Camelot.
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue,
The knights come riding, two and two.
She hath no loyal knight and true
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights:
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, came from Camelot.
Or, when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers, lately wed:
"I am half-sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part the Third.

A bowshot from her bower-eaves.
He rode between the barley-sheaves:
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Launcelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden galaxy.
The bridle-bells rang merrily,
 As he rode down from Camelot.
And, from his blazoned baldric slung,
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And, as he rode, his armour rung,

Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather,
 Thick jewelled shone the saddle-leather.
 The helmet, and the helmet-feather
 Burned like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down from Camelot.
 As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over green Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed.
 On burnished hooves his warhorse trode.
 From underneath his helmet flowed
 His coalblack curls, as on he rode,
 As he rode down from Camelot.
 From the bank, and from the river,
 He flashed into the crystal mirror,
 "Tirra lirra, tirra lirra,"
 Sang Sir Launcelot.

She left the web: she left the loom:
 She made three paces thro' the room:
 She saw the waterflower bloom:
 She saw the helmet and the plume:
 She looked down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web, and floated wide,
 The mirror cracked from side to side,
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part the Fourth.

In the stormy eastwind straining
 The pale-yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over towered Camelot:
 Outside the isle a shallow boat
 Beneath a willow lay afloat,
 Below the carven stern she wrote,
 THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight.
 All raimented in snowy white
 That loosely flew, (her zone in sight,
 Clasped with one blinding diamond bright,)
 Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,
 Though the squally eastwind keenly
 Blew, with folded arms serenely
 By the water stood the queenly

Lady of Shalott.

With a steady, stony glance—
 Like some bold seer in a trance,
 Beholding all his own mischance,
 Mute, with a glassy countenance—
 She looked down to Camelot.
 It was the closing of the day,
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay,
 The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

As when to sailors while they roam,
 By creeks and outfalls far from home,
 Rising and dropping with the foam,
 From dying swans wild warblings come,
 Blown shoreward; so to Camelot
 Still as the boathead wound along
 The willowy hills and fields among,
 They heard her chanting her deathsong,
 The Lady of Shalott.

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,
 She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
 Till her eyes were darkened wholly,
 And her smooth face sharpened slowly
 Turned to towered Camelot:
 For ere she reached upon the tide
 The first house by the waterside,
 Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
 By gardenwall and gallery,
 A pale, pale corpse she floated by,
 Deadcold, between the houses high,
 Dead into towered Camelot.
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
 To the plankèd wharfage came:
 Below the stern they read her name,
 "The Lady of Shalott."

They crossed themselves, their stars they
 blest,
 Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire and guest.
 There lay a parchment on her breast,
 That puzzled more than all the rest,
 The wellfed wits at Camelot.
*"The web was woven curiously
 The charm is broken utterly,
 Draw near and fear not – this is I,
 The Lady of Shalott."*

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