EBENEZER JONES: A STUDY

by

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B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1969

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
Master of Arts

in the Department

of

English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April, 1971.
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Date 10 May 1971
ABSTRACT

A series of misfortunes had the effect of limiting Ebenezer Jones' verse publication to a single volume. Although many notable writers of the time found merit in the work, *Studies of Sensation and Event*, it was not a popular success; however, Dante Gabriel Rossetti prophesied that one day it would be recovered from its undeserved obscurity. Stimulated by Rossetti, several persons made an attempt to revive interest and the volume was re-issued, posthumously, in 1879. It again failed to generate much interest, however, and it has continued its decline into obscurity to the present.

It has been common in the past for critics to dismiss Jones' poetry as "Spasmodic," or "Chartist" labels that are not only inaccurate but, in focussing upon a single aspect, overlook the significance of the whole work. Ebenezer Jones' book is largely significant as a response to the period of crisis during which he lived. In a period of rapid change and grave uncertainties, Jones exemplifies the transitional poet who, adhering to the romantic literary tradition, tries to come to terms in his art with contemporary issues.

Many of the foremost writers of the time shared Rossetti's appreciation of Jones' talent. They recognized that many of the faults and weaknesses of Jones'
poetry resulted from his attempts to analyze and describe sensation in an original and meaningful way; dissatisfaction with conventional diction led Jones to experiment with words in an effort to achieve the desired effect. The revolutionary nature of his work, the choice of unconventional subjects and their treatment in strange and exciting ways, occasionally results in "jaggedness" or obscurity; on the other hand, he frequently succeeds in conveying powerful sensations with clarity and force.

Critics in the past have tended to discuss Jones' poetry within the context of his biographical misfortunes. These seriously affected Jones' work and for this reason require discussion, but it will be the intention of this study to indicate that many of Jones' poems may be enjoyed as works of art without recourse to his biography. This thesis, therefore, will consist of two parts: the first three chapters will relate the known facts of Jones' life and the circumstances surrounding the two editions of his Studies of Sensation and Event; and chapter four will examine his poetry as its original aspects and as sensitive response to the period.
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INTRODUCTION

Ten years after the death of Ebenezer Jones, and nearly twenty after the publication, in 1843, of his single volume of verse, *Studies of Sensation and Event*, Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote:

> His poems . . . had been published some five years before my meeting him, and are full of vivid disorderly power . . . these "Studies" should be, and one day will be, disinterred from the heaps of verse deservedly buried.¹

An attempt to realize Rossetti's prophecy created a flurry of interest in 1879, but it ultimately proved abortive; and, despite Theodore Watts' (later Theodore Watts-Dunton) assertion that Jones' influence upon other writers was so great that "no student of nineteenth century poetry can leave him unread," his work once more was cast into obscurity.

Apart from passing remarks, frequently erroneous, in literary histories, Jones' poetry has excited little interest in the present century. It is true that Ramsay Colles, in August 1904, wrote a longish monograph for the *Gentleman's Magazine* entitled "Ebenezer Jones," but it is merely a reworking of material from the introduction to Herne Shepherd's 1879 edition of *Studies of Sensation and Event* with some of Watts-Dunton's² earlier observations. In 1909, a Reverend T. Mardy Rees,
exiled in Chelsea, wrote a single page introduction to two pages of poetry, under the title *Ebenezer Jones, the Neglected Poet*. The Mardy Rees article left Jones no less neglected than previously, for the only original aspect of the piece is his effort to "repatriate" "this notable Welshman." Unfortunately, the contemporary critic, Jack Lindsay, decided not to continue with his plans for publishing his *The Starfish Road*, for which he had already written a chapter on Ebenezer Jones, and thus, the most extensive reference to the poet in recent times remains the following imaginative treatment of an episode belonging to his boyhood days. John Betjeman, under the title "An Incident in the Early Life of Ebenezer Jones, Poet, 1828," quotes the following extract from Sumner Jones' "In Memoriam" notice in the 1879 edition of *Studies*:

We were together at a well-known boarding school of that day (1828), situated at the foot of Highgate Hill, and presided over by a dissenting minister, the Rev. John Bickerdike, whose peculiar nasal feature had earned for him among us boys the appellation of "Snipe." It was a theme of frequent discussion among us whether the worthy man had ever found that out - which some of us believed and some not. We were together, though not on the same form; and on a hot summer afternoon, with about fifty other boys, were listlessly conning our tasks in a large schoolroom built out from the house, which made cover for us to play under when it was wet. Up the
ladder-like stairs from the playground a lurcher dog had strayed into the schoolroom, panting with the heat, his tongue lolling out with thirst. The choleric usher, who presided, and was detested by us for his tyranny, seeing this, advanced down the room. Enraged at our attention being distracted from our tasks, he dragged the dog to the top of the stairs, and there lifted him bodily up with the evident intention - and we had known him do similar things - of hurling the poor creature to the bottom.

"YOU SHALL NOT!" rang through the room, as little Ebby, so exclaiming at the top of his voice, rushed with kindling face to the spot among all the boys - some of them twice his age.

But even while the words passed his lips, the heavy fall was heard, and the sound seemed to travel through his listening form and face, as with a strange look of anguish in one so young, he stood still, threw up his arms, and burst out into an uncontrollable passion of tears.

With a coarse laugh at this, the usher led him back by his ear to the form and there he sat, long after his sobbing had subsided, like one dazed and stunned.

The incident inspired the following poem by Betjeman:

The lumber of a London-going dray,
The still-new stucco on the London clay,
Hot summer silence over Holloway.

Dissenting chapels, tea-bowers, lovers' lairs,
Neat new-built villas, ample Grecian squares,
Remaining orchards ripening Windsor pears.

Hot silence where the older mansions hide,
On Highgate Hill's thick elm-encrusted side,
And Pancras, Hornsey, Islington divide.
June's hottest silence where the hard rays
strike
Yon hill-foot house, window and well alike,
School of the Reverend Mr. Bickerdike.

For sons of Saints, blest with this world's
possessions
(Seceders from the Protestant Secessions),
Good grounding in the more genteel
professions.

A lurcher dog, which dray men kick and pass
Tongue lolling, thirsty over shadeless grass,
Leapt up the playground ladder to the class.

The godly usher left his godly seat,
His skin was prickly in the ungodly heat,
The dog lay panting at his godly feet.

The milkman on the road stood staring in,
The playground nettles nodded "Now begin" -
And Evil waited, quivering, for sin.

He lifted it and not a word he spoke,
His big hand tightened. Could he make it
choke?
He trembled, sweated, and his temper broke.

"YOU SHALL NOT!" clear across to Highgate
Hill
A boy's voice sounded. Creaking forms were
still.
The cat jumped slowly from the window sill.

"YOU SHALL NOT!" flat against the summer
sun,
Hard as the hard sky frowning over one,
Gloat, little boys! enjoy the coming Fun!

"GOD DAMNS A CUR. I AM, I AM HIS WORD!"
He flung it, flung it and it never stirred,
"You shall not! - shall not!" ringing on
unheard.

Blind desolation! bleeding, burning rod!
Big, bull-necked Minister of Calvin's God!
Exulting milkman, red-faced, shameless clod,

Look on and jeer: Not Satan's thunder quake
Can cause the mighty walls of Heaven to shake
As now they do, to hear a boy's heart break.
In one of the few recent references to Ebenezer Jones, Rosalie Glynn Grylls (Lady Mander) recalls Watts-Dunton's pronouncement by referring to Jones as an influence on the early Rossetti. The influence is not, however, readily discernible, and unfortunately Miss Grylls makes no further allusion to the connection. Rossetti's correspondence shows that he did recognize the merit in Jones' work - Rossetti was one of the major parties in the attempt to resuscitate Jones' poetry - but his enthusiasm was far from uncritical.

Jones' "incidental influence on Meredith" is noted by B. Ifor Evans in his *English Poetry of the Late Nineteenth Century*, although there is no evidence that Meredith was familiar with the work of the earlier poet.

Although Watts-Dunton laid great emphasis on Jones as a literary source, the influence of a minor poet on a major one is, of course, not always easy to ascertain. Nevertheless, Watts-Duntons' words have a ring of authenticity about them in a way that he never envisioned; the significance of Jones' writing has so far gone unobserved, except in the case of Jack Lindsay who, however, adopts a different viewpoint from that of this paper.

It is the thesis of this study that Jones' work exemplifies the characteristics of the age he lived in.
The thirties and forties of the last century were decades of extreme stress, as society tried to make the adjustment from the old, rigid class system based on an agrarian regime to the new, more democratic bourgeois society grounded in a commercial policy of *laissez faire*. Jones' work is pre-eminently a passionate response to the needs, whether rationalized or intuited, of a society in transition.

The purpose of this examination will be two-fold. The first part will present the biographical and historical aspects of Jones' story that culminates with the appearance of the 1879 edition of *Studies*; the second part will present an analysis of the poetry against the background of the age.

Today, the reader is almost wholly dependent for biographical details on Ebenezer Jones upon secondary material and this is limited, for the most part, to three sources: Sumner Jones' memorial of his brother; "Reminiscences" by Jones' friend W.J. Linton; and, three articles by Theodore Watts-Dunton in the *Athenaeum*. Further information is provided by William Bell Scott, some of whose letters, with those of Rossetti, contain additional valuable information. Unless otherwise stated, none of these letters - all in the Penkill or Angeli Papers in "Special Collections" at the University of British Columbia - have yet been published.
CHAPTER ONE

Ebenezer Jones (1820-1860) was born in Canonbury Square, Islington on 20 January 1820, the second son of Robert and his second wife Hannah. Robert Jones was of Welsh extraction, but his wife, Hannah, (née Sumner) came from a long established Essex family. Both parents were of solidly respectable middle-class backgrounds with similar sectarian views on religion.

There were five other children born to this marriage, Mary (1816-38), Sumner (b. 1818), David (b. 1822), Selina (1824-62), and Hannah (1827-79). Sumner Jones relates that the family was in "competent circumstances," a fact duly acknowledged by the frequent visits of the "tea and toast parsons" of the extremist sect of Calvinist dissenters to which the Joneses belonged. The sect was characterized by austerity and intense bigotry (SJ, p. xxvii), and the joyless tenets of that faith were grimly applied in the Jones household. The older children were avid readers, but the only books admitted into the house were those in which "useful knowledge" was framed in a setting of religious "tags"—books of solid doctrinal divinity, and worst of all books of overwrought "spiritual" experience and hysterical evangelism . . . while the Bible, and
a compilation of short questions and long answers (we wished it had been the other way), dreaded by us, and called the "Assembly's Catechism", were in constant use to fill up all gaps. Dr. Watts and Kirk White were permitted on our Parnassus; but Shakespeare and even Milton were kept in rigorous quarantine. Of Byron we had a mysterious notion, gathered from hearing our elders now and then speak of him shudderingly. . . . Of Shelley we had never heard.

(SJ, pp. xxix-xxx)

According to Watts-Dunton (TWD 1), it was Mary who took it upon herself to counter the harmful effects of extremist dogma, and Ebenezer, as he grew up, was increasingly filled with gratitude and admiration for his sister. He later expressed his sense of obligation in "The Seekers," a requiem for Mary written six years after her death:

Twice three years in this tomb she hath lain;  
Speak low speak low.  
One like to her doth the earth yet contain?  
We have sought ever; is the search vain?  
Speak low.  
Answer we nothing? none have we found?  
Weep not, weep not.  
One like to her earth could but wound,  
Sense with but wearying trammels bound;—  
Weep not.

(p. 190)

Both Mary and Sumner idolized their younger brother; Sumner Jones particularly was impressed by the inherent sense of nobility that seemed to govern all his brother's thoughts and actions. Throughout his life, Sumner looked up to Ebenezer with a regard verging on
hero-worship; and he was bitterly disillusioned and resentful when Ebenezer's verse failed to achieve the popular acclaim that Sumner felt was its due. The explanation he gave to Watts-Dunton concerning his reluctance to publish his own work illuminates Sumner's feelings in this regard:

During Ebenezer's life-time nothing would have induced me to bring out a volume of poems. I not only saw how he had been served; but if success were certain, that alone would have obliged me to desist, for I loved him as men—saving by women—are very rarely loved in this world, and thank God he died knowing it.

(TWD 3)

The oppressive atmosphere of the Jones household was soon to be enlivened by the introduction of the writings of Carlyle and Shelley, but this event was but a prelude to an experience that was to prove far more distressing to young Jones' idealistic vision than the circumstances of his home life.

In the mid-thirties Robert Jones fell ill. His illness endured and brought about a reversal in the family fortunes, which in turn meant an end to the visits of the peripatetic divines who removed themselves to other more affluent homes. The formerly rigorous proscriptions slowly relaxed in their absence and one day Ebenezer Jones brought home a copy of Sartor Resartus. Whole passages of Carlyle's book were committed to memory.
As Sumner remarks, here for the first time, his brother discovered the bold expression of humanitarian ideals that he had longed to articulate and which were to have so profound an influence on his poetry, his politics, his life (SJ, p. xxxix). Other books followed rapidly, in particular an edition of Shelley's Poems, which "afterwards had a magical effect upon him"—an effect which will later be traced in his verse.

Because the family circumstances continued to worsen, it became necessary in 1837 for Ebenezer to contribute to the family budget. He was found a position as clerk in the city warehouse of a tea merchant. The father, notwithstanding his infirmity, had taken as much care in the selection of a place of employment for his sons as he had done in the choice of their schools. It is from personal observation and experience that the "Song of the Gold-Getters" is written, and the sickening disgust and fearful apprehension of those powerful and cold-blooded autocrats is expressed in the chorus to the "Song of the Kings of Gold":

We cannot count our slaves,
Nothing bounds our sway,
Our will destroys and saves,
We let, we create, we slay.
Ha! Ha! who are gods.

(p. 46)

Many times Sumner and Ebenezer Jones must have reflected how similar their lot was to that of slaves.
They worked a twelve hour day from eight to eight and had an hour's walk to and from their lodgings, to which they would return exhausted at night. They worked those hours six days a week, and Sunday was spent tending to Mary. She was consumptive and when the rest of the family moved to relatives of the father in Wales, Ebenezer would walk his sister to Chapel each Sunday, after which they would stroll together in the countryside. When she died, aged twenty-two, in 1838, the brothers were relieved of one of their more pressing responsibilities.

For the first twelve months in his new situation in the city, Jones wrote little or nothing; physical exhaustion and emotional shock combined to fatigue his body and dash his spirits. Eventually, he made a plea for a small amount of leisure time both for reasons of health and self-culture. Sumner Jones describes the Bumble-like response that

self-culture led to pride of intellect, which . . . was "One of Satan's peculiar snares." This language was actually held by men--our employers--who though conducting a wholesale business, in which they amassed large fortunes, stooped, as did others like them, to the lowest tricks of retail trade.

Thus, save that his young genius could not be slain, was Mammon left to finish what the bigots had begun.

(p. xliii)

The request was denied but the boy found solace in the
new ideas he had discovered in Carlyle and Shelley. Carlyle's assertion of a beneficent God brought much comfort but, more importantly, Jones learnt to be resolute, to refuse to be browbeaten into submissiveness, and to draw upon reserves of strength within himself to fight the forces which threatened to bear him down. He discovered in man a nobility and a dignity with which to raise himself above the degrading selfishness and parsimony that surrounded him. But man must be prepared to fight. He must stiffen his will to do battle; then, even if he fails he may gain satisfaction from the experience of having resisted. Such was the antidote Carlyle offered as a means of combatting the evils of the age:

Name it as we choose: with or without visible Devil, whether in the natural desert of rocks and sands, or in the populous moral Desert of selfishness and baseness,—to such temptation are we called. Unhappy if we are not! . . . Our wilderness is the wide world in an Atheistic Century; our Forty Days are long years of suffering and Fasting; nevertheless to these also comes an end. Yes, to me also was given, if not Victory, yet the consciousness of Battle, and the resolve to persevere therein while life or faculty is left.

1

Carlyle goes on to assert that it is a man's duty to himself to strive for the ideal, to reach out toward truth. No matter what situation or circumstances
a man finds himself in, if he is determined nothing can prevent his reaching out for the ideal. Nor has a man's physical surroundings any power to prevent the attainment of that same ideal for it rests within him, in most cases unrealized. The following passage seems almost directed specifically to the young Jones, but there were many others to whom it brought fresh heart:

The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free. Fool! the ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself; thy Condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of; what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the Form thou give it be heroic, be poetic?

Hector Macpherson writes of Carlyle that "he lifted a whole generation of young men out of the stagnating atmosphere of materialism and dead orthodoxy into the region of the ideal," and Carlyle's stirring words could hardly have failed to gain an echoing response from the young poet in 1838.

In addition to spiritual comfort, Jones found in Carlyle's work a warm humanitarian impulse that was reinforced by his reading of Shelley's poetry. But Shelley had no time for martyrs; to Carlyle's philosophy of stoical endurance Shelley would have replied that
acquiescence encourages the oppressor to further outrages. In the "Ode to Liberty" he writes:

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever Can be between the cradle and the grave Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour! If on his own high will, a willing slave, He has enthroned the oppression and oppressor.

Nor had he much respect for Priests; "Queen Mab" is an indictment of the two institutions, the Church and the State, which unite in their efforts to advance the cause of the rich and retard that of the poor. Of the former he writes:

Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs Of outraged conscience; for the slavish priest Sets not great value on his hireling faith; A little passing pomp, some servile souls, Whom cowardice itself might safely chain, Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe To deck the triumph of their languid zeal, Can make him minister to tyranny.

Jones found in Shelley's poetry an emphatic statement of many of his own ideas on the human condition and on social reform. If he discovered in Carlyle a moral strength with which to combat doubt and despair, in Shelley he discovered confirmation of his own inner convictions concerning the necessary improvement of the lives of the exploited workers; a more equitable distribution of wealth based on labour rather than possession;
a hatred of all forms of despotism; and a firm belief in a world characterized by universal love.

The poet's part in the achievement of this ideal was of paramount importance. In the first instance, the poet, gifted with visionary knowledge, would be responsible for achieving political and social reform by encouraging the people to cast off the yokes which enslaved them; and then it would be the poet's task to instruct men in reforming society along lines of mutual trust and affection. Second, the poet by means of his art would keep ideals of beauty and truth before even the humblest of men, who thus would be led to a new moral awareness. Such were the ideas that emerged from this formative period in Jones' life; and they provide the basis of the moral philosophy that he eventually succeeded in synthesizing in his verse.

Ebenezer Jones' philosophy of reform never reached the sophisticated level that Shelley attained. His hatred of nepotism and other forms of material iniquity justified for him the use of violence in the event that other means failed to succeed. In "Ways of Regard," after the poet has described at great length the physical and spiritual degeneration of the lower orders whose hopeless situation is ruthlessly exploited by unscrupulous rulers, a young man promises to carry their grievances to King and Senate. He concludes:
Within this cavern
Are thousands, sworn to rise from out the mire,
Wherefore you damn them; they will rise, - will rise,
Though war may hew their pathway, though their march
Be in blood to the armpits! Oh that it were mine
To lead them bloodless conquerors! They will rise,—
But with the chains they shatter from their limbs,
Must they do it hellishly. A vessel, laden
With captives fetter'd unto famine and plague
Now is this land; the slaves force-freed,
will make it A burning wreck; themselves amidst the flames,
Maniacs, wild dancing. Oh who, who can know,
How to redeem this people?
(p. 167)

One means of redeeming the people which occurred to the young Jones was the nationalization and more equable distribution of the land. Nationalization of the land formed the cornerstone to Ebenezer's political platform and found its most complete expression in his pamphlet on land monopolization, written in 1849.6 The germ of the idea may be seen in the titles of the only two other recorded tracts by Jones—"The Conciliation of Society by the Organization of Labour," published in Robert Owen's New Moral World, in 1839; and "Arguments for and against Private Property," published at about the same time in Goodwin Barnby's Promethean, Or Communitarian Apostle, a Monthly Magazine.
Robert Owen's *New Moral World* had appeared in 1834 as the organ for Owen's own brand of socialism. Owen's philosophy, which owes much to Rousseau, is often crudely fashioned but the man was sincere and sought only to be of service to the underprivileged. He was a tireless worker within the general agitation for reform, although he had little sympathy for the Chartists and the Members of the Corn Law League, whom he felt deluded themselves in thinking that political reforms would cure their ills. His reforms required the complete restructuring of society and the education of the populace towards a superior moral character.

For a time, Ebenezer Jones became a disciple of Owen. He would have been impressed by Owen's philanthropic measures and by his humanitarian impulses. But, concerned more with the individual's improvement of himself, to be encouraged by a fairer distribution of land and the removal of political measures designed to confine the lower classes to the same inferior station, Jones could not sympathize with the substitution of one form of regimentation, however benevolent, for another. The essence of his own belief was that man should be granted the means--independence through possession of land--to improve by virtue of his own endeavour. In a footnote to his pamphlet on "The Land Monopoly" he underlines his support for private enterprise:
This Tract is by no means . . . intended to favour the notion of Communism. Inequalities of Fortune are as unavoidable as they are just, and are not less useful than ornamental to a nation. Communism is indeed nothing but an ephemeral, though fierce reaction against that confiscation from most men of all property of every kind whereby is constituted the land monopoly, and supposing it for a moment triumphant, the day of its establishment would also be the day of its repudiation, by even its warmest disciples.

The Socialist movement commanded Jones' sympathy but his own decided views prevented him from making his support absolute. As with Socialism, so with Chartism; he was sympathetic to the demands of the Chartists and wrote in their support on occasion; he even edited for a time a newspaper, The Fireside Journal (previously The Odd-Fellow) owned by Henry Hetherington, who had helped draw up the "People's Charter." Both papers carried political leaders which advocated political reform. Ebenezer has been labelled a Chartist by some literary critics. Gladstanes-Waugh, in the query which began the chain of events that culminated in the 1879 edition of Studies of Sensation and Event, calls him a Chartist, and Rossetti when he responded to the query the following month, may have given credence to the idea with the following comment:

I met him only once in my life, I believe in 1848, at which time he was about thirty, and would hardly
talk on any subject but Chartism.

W.J. Linton, himself a confirmed Chartist and friend of Jones, points out that Ebenezer is sometimes confused with his namesake and fellow poet, Ernest Jones, who gave his pen to the Chartist movement. Linton quotes from memory the following doggerel which neatly distinguishes between the man, primarily a poet, who felt it his duty to support the struggle for human rights, and the man, primarily a politician, who used his poetic talents to further the cause:

Eben Jones,
A swift brook among stones;
And less earnest Jones,
Scanter brook with more stones.

Outspoken in what he considered to be a just cause, Jones would easily have merited in many people's view the pejorative epithet "Chartist." "Those were the days," Linton recalled in 1879,
in which that now innocent word Radical meant something exceedingly reprehensible if not acutely disreputable; days when to wear a beard or an incipient moustache would call down the condescending scowl of the counting-house Jove, and according to the jovial mood subject you to instant dismissal or the gently severe request that you would leave off that enormity in business hours.

(p. lxx)

Jones, of course, sported a beard; and he was not the person to be intimidated or deterred from a course of action he had determined on. "He dared do anything that
he thought right," says Linton; but, while his sympathies were with the Chartists, they went "beyond, I would add, to republicanism," (p. lxxii). Nevertheless, even though he could not avoid aligning himself with the popular reform movements in the years prior to the publication of his book of poems, and though he felt strongly enough to write in support of the movements, it was poetry that had first claim to his pen; and it was as a poet that he felt he would eventually be recognized, and through it make his most effective contribution to mankind.

When his first published poem, "Ode to Thought," appeared in Tate's Edinburgh Magazine, in 1838, Jones could not conceal the satisfaction it gave him. Finally, it seemed, his hopes and ambitions were going to be realized. As he and Sumner walked home that night, Ebenezer confided to his brother his determination to "emancipate himself by his pen from city thraldom."

"From that time forth," Sumner recalls

after working in the City all day, he set himself to bend night to his fixed resolve, and completed, during the next four years, a series of poems of which the "Studies" are but a selection.

(p. xlvii)

His labours culminated in 1843 in the appearance of his book Studies of Sensation and Event. Into his book went all his passions, his protest against
the tyranny of materialism, and his poetic ideals. The book was also invested with life-long hopes and ambitions. It was to be a justification of Mary and Sumner's faith; it was to be the instrument of his liberation from "city thraldom"; but, above all, it was to be the means of carrying to the hearts and minds of men his vision of universal love.

After Sumner's account of the excitement and impatience with which his brother awaited the appearance of "Ode To Thought" (SJ, p. xlvi) one may gauge the anxiety, the hopes and the fears that must have attended the reviews of his first book. The first review of the Studies appeared in the Spectator on 9 December 1843. The book appeared in time to catch the Christmas trade, traditionally the best market for books of verse; but the Spectator review carried few glad tidings for the young aspirant. The reviewer detected elements of Browning, Tennyson, Barry Cornwall and the Cockney school; however, there was also "a warm voluptuousness, which, to do the world justice, is EBENEZER'S own." The voluptuous element was not only "gratuitous," but inconsistent with a somewhat moral seeming; done with an uncoveredness unnecessary to convey result or express meaning, and yet exhibiting rather a gloating fancy than a vigorous passion.
The reviewer was critical of what he considered serious moral lapses but he was not totally disparaging. The review concluded on a note that conceded that, if Mr. Jones only observe suggested improvements, he might well succeed in the future. However, even such grudging praise was heavily qualified:

Notwithstanding the faults of morals, taste, and critical principles, that pervade this author, with a strong dash of affectation super added, there seems to be in him a vein of true poetry, that might by care and labour be successfully wrought. There are frequent poetical passages in the volume, and traces of poetical power; but whether this would tell as it now does, if it were abstracted from uncommon ideas and sounding verbiage, to be occupied in expressing natural images in simple language, may be a question.

Undoubtedly, there poems in the volume that invite the charge of being "inconsistent with a somewhat moral seeming," but the emphasis on "gratuitous" voluptuousness is grossly exaggerated. The passage in "Zingalee," when a mariner, returning unexpectedly home from sea, discovers his wife and her lover in flagrante delicto, is described in faithful detail; but there is no sense of prurient relish—indeed, the episode is essential to an understanding of the husband's emotional shock that ends in his insanity. The incident, however, is used as a base from which to deliver a sweeping slash at "other poems [unidentified], where
the treatment, or the subject, or both, is in the wanton style."

A similar charge of writing with "impure motive" was levelled by Thomas Hood, who was personally unacquainted with the younger Jones. It was Sumner who had sent Hood a presentation copy of his brother's book, and it was Sumner who was most offended by the accusation of immorality, and who was later at such pains to vindicate his brother's character. Yet, there was some consolation in the fact that the criticism was in a letter rather than in print:

there was room for congratulation that Hood, who it was hoped would review the book in his own magazine, had not openly done that, which would have made matters worse; and so we both felt before we separated that evening. (SJ, p. xxv)

But the censure was not allowed to remain private; in response to Gledstanes-Waugh's inquiry, in 1870, William Bell Scott gave the following version which was to distress Sumner Jones for nearly ten years: 13

Thomas Hood, who was very ill at the time Jones's volume of poems was published, on receiving a presentation copy sent for the author, earnestly requesting to see him. Jones of course went immediately, proud to be so invited by one he so much respected, and saw Hood in bed. The author of the "Song of the Shirt" had fallen into a severe mood on his sickbed; all his life, indeed, he was a great stickler for propriety of moral tone in
literature; and while he acknowledged that he had sent for Jones because of the great poetic power in his book, accused him so savagely, as my friend thought, of impure motive and tendency, that Ebenezer was rendered miserable.

Bell Scott concludes:

The person who could give the best account of Ebenezer Jones, perhaps, is W.J. Linton now in New York.

When Linton did give his account, he contradicted Bell Scott's version: Ebenezer had not visited Hood, and it was Sumner, not Ebenezer, who had sent the book. Furthermore, he continued,

It was not in despondency, but with defiant disdain that Eben met a rebuke so unexpected and so undeserved. Grieved he doubtless was; grieved that "impure motive" should be imputed to him; but it did not make him "miserable". His answer was a manly letter to Hood, in courteous, collected, but incisive terms vindicating himself from a false charge.

(p. lxvii)

The only other review to appear in December, 1843, was that in the Literary Gazette, whose reviewer was completely out of sympathy with Ebenezer's verse:

Here is a cat [said the Gazette's critic] of another colour, and a strange wild cat it is. It is long since we encountered a minion of the moon so original in subject, thought and expression. It was said of Oliver Goldsmith that he touched no subject which he did not adorn; and it may be said of Ebenezer Jones that he handles no subject which he does not make ridiculous. He is wonderful
in his way. Of all the nonsense-verse trash we ever read the worst is "Emily". We might multiply examples of every sort of folly; but we will only quote two or three stanzas on different themes to add to the surprise of readers that ever such stuff was printed and published. [He refers to "Whimper of Awakening Passion"] The last verse is indecent, and so we leave it with Ebenezer; upon whom it will be well that a jury de lunatico inquiriendo never sit, and we on that jury.

With one exception, none of the early reviewers felt motivated to write about other poems than those of a "voluptuous" nature. "Emily," "Whimper of Awakening Passion", "A Crisis", and "Zingalee" were each singled out as typifying the whole, and, where they were not roundly denounced on moral grounds, they were placed in the public stocks and jeered at.

The single notable exception was the March review in The Critic whose poetry reviewer discovered in "Plea for Love of the Universal" "the voice of genius." The reviewer went on to write, somewhat fulsomely:

The mind that thus hath uttered its deep thoughts hath thoughts more deep to which it cannot yet give words, but which, as time and practice make it strong to conceive and vigorous to express, it will assuredly send forth to swell the grand chorus of song, that from the beginning of the world has been gathering and proclaiming to man that God has endowed him with faculties more divine than those demanded by the cares of life, and the
encouragement of which is no less a
duty, because a part of the scheme of
creation—a gift entrusted by heaven
that it may be cultivated,—an account
of which will be demanded of him here­
after;

In Ebenezer's verse was recognized the "spark of
divine fire" and the remainder of the volume, the
writer found, supported his first impressions:

Everywhere we found the footprints of
genius. No smooth sounding nothings—
no mawkish sentimentalities—no servile
imitations offended. Faults there were,
many and palpable; inelegancies of
language, harsh rhymes, dissonant metres,
some affectations both of sentiment and
words; not unfrequently vagueness is
mistaken for profundity and mysticism
substituted for thought; but these are
errors which age will correct, which
friendly criticism has but to indicate
to ensure their avoidance, and many of
which have proceeded from an over­
anxiety to appear, as well as to be,
original.

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In its way, such extravagant praise is as much to
be deplored as the other extreme views; as criticism it
adds little of constructive value, but as a morale
booster it may have helped to counter the disagreeable
effects of the earlier reviews—and, at least, it serves
to put all such excesses into perspective. The tone of
the Athenaeum review was more temperate, but once more
the love-lyrics were noted as being "of a somewhat
voluptuous character, and calculated to startle sober
men like ourselves." The reviewer comments on the
Spasmodic elements (not labelled as such) in the book and cautions the author to adopt a less pretentious style or else "run the risk of misconception. One knows not whether to ascribe the peculiarity to genius or conceit." Vacillating between stern reproof and encouragement, like a dowager aunt, the critic continues:

Let him, however, not mistake us: we are not depreciating his talents; what we state is meant in the way of admonition and warning. There is originality in many of his subjects.

And, as if fearing that such praise might prove too heady a draught, or else that his prodigality might encourage self-approbation, the reviewer hastily withdraws with a prim swish of skirts and leaves his parting injunction to work its salutary effect:

We recommend him to be more humble in his pretensions and simpler in his address, when next he appears in public. He may rest assured that there are other means of "pleasing" in poetical composition, than by exag-gerating passion into maniac defiance, and exhibiting joy and grief in such extreme degrees that life is insupportable beneath the intensity of their pressure.
CHAPTER TWO

The reception of *Studies of Sensation and Event* was by no means a rapturous one. But then, neither was it an unqualified failure. Of all the reviews consisting of more than one paragraph, only that of the *Literary Gazette* (so far as may be determined) found nothing worthy of praise and encouragement; tributes were paid to "a vein of true poetry" and to "originality in many of his subjects," and *The Critic* heralded the appearance of a potential "genius." The consensus overall seemed to be represented by one of *The Critic's* more moderate pronouncements, that Ebenezer Jones showed true ability and a potential he might realize if he were to apply himself diligently to weed out the faults and affectations we have noticed, to throw himself boldly upon his own genius for thoughts, and to clothe them in the vest of pure, vigorous English.

Certainly, his first literary venture had failed to generate the enthusiasm desperately desired, and assuredly the day of Ebenezer's acceptance into the "Brotherhood of Art," with the concomitant emancipation from city drudgery attendant upon such recognition, was not immediately at hand; yet, there was sufficient encouragement in the notices to justify the belief that success depended only on time and poetic maturity. How, then, is one to account for the fact that Ebenezer
proceeded to destroy a body of poetry that was to have followed the first publication had it been acclaimed, and that he forsook art for politics, limiting his output to a mere half-dozen more poems for the remaining seventeen years of his life?

Sumner Jones had no doubt as to the cause. He laid the blame squarely at the door of the "perverse and lying criticism" of the reviewers. According to Sumner Jones, Ebenezer had imagined the world of art as a place of high ideals and scrupulous honesty; accustomed to perfidy and baseness in the commercial world, he clung to the illusion of artistic integrity. Jones' ingenuousness stemmed largely from his inexperience in publishing circles; he had little leisure time to cultivate literary acquaintances, and his fierce pride rejected friendship except on the basis of equality. The little knowledge he possessed of worldly affairs was bookish and necessarily incomplete:

The reception of his poems was a matter of genuine surprise as well as disappointment to my brother. He was prepared to profit by any fair severity of criticism. But seeing passages from his book studiously garbled and wrenches from their context, to convey a false impression of the whole, forced him to hear the "Lie, let us lie," chorus of his world of traffic echoed in an arena where he had thought that a "free lance" would at least meet fair attack. Until thus disillusioned he had
indeed fondly imagined that there was a brotherhood in Art.

(Theodore Watts-Dunton, though doubtless primed by Sumner, also explains Ebenezer's poetic surrender in terms of his artistic disillusionment. Watts-Dunton describes how Ebenezer invested his dreams in a supra-mundane sphere of belles-lettres "where a poem had only to be good ... to be hailed" as such; how belief in a "Brotherhood of Art" became a religion to him; how he built his hopes for alleviating widespread want on his work which, he was convinced, would meet with fair criticism even if found lacking; and, finally, how Ebenezer recoiled in disgust from the discovery that his ideal world was no different, in fact, from the sordid arena with which he was already familiar:

The way to daunt the dauntless is to shatter his ideals. It was not so much that he smarted under the puny satire of those who reviewed him in the newspapers, but he sent presentation copies of the book--(which he must have known showed the writer to have at least as incisive an intellect as any man then at work in belles-lettres)--to those who filled the high places in literature; and with the exception of generous notes from Barry Cornwall and Mr. R.H. Horne, and another one or two, not a word of encouragement came to him--not a word of generous sympathy.

(It is interesting to note that Watts-Dunton chooses to stress the effects of private indifference...
and the implied rejection of the Studies by some individuals in "high places." As the chief literary critic of one of the leading literary journals of the day, Watts-Dunton was not only familiar with the infighting and personal rivalries that have always characterized the literary arena, he also probably felt that it behooved him to admonish occasionally literary men whose eminence placed them beyond the strictures of lesser pens. Furthermore, he was sensible, in a way Sumner could never be, of the ephemeral nature of press reviews and their effects since he himself had written countless similar ones as a matter of course.

On the other hand, Sumner, in all his writings on the subject, is most concerned with the public aspects of his brother's "failure." Sumner's horror at anything approaching a public slur on Ebenezer's character, particularly where it carried the implication of impropriety, may be reasonably attributed to his Calvinistic upbringing. His letters to Rossetti are filled with a deep sense of gratitude to Rossetti and Watts-Dunton. For, above all, the Athenaeum articles represented for Sumner a final and public vindication of his brother's honour which had been besmirched all those years before. His letter to Rossetti dated 18 October 1878, is one long prayer of thanks. It concludes:
But not as I last left [the World] shall I return, but rather with the sweet consciousness that what truth and love both desired should be done has now been done and great and abiding is the satisfaction to me and my daughter—who has been intensely interested in what has been done for her uncle's memory and for my sake,—

Although each chose to interpret the facts according to his lights, Sumner Jones and Watts-Dunton agreed that it was the disappointing reception of his book which had determined Ebenezer in the course he was to follow for the remainder of his life. Sumner consistently contended that:

It was the public attacks, such as that in the Literary Gazette, that troubled my brother. He despised, never noticed them; but he saw clearly that they involved the failure of his book.  

(SJ, p. xxv)

It would be difficult to extend much sympathy to one who quit writing because he was piqued that others in "high places" did not register the appreciation he felt was his due. However, such an interpretation only partly fits the facts. For, apart from the "generous notes" from R.H. Horne and Barry Cornwall (whose literary importance ranked higher in their own day than in ours), Jones received a warm letter of praise from a writer whose eminence in literature extended beyond his own time and country. On the fifteenth of April, 1844, only two days after the
Athenaeum review, Charles Dickens wrote the following letter to Ebenezer Jones:

Dear Sir,

I don't know how it has happened that I have been so long in acknowledging the receipt of your kind present of your poems; but I do know that I have often thought of writing to you, and have very often reproached myself for not carrying that thought into execution.

I have not been neglectful of the poems themselves, I assure you, but have read them with very great pleasure. They struck me at the first glance as being remarkably nervous, picturesque, imaginative, and original. I have frequently recurred to them since, and never with the slightest abatement of that impression. I am much flattered and gratified by your recollection of me. I beg you to believe in my unaffected sympathy with, and appreciation of your powers; and I entreat you to accept my best wishes, and genuine though tardy thanks.

Nowhere does Sumner or Watts-Dunton mention Dickens' letter, which would certainly have weakened the construction that Watts-Dunton placed upon the facts.

Sumner is unequivocal in his assessment of the situation. On the other hand, W.J. Linton, one of the two friends closest to Ebenezer at this time—the other was Horace Harrall (pp. lx-lxi), claims that the effect of the reviews on Ebenezer, as one would expect of a man so self-sufficient and resolute, has been over-emphasized:
Particular recollection failing me, I should still know that he was not one to be crushed because, having enlisted among those desirous to make a figure in the world, he found the world in no hurry to witness the performance. Knowing the worth of his attempt, surely he wished for and felt his right to expect some sympathy, if not applause. The desire of appreciation belongs to a healthy mind. But he knew also the course of other poets, and had too much good sense not to be forewarned of his own eventualities.

Linton goes on to list other poets to whom recognition came late, including Thomas Hood and R.H. Horne. He continues:

My time of companionship with him must have been mainly between 1842 and 1848. I can recall no special alteration of thought or demeanor at all attributable to the non-success of his literary venture. Disappointment struck him in passing, but passed, having other and more poisoned darts with which to reach him.

(pp. lxiv-lxvi)

The implication is that the cause for Jones' abandonment of his verse lies elsewhere.

William James Linton, who later achieved distinction as an engraver, was very close to Jones in the years 1842-1848, and he is the source for much information during this period. As if anticipating that Sumner's memoir would be necessarily "a subdued account," Linton is careful to portray the carefree liveliness of his friend, as he knew him:

A right capable man of business, diligent
in his hours of work, however . . . he disliked that work, he could make amends for the enforced restraint by riotous, almost reckless enjoyment in the after hours; could play the bohemian as well as any never-calvinized youth among us, with perhaps a more eager craving and fuller relish because of Calvinistic recollections. . . . Every pore of his being was open to pleasurable sensations, his attraction generally toward the best. Caught too readily perhaps (not being suspicious or distrustful) by a fair outside, loving easily, careless sometimes of appearances (for formality surely he could have no respect), however wilful or careless, I always perceived and respected in him a pure clean-heartedness, a perception of the highest, a severely honest determination to do right, and a chivalrous feeling very rare among men. . . . Full capacity for enjoyment, whether of his senses or his intellectual faculties, characterised the man in his day of health; delighted with all he saw, from the rugged bleakness of Wastdale to the pastoral repose of Buttermere, enjoying equally a row on Crummock-Water and our evening walk beside the golden woods to Keswick. . . . A worshipper of beauty, sensitive, pleasure-loving, impassioned, his erotic poetry was as much the affluence of his blood as of his brain (not that I find one line in it of which one need be ashamed); and easily moved to love he could not help but sing, as the buds must open in the spring sunshine.

(WJL, pp. lxxii-lxxvii)

The curious note of regret tinged with reproof struck by the words "Caught too readily . . . careless sometimes of appearances," is explained by succeeding events—events which Linton went on to insist subsequently resulted in his friend's poetic demise.
He had the misfortune to fall in love with an anonymous young lady who could not return his love—she was betrothed to a friend of his whom she married. Poems such as "The Face," "A Happy Sadness," "Repose in Love," and "Prayer to a Fickle Mistress," among others, "are pages torn from life, and which tell a story of their own." (SJ, pp. xxi-xxii). She died shortly after marrying and Jones, virtually on the rebound, with characteristic impulsiveness proposed and was accepted by Caroline Atherstone, a niece of Edwin Atherstone (1788-1872), the poet whose gigantic labours included the thirty volume *The Fall of Nineveh*. The young couple married within a few days of their meeting. William Bell Scott, who was introduced to Jones by Linton and began his friendship about the same time, afterwards wrote of the marriage:

> Ebenezer's day of poetry was his day of love, many of his poems being written just before his marriage to the daughter [sic] of Edwin Atherstone, the author of a poem of portentous length called "The Fall of Babylon." [sic]

Successive writers have been quick to point out the further inaccuracy that the love poems were inspired by one other than Caroline Atherstone. As Linton makes clear, "as regards the courtship of the wife, it was too brief for much amount even of the most rapid rhyming" (p. lxxvii). The only poem apparently commemorating the
marriage is the untitled "My wife my child come close to me."

There are hints in Sumner's narrative that there may be more to the facts of the marriage than he is prepared to divulge. It was, however, left for W.J. Linton to state in his "Reminiscences," sent from America, that the well-spring of Ebenezer's poetry was soured at the source, until finally it ran dry. The cause of this phenomenon, he stated, was Caroline Atherstone.

Miss Atherstone was of a striking personal appearance; she also possessed a fine singing voice. But, as Bell Scott noted, "all her inheritance of beauty and musical talent did not ultimately insure her domestic peace or the well-being of her husband."

The Joneses and the Bell Scotts were acquainted and, on occasion, would spend a social evening together. Bell Scott has recorded one of the rare pieces of factual information regarding the marriage:

To Ebenezer's many pains, in a temporary passion of admiration, he added another by marrying Miss Atherstone, a model for Cleopatra, possessed of a characteristically rich voice, and power of using it, that inspired her with ambition of a musical career.

For two or three years we, that is my wife and I—for my wife took to her enthusiastically on account of her musical talent,—made a point of seeing Jones and his wife annually. Once we all went to the opera, where
we were joined by the younger Costa; we were in his box, I believe. It was soon evident to me that Jones was incurably unhappy that evening, and possibly every evening.

The enigma surrounding the marriage is the most mysterious aspect of the whole tantalizing affair. Bell Scott's last words intimate much, but in fact say little. Sumner skirts the issue entirely. In the forty-five pages of his memorial notice of his brother, he devotes one short paragraph to Ebenezer's marriage, and even in that he restricts himself to a single comment, to the effect that Ebenezer was "lamentably allied" to Caroline Atherstone in marriage in 1844. Linton, three thousand miles away in New York, was under no such restrictions as Watts-Dunton, whose biographical account merely recorded the fact of an unhappy marriage which could not be discussed; but, although he is more forthright about the sterilizing effect of the marriage on Ebenezer's poetry, he is unwilling to discuss facts:

Of the misery of that marriage I must speak. But how? Surely I have no thought of telling the unhappy story after the manner of a witness in a police-court. Trite observations on causes also may be avoided. What would all the facts avail? ... Facts! I never knew any, of man's or woman's life, that could not be stated in at least two ways. ... I will give no facts. Nor have I word to utter of the wife; of whom also personally I have but a faint impress, seeing but little of her. I have to
write only of what concerns my estimate of the man, of what remains stamped upon my memory as the truth in relation to his conduct and his character.

( pp. lxxviii-lxxx)

He goes on to pay tribute to Ebenezer's courage, and "Christ-like generosity and goodness." He compares his suffering to that of the Spartan boy with the fox under his vest gnawing his vitals, bearing the pain as uncomplainingly:

A man most keenly sensitive, the torture he went through must have been agony indeed, the bitterest a man could undergo.

Facts he prefers to forget, but there is no doubt in his mind that here may be discovered the real reason why Ebenezer renounced poetry for prose. It was not the mean effusions of petty-minded critics, he stated, but a genuine heart-sickness that sapped his vitality and withered his poetic inspiration at the fount.

However laudable the reticence displayed by everyone in their delicate treatment of the subject, the fact remains that the extreme caution each displays makes it well-nigh impossible to arrive at a thorough estimate of the effects of the marriage upon the poet, except that all (including Sumner) seem agreed both that the marriage was an unhappy one and that it had a pejorative effect on Jones' poetic vision.

One effect of Linton's account, however, was to
embolden Sumner, in a postscript to Linton's "Reminiscences," to intimate circumstances he had hitherto totally ignored, "because I dared not trust to myself to speak." After noting that Ebenezer had, on more than one occasion, sought to escape the employment he detested, Sumner states (p. lxxxiv) that he would inevitably have freed himself, if only because he could have been content "to live upon the ascetic edge of life," among like-minded men of the same high principles as himself. However, he was prevented by the circumstances of his home life. He was fettered by the "incessant and extravagant claims upon him," by one whose excesses caused "silently borne" suffering and grief, one for whom Ebenezer sacrificed himself "in ceaseless striving to reclaim."

The cause of the marital discord is never revealed and the reticence of all involved only serves to encourage discussion. Sumner's concluding comments infer much; that Jones' wife made "incessant and extravagant claims" upon her husband's finances--but for what reason? Was she a spendthrift or an addict; or was there some other motivation involved? Sumner's last quoted statement about Ebenezer's "sacrifice of himself in ceaseless striving to reclaim," [my emphasis] would seem to support the theory of addiction. But, whatever the reason, it was obviously such as to make it impossible
for Jones to continue with his art.

The biographical truth will probably never be
known, but the effects on Ebenezer's poetic powers are
manifest. To one whose life had been a constant striving
after the beautiful and true, and who felt divinely
appointed to spread those ideals among men, the defile­
ment of his courtly concept of love, expressed in "Repose
in Love" and "A Crisis," among other poems, must have
seemed like a betrayal of his last defences, following
so soon upon the cool response to his book. It was W.J.
Linton's confirmed opinion that:

Had he rejoiced in a happy home we
had not been without more of such
lines as those he did address to
her ["My Wife and Child Come Close
to Me"], a richer growth through
culture of his poetic nature, and
with the continuance of his day of
love continuance of poetic aspiration.
(p. lxxviii)

Disillusioned with love and belle lettres, he
turned to pamphleteering. Having decided to reject
poetry for politics, he ruthlessly destroyed a body of
poetry intended as a sequel to his first book, lest he
should be swayed from his newly resolved purpose by what
Sumner referred to as his "lust of completion."

Sumner bitterly opposed his brother's wilful
desertion of poetry for radical prose and there seems
to have existed some enmity between them for some years
on that account. Their meetings were infrequent, the
estrangement encouraged, rather than otherwise, by Sumner's taking a position in a bank in another part of the city. Doubtless, too, Jones' unhappy marriage increased the sense of alienation.

For many of the sixteen years until his death in 1860, Ebenezer clung to the hope that he might bring about through radical prose reforms which had inspired much of his verse. He remained resolutely inflexible to Sumner's periodic entreaties. Unfortunately, he was confirmed in his resolution by signs of the same disease that had earlier taken the life of his sister. The earliest notice of Ebenezer's ill health comes from William Michael Rossetti. At Dante Gabriel Rossetti's request, a mutual friend, Major Caldwell, had arranged an introduction to Ebenezer Jones in 1848; William Michael was present and described Ebenezer as:

A thin, pale man, tall rather than otherwise, nervous-looking, and somewhat sickly; he spoke with a kind of careless seriousness, or measured and self-contained impetuosity. He was then already an invalid, suffering from dyspepsia, and probably from pulmonary disease.

Ebenezer was then twenty-eight years old:

That same year, 1848, was the Chartist year; the year that an alarmed government called on the Duke of Wellington and the military to defend the Houses of Parliament against the militant Chartists. Over a
half-million protest marchers were anticipated and prepared for; in the event, only a fraction of that number materialized and the expected confrontation was avoided. Nevertheless, feelings continued to run high, and in those tense months "Chartism" was a word on everybody's lips. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when Rossetti met Ebenezer he "would hardly talk on any subject but Chartism"—significantly, however, in his political treatise published a few months later, there is no reference to Chartism. While he wished passionately to see the reformation of society, he was less concerned that the masses obtain the vote than that they receive a fair share in the produce of the land. Throughout his life, his idée fixe remained the returning of the land to the people, and his views received their fullest explication in a twenty-eight page pamphlet that appeared in 1849, under the title The Land Monopoly; The Suffering and Demoralization Caused by It; And The Justice & Expediency Of Its Abolition.

The content may be summarized thus: the land belongs to everyone but in the ages of barbarism the men of power and wealth, chiefs and leaders, usurped it to themselves and conferred portions on others for political reasons; thus they disposed of what they never rightfully owned. Time and custom have confirmed
landowners in their mistaken attitude toward private ownership encouraging the belief that the land was theirs to use as they saw fit. The result has been inefficient cultivation and low productivity; in a land where it has been calculated that ten million people could support in affluence one hundred and twenty million, given the proper means of cultivation, out of a population of forty million more than one in twenty persons are supported by charity. Frequently, the conditions of labour are so appalling that physical debility is the inevitable result—however, a worse effect is the spiritual and moral degeneration of men and women forced into a life of servitude or pauperism.

The land monopoly should be abolished and replaced by a number of Land Commissioners whose functions would include the apportioning of shares in the land to everyone; the regulation of land cultivation to ensure maximum productivity; the fair compensation of landowners so that, within their lifetime, they would not suffer from the abrupt termination of a life style to which they had become accustomed. If a labourer were dissatisfied with his remuneration, he could apply to the Land Commissioners for land equivalent to that amount. The natural result would be a fair standard of living for all, a hitherto unknown measure of independence for the masses, and an end to
involuntary servitude.

The essay is an attempt to revise the attitudes of those monopolizing the land but, unfortunately, the author allows his emotions to colour his judgement. The factual aspects of the treatise are confined to chron­icling the undoubted hardships of the people with little corresponding weight attached to the means of alleviating their distress. The proposal set forth by Ebenezer Jones would call for a major restructuring of society which would leave no single person unaffected. Not only does Ebenezer fail to suggest concrete plans for such a major upheaval, his case rests on the willingness of those persons who have most to lose, (the landed gentry) to institute, organize, and supervise the reforms.

As is often the case in utopian schemes, practical means are overlooked in the pursuit of altruistic ends. The necessity of reform demonstrated, the author states that it is not his intention to advocate any particular plan: "Suffice it to observe that several plans are possible, the difficulty being not in the finding of any, but in the selection of the best" (p. 8). The weakness of the paper is underscored when, at two crucial stages in his argument, he resorts to analogy instead of proposition. On the problem of efficient management and regulation of his scheme, Jones places his trust in the readiness and capacity of the masses to
ensure that the land is managed efficiently; to suppose otherwise he claims, would be "to suppose national idiocy" comparable to

that of a shipwrecked mariner indifferent to the life-boat sent for him, or of a starving wayfarer inattentive to an offer of food shelter.

(p. 6)

And, concerning the equitable distribution of produce (although he has previously pointed to the deficiencies of the labour market and the difficulties inherent in "determining equal awards to equal claims"), he dismisses anticipated demands to demonstrate how such distribution would be effected without creating new inequities:

The demand appears reasonable, but is in reality little more so than would be a demand for evidence that removal of a barrier between food and hungry men (hungry men that is, under the control of just laws, and equally entitled to obtain food), would be the means of getting food equitably eaten.

(p. 8)

Perhaps the above judgments are too harsh for what Ebenezer terms a "merely indicative sketch" but, given the fact that one in twenty of the population was on the poor rolls, and assuming that many of society's ills were directly attributable to the exploitation of the masses, as he claims, it is not sufficient merely to point to the evils and suggest a solution that, superficially at least, seems impractical. Under the
circumstances, one would be justified in requiring a more explicit statement; even for a sympathetic reader, the proposal leads only to frustration and impatience. If, indeed, the author's scheme were as viable as he himself believed, then why did he not make more of an effort to add substance to his theory. In brief, despite the commendable motives that inspired the pamphlet, as a working proposition the scheme is valueless for the simple reason that the people with the power to put the scheme into effect were the very ones who had least to gain. To abolish the land monopoly would require a revolution of the labouring classes, a fact which Ebenezer appears to recognize in his concluding pages. Universal suffrage was not yet achieved, and the author did not have too much confidence in its effectiveness; he felt that, with the power structure that then obtained, the achievement of a truly representative government was an idle dream. Yet, he sought to circumvent the movement for political reform in order to institute his social changes, appearing to believe that the landed gentry would more readily divest themselves of economic than political power. The principal intent of the pamphlet was the persuasion of landowners to reverse their attitudes toward private ownership; in doing so he evinces a charitable view of the upper classes that is at odds with characteristics the author describes frequently
in his poetry.

It would appear that Sumner Jones' instincts were sound, for, referring to the ephemeral nature of the radical prose which proliferated in those middle decades of the nineteenth century as an exasperated proletariat desperately sought overdue reforms, he wrote, "his pamphlet on the 'Land Monopoly' . . . with which he took singular pains, was certain to be void of effect." At this time, Jones had numerous political papers on hand, and he busied himself with continual modification and revision. Ultimately, Sumner wrote, none of them saw the light of day and in the end they were all destroyed. It seems, in retrospect, as though, his mind once made up, Jones continued wilfully to pursue a course which he must have known would lead nowhere and that he did this partly as a palliative to his wounded sensibilities and, partly, as a counter-action to suppress poetic tendencies that might once more be misinterpreted and bring their author nothing but increased unhappiness.

That Jones was sensible of the perversion of his talents may be adduced from his anguished response to his brother's suggestion that he call on his demigod, Carlyle; the young poet had moved to old Chelsea as he became increasingly ill because he had a love of that part of the city and enjoyed evening strolls along the
river after he became too sick to take long walks. The move was also an act of homage to Carlyle whom Jones would frequently see on his walks. One day Sumner reminded his brother that Carlyle had acknowledged the gift of *Studies of Sensation and Event* with a cryptic little note and suggested that Ebenezer call on him:

He replied,—I call on Carlyle! See his look fixed on me, and hear his voice uttering the words—"Young man, what have you done?" And such a shudder passed over his face, and he was so distressed, that I never renewed the subject.

(SJ, p. lviii)

In 1858, Jones was well enough to take a holiday in Jersey where, Sumner relates, he was full of ebullient life. One of the results of the holiday was that the poet began to write verse again: "I Believe," included in R.H. Shepherd's 1879 edition, certainly belongs to this period; it seems likely, too, that "A Winter Hymn to the Snow" was composed at this time. (On page vi of his memoir, Sumner talks of "a few poems composed in Jersey during the last winter of his life.") It is probable that the remaining poems were handed to W.J. Linton "as a parting gift" when that gentleman returned from the north of England in 1860, to find his friend dying. They were not included in the edition published twenty years later, as Linton was in America and did not have the poems with him. These poems are
not known ever to have been published nor is their location known.

The last known poem of Ebenezer's, "To Death," written just three months before he died, is dated June 10, 1860. Weeks later, yearning for the countryside, Jones was moved to Brentwood in Essex to the house of a relative. He rallied briefly, but, finally, died on Friday, September 14. He was buried in the churchyard at Shenfield, according to his final wishes, in a spot secluded but "not lonesome or neglected."

It is unfortunate that only three poems have survived from the last years, when Ebenezer Jones finally relinquished old unpleasant memories and once more took up the vocation he seemed born to. It is the more regrettable in that his last poems indicate a maturer vision, a greater control over his material, and a philosophical response to life which enriches and adds depth to his verse. It is fruitless to reflect on what might have been, yet it is difficult not to regret that streak of wilful pride which effectively prevented the full maturation of his powers, which left only an indication of his true capabilities, and which denied to later generations more poems comparable to "A Winter Hymn to the Snow," and "To Death."

If Shelley, as Jones had written in a letter to a M. Considerant (quoted p. xliiv), was a "lute,"
Ebenezer Jones was an Aeolian harp, whose harmonies are the spontaneous outpourings of finely felt sensations. If he had been acquainted with more experienced writers, or, if he had continued to exercise his poetic faculty, he might have achieved a greater control in more of his verse. As it was, too often his verse proved too frail a vehicle to support the intensity of his feelings. Such, also, is the conclusion Bell Scott arrived at. After recalling Coventry Patmore's *Tamerton Church Tower*, he writes:

> Ebenezer Jones was another who had sent me his book *Studies of Sensation and Event* which had more vitality, but less poetry. His excellence lay in his aspiration, and in a perception of more than he could express. 9

The book, according to Watts-Dunton was foredoomed to failure because it lacked "that harmonious balance of the faculties which comes into Aristotle's definition of happiness" (TWD 2). He describes it as a "Camacho's cauldron, full of all kinds of things rich and rare." Books immeasurably inferior, continued Watts-Dunton, have succeeded where it failed. He noted its sensitive execution of mood and feeling in a variety of modes. Unfortunately, he felt, there was too much variety; "In a word its eccentricities damned it."

Before going on to consider the fate of the
Studies it seems appropriate that a discussion of the man and his life should conclude with an evaluation by one of those who was with him at his death. W.J. Linton was one of Jones' two most intimate friends; his familiarity with the details of Jones' life and work, particularly in the critically important years between 1842 and 1848, enable him to give a creditable, if not wholly impartial, assessment of his friend's character. He concludes his "Reminiscences":

Sensations of the keenest, whence quick impulses; clear insight as to right and wrong, from which arose his indignation against injustice; fearlessness and fortitude, and with them tenderness for others; rare poetic gifts, and at the same time the practical talent and good sense of a man of the world; all these belonged to Ebenezer Jones. What he has written speaks for itself, needs no comment, eulogium or criticism from me. I have spoken only of the man. He was of the type of Alcibiades, but with an idea of duty which the Greek had not; a man seemingly marked out from his birth, by his very nature, to be beloved and to succeed. Sorrow and Misfortune saw and envying slew him. Only a memory remains in place of all that promise.

(p. lxxxii)

A memory, and of course his single volume, Studies of Sensation and Event.
CHAPTER THREE

Ebenezer Jones died in 1860 believing that his ill-starred book of verse had been irretrievably forgotten. Such would probably have been its fate but for a chance query ten years later in Notes and Queries, which began a series of events that culminated, nineteen years after the poet’s death, in the resurrection of Studies of Sensation and Event. The reappearance of the book, in 1879, was due to the concerted efforts of a few individuals who sought to generate a popular demand for the deceased poet’s work. One of the parties most concerned for the fate of the book was Dante Gabriel Rossetti, but not even his active promotion of the enterprise ultimately ensured its success for, although a second edition was eventually brought out, once again Jones’ verses failed to achieve the public recognition that several of the foremost writers and critics of the time felt they deserved. The particulars of the abortive revival are worth recording if only for the revealing light they cast on the motivations of the two principals involved, R.H. Shepherd and D.G. Rossetti.

The stray query that resulted in the recovery and preservation of Ebenezer Jones’ poetry, some of it still in manuscript form, appeared in the 8 January 1870 number of Notes and Queries over the name of F. Gledstanes-Waugh. It read:
EBENEZER JONES—Can any of your correspondents supply me with particulars of the life of the above-named Chartist? He published a volume in 1843, entitled Studies of Sensation and Event—a very striking book, but long since out of print.

Gledstanes-Waugh has long since swelled the ranks of the dead but his name lives on because Rossetti noticed the request and was interested enough in the subject to write, a month later, a longish letter in reply. He recollects his meeting with Jones and goes on to praise his verse; he notes that he himself heard Browning "speak in warm terms of the merit of his work" and that Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), likewise, admired the studies. He closes his remarks on Jones with the statement: "It is fully time that attention should be called to this poet's name which is a noteworthy one."

He closes his letter with some words of high praise for a poet similarly neglected, Charles J. Wells, author of Joseph and His Brethren, and Stories After Nature. After citing Wells as an even more striking example of "poetic genius" that failed to be recognized, he concludes:

Well's writings—youthful as they are—deserve to stand beside any poetry, even of that time, for original genius, and, I may add for native structural power, though in this latter respect they bear marks of haste and neglect. Their time will come yet.

The relevance to Ebenezer Jones of the note on Charles Wells may not be immediately apparent, but it
should become more meaningful shortly.

The next issue of Notes and Queries, March 5, contained a further letter on the subject, from Rossetti's friend, William Bell Scott. He added a few personal reminiscences and information which, unfortunately, contained several errors of fact. Bell Scott's letter has been discussed elsewhere, together with the distressing effect that it had on Sumner Jones until Watts-Dunton's articles, eight years later, finally cleared his brother of the charge made public by Bell Scott, of "impure motive and tendency."

However, it is not Sumner Jones' reaction that is of present importance, but that of another person who also read the two letters concerning Ebenezer Jones and decided that if men of such literary standing as Rossetti, Monckton Milnes, Bell Scott, and even Robert Browning, were convinced of the merit of the comparatively unknown Mr. Jones, the reissue of his book of verse might prove to be a rewarding venture.

Richard Herne Shepherd in later life was to become a reputable bibliographer, but in 1870 he was a young man of twenty-eight struggling to earn a living by writing, and reduced to literary hack work. In 1869, he had translated a selection of poems from Baudelaire, who was generally unknown in England; the book was not a success. In the previous years, he had
edited for B.M. Pickering the poetry of William Blake
and at the time of reading Rossetti's and Bell Scott's
tributes to two poets of "neglected genius" was pre-
paring the second book in a series of bookseller's
editions of the classics on Shelley.

One of the few ways to make money from the
writings of others was to unearth or revive an early or
unknown work of an author in current vogue; another and
rarer, was to bring out an edition of a writer whose
genius, like that of Blake and Keats, had gone unrecog-
nized by his own generation.

Shepherd was an astute, resourceful man and he
thought he detected in the letters to *Notes and Queries*
the basis for a profitable undertaking. Perhaps, he
felt that the literary climate was not yet right, or
perhaps, as he later stated in his preface:

> Pressure of more urgent literary
> work between the years 1873 to 1876--
> postponed the execution of a scheme
> which I never ceased to cherish.
> (p. xiii)

Whatever the cause, nearly a decade was to pass before
he returned to his scheme. During that period, the
"more urgent literary work" included *Poetry for Children*
(1872), by Charles and Mary Lamb; Coleridge's tragedy
*Osorio* (1873), with notes; "The Lover's Tale" and other
uncollected juvenilia of Tennyson, unearthed from albums
and periodicals and printed privately. (The edition of
fifty copies was suppressed by court injunction.) He also published an anticipatory notice of Tennyson's "The Window; or, the Loves of the Wren," a copy of which he had obtained by "piecing together the lines which he had found distributed through the pages of a concordance to the author's works."  

It was inevitable that such unusual diligence and enterprise should eventually invite reflections on their author's motivation and literary principles. The first public examination was occasioned by Shepherd's reprint of The Earlier Poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1826 to 1833. The reviewer in the Athenaeum (15 December 1877) discussed at length the early and immature work of many poets whose distinctive voice emerged only when they had unlearned the amalgam of influences which characterized their early productions. He notes that the mature work of Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, for example, bears no relation to their earlier "quintessential amalgam of the literary vices of [their] many predecessors;" it is a consolation to the mature poetic mind that former puerile effusions are no longer in print, and in most instances, to quote Mrs. Browning, can "only be remembered against him by a few personal friends." Such was the gist of the reviewer's remarks as he led into the following passage, later cited in the suit brought by Shepherd against the Athenaeum:
But, while he is rejoicing in this fool's paradise, there is eating into his bliss an insect, whom, if he even perceived, he would ignore. . . .

What we allude to is, of course, the bookseller's hack. Though devoid, always, of the worst dash of literary taste, the hack has yet intelligence enough to recognize the pedestal of fame upon which a poet has been placed; though devoid of the faintest tincture of culture, he nevertheless can read and write. In a certain sense, he must be called a bibliographer, no doubt; for by dint of that enormous patience which often accompanies a dearth of intelligence, he makes himself really learned in editions and in variations of texts. Having discovered some forgotten production, or some inchoate form of a known production of a famous writer, he scans the book-stalls till he finds a copy, and then, if he can find a bookseller so forgetful of the dignity of a noble calling as to abet him, he reprints what the poet had so fervently hoped was "only remembered against him by a few of his personal friends."

The piece, of course, is anonymous so that there is no way of knowing if the review the following month, of Shepherd's revised edition of Lamb's Poetry for Children, was by the same hand; however, the review continues the attack on unscrupulous entrepreneurs who exploit the name of established authors. Where a book is out of copyright but unlocatable, states the reviewer, the booksellers would sometimes resort to inventing a reproduction for themselves. Such, it is claimed, was the case with R.H. Shepherd's 1872 edition of Lamb's book of children's verse.
Three days later, January 15, the *Athenaeum* printed a lengthy letter by Shepherd repudiating "most distinctly and emphatically the insinuation contained in the review." However, the evidence was against him and he gained little satisfaction in reply:

Is not Mr. Shepherd somewhat uncertain in his use of words? We did not "insinuate"—we stated as a matter of fact—that Mr. Pickering's issue of 1872, owing to "the suppression of all mention of, or clue to, the sources of the little selection," was an "attempt to pass off as a reprint of the lost book, the selections from Mylius it contained.

Shepherd had been badly burned by the reviews, and at least one publishing house, that of Chatto and Windus, ceased to employ him for editorial work. However despite the severity of the pronouncements against him, and the consequent financial loss, his mortification was not yet complete.

Apparently, in 1878, he considered that the "pressure of more urgent literary work" had eased sufficiently for him to put into effect the scheme he had "never ceased to cherish," for towards the end of August, 1878, he produced a thin, buff-coloured pamphlet of twenty-four pages, entitled *Forgotten Books Worth Remembering*. The subject was Ebenezer Jones' *Studies of Sensation and Event* which was to be the first in a series of monographs by the editor.
Although Shepherd's faith in Rossetti's critical judgment is attested by the advertisement on the book cover, which states that number two in the series of monographs will figure Charles Wells, he was uncertain enough of the success of the project to seek some reassurance. The pamphlet was sent out as a feeler to gauge public reaction before he committed himself to the time and effort required for a full length book.

The secondary objective of the preliminary publication was to stimulate interest and a possible demand. The monograph opens with an acknowledgement to Rossetti and Bell Scott (whose names presumably would provide by association some interest lacking in the original), and he goes on to excerpt reviews from the Literary Gazette, the Athenaeum, and, of course, the Critic. Six poems are represented including two—"When the World Is Burning," and "My wife and child come close to me"—not contained in the earlier work; he also expresses the pious hope that "the day may not be far distant when this precious volume may be republished by some surviving friend or representative of the poet." Whether or not he, himself, would undertake the proposition obviously depended on the response to his initial probe.

The response was immediate and encouraging, even though it included an unfortunate personal attack which,
in this instance at least, appeared unwarranted. On 14 September, the *Athenaeum* reviewed the pamphlet and the reviewer, shielded by the anonymity reviewers commonly enjoyed and familiar with the previous judgments on Mr. Shepherd's proclivities, indulged in some rather pungent rhetoric which, despite the generally commendatory tone of the remainder of the review, resulted in an action for libel being brought against the *Athenaeum*.

On 16 June 1879, in the case *Shepherd v. Francis* (the publisher), the court heard extracts from the review of Mrs. Browning's early poetry; and the opening paragraph of the review of *Forgotten Books Worth Remembering* was quoted in full. It reads:

> If a combination of the chiffonier and the resurrection-man could constitute a personality of importance in the world of letters, we should have to congratulate Mr. Shepherd upon his position, for he seems to have an uneasy zeal for hunting up things which readers have forgotten, and which authors have dropped by the wayside, or wish they had never produced. To be one's own vampire is an unenviable lot; to be somebody else's vampire is a post to which only a tortuous ambition could aspire. But there is no accounting for tastes; it is said that whenever the office of hangman is vacant competition is brisk.3

The judge was obviously in sympathy with the sentiment if not the expression, for in his summation he noted that while the plaintiff was legally entitled to
publish Mrs. Browning's work, "there were some rights it was bad taste to assert." The jury found that the defendant, nevertheless, had been over-vigorous in his protest and, in view of Mr. Shepherd's consequent loss of employment by Chatto and Windus, awarded him damages of £150.

The anonymous reviewer of Forgotten Books was William Michael Rossetti, who was not usually given to asperity, a fact which had misled Bell Scott. He wrote on 20 September to Dante Gabriel Rossetti:

You surprise me by telling me the article on Shepherd was by William. I took it to be Watts, perhaps led to do so by the severity of the remarks on that literateur's character.4

The flavour of the article was not characteristic of William Michael who was a generous and kind person and a temperate and scrupulous critic. He once wrote, towards the end of his life:

If all my old critiques were to be reprinted . . . and if I were to reread them, I do not believe that I should in a single instance be compelled to confess to myself, "There I said what I knew to be neither true nor fair; a bad personal motive was at the bottom of it."5

Despite his assertion that his literary conscience was quite clear, he would doubtless have welcomed the opportunity to rewrite the above notice in a phlegmatic tone characteristic of most of his writing. In volume two of his Reminiscences, he recalls the trial and confesses
that, though his intentions were not maliciously motivated, they were ill-advised and he reflects ruefully:

Since that date I have not been much in the way of writing or publishing tart things about anyone, and I should feel that the temptation is one to be steadfastly resisted.6

William Michael Rossetti was never asked to appear at the trial and his name was never associated publicly with the review. What effect such knowledge would have had on Shepherd it is impossible to tell—possibly he might have decided not to press on with his design—for it was to Dante Gabriel Rossetti that he turned for help when a problem occurred in the preparation of the book. If Shepherd had known, too, that the considerable interest which his pamphlet had generated (as indicated by the articles in the columns of the Athenaeum and Academy) largely reflected the enthusiasm and personal magnetism of one man, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he would certainly have reconsidered the project. As it was, Shepherd discovered that he could count on Rossetti's willing cooperation and editorial assistance when the need arose. Writing to Watts-Dunton on 26 February 1879 Rossetti notes:

The unhappy Shepherd has been driven to ask me Ebenezer riddles (as to Illum [inated] Mag[azine]) which you had promised to solve, but it seems solution came. I have tried to lay his perturbed spirit.7
William Bell Scott was a long time friend of Rossetti. He had written to Notes and Queries a week after Rossetti, in 1870, and now after Watts-Dunton's articles appeared in the Athenaeum he went into print again with two long letters to the Academy, on 2 and 16 November. These contained the unpublished letter from Jones already referred to and the previously unpublished poem "To Death," which Horace Harral had entrusted to him. Bell Scott's correspondence also indicates the interest in Jones that had been set afoot. The topic of Ebenezer Jones recurs in many of his letters during this time; for example, he writes to Rossetti on 12 November 1878:

Yes it is the Devil to pay: The increasing crowd of chattering girls and smart young ready writers who must begin by issuing a small volume of poems as if that was the easiest part of their intended work. But there is a difference when one knows the author to be no literateur or ready writer, but a quiet, modest, good young soul, who only fancies his life is a wreck at 22 because of a love affair falling through.8

(The remainder of the letter concerns the contentious Hood episode and indicates that the difference in their versions of it had now become a source of personal animosity between Bell Scott and Watts-Dunton.

Rossetti was delighted that Bell Scott was doing so much to publicize Jones' cause, even if their evaluation
of the poet did not correspond. Writing to Watts-Dunton, he stated:

Scotus writes as enclosed. You see he is rattling the bones of Ebenezer pretty briskly. Notice the superlative form of address to myself. No doubt he is an affectionate old Scotus.9

It was Rossetti who, after seeing Shepherd's pamphlet, reviewed by his brother, had written to Sumner and proposed that Sumner call upon Watts-Dunton.10

During Rossetti's final years he came more and more to rely on his "little solicitor." Watts-Dunton, for his part, was only too willing to sacrifice his own interests and volunteer his devoted services to the artist.11 Watts-Dunton was the chief literary critic of the Athenaeum and, although Rossetti's correspondence shows that the Athenaeum eulogies were exclusively written by the critic, there is no doubt that Rossetti inspired their appearance, as he had in the case of Joseph Skipsey's A Book of Miscellaneous Lyrics,12 even to the extent of approving Watts-Dunton's articles before publication. In a postscript to a letter dated 15 September 1878, and addressed to Watts-Dunton, Rossetti proffered his services:

I should like to see what you write about Ebenezer, as I might possibly offer a hint or two as to matters of fact. I dare say even your friendly zeal will deem it unwise to make me foreground figure in connexion with subject after the similar case of Wells.13
The result of so much activity in the leading journals between September and November 1878, was a new edition the following year of *Studies of Sensation and Event*. No doubt it made "a fine fellow happy," but it seems to have had little other effect. Four years later, in 1883, the publishers were still in possession of a substantial number of copies. Today, unlike the 1843 edition, which is scarce, the later edition is comparatively easy to obtain.

Rossetti was an astute critic, but he was also an artist and, thus, was capable of appreciating artistic merit where it might be missed by a less discerning eye. This partly explains why poets like Charles Wells, Joseph Skipsey, and Ebenezer Jones remained lifetime favourites with him but failed, despite his efforts, to enjoy public appeal. Thomas Early Welby supports such a view in *The Victorian Romantics*, where he writes:

[DGR's] criticism of poetry was entirely a poet's which is why he estimated more highly than any but a poet will the poetry of Chatterton, of Wells, of Ebenezer Jones, of Hake, recognizing in immature or frustrate work an energy which had need to produce more definite results for recognition by ordinary criticism.

It seems more than likely that the renown which attended the book from September to November 1878 will never be surpassed. Except for the occasional scholar, already
the book has virtually ceased to exist. Such is the inevitable fate of a minor work particularly if the writer happened to be born in the nineteenth century when an unprecedented number of people (if they were not forming a sonnet collection) were publishing their single volume of verse. However, one must be careful to distinguish Ebenezer Jones from this "crowd of ready writers" as Bell Scott labelled them, for an examination of Jones' work indicates a genuine, though erratic poetic impulse that at times reaches greatness.
An analysis of Ebenezer Jones' poetry should properly begin with a consideration of the title of his single volume, *Studies of Sensation and Event*. Even the most cursory glance at the contents will indicate to the reader that the title was no random choice, for the greater part of the verse recreates and examines modes of feeling ranging from the starkly sexual to the subtlest nuances of psychological motivation. At the conclusion of "A Crisis" he describes his poetic ambitions:

... could poet sound
Words that should give the minds of those who heard
Knowledge of its prompting feelings, he would fling
Art to the winds, thought, life, and heaven, forget,—
And though the uttering the words should shatter
Him to annihilation, he would speak,
And shatter himself into eternal fame.

(p. 124)

Frequently, the mere recalling of sensations in their former vividness proves an impossible task as "Remembrance Of Feelings" relates. A recurring difficulty, too, was the inadequacy of conventional diction to describe his perceptions. It often lacked sufficient vitality and force to convey his deeply felt passions and so Jones can be seen experimenting with his language reviving archaisms, arranging words into new combinations, and
where necessary, creating new words themselves.

The psychological aspect of feeling also interested Jones and in several poems he attempts to trace a sensation to its source, a pursuit which leads him towards a theory of the imagination that derives from Hazlitt and Wordsworth. The significance of the theory of the "association of ideas" as Jones applied it to his work will later be seen to form (together with aspects of Shelleyan neoplatonism) the basis of his poetic and moral philosophy.

A few of the characters whose responses Jones analyzes and details appear direct descendents of the "noble savage." Their response to life is almost wholly intuitive and when emotionally wounded their only release is through self-inflicted pain as is the case of the lovers in "Zingalee" and "A Crisis."

The assumption that what is "natural" in man is his feelings encourages an emphasis on such qualities in art as spontaneity, immediacy and originality. If what is best and most "natural" in man is his emotional character, then in art what should be most striven for is the original and outgoing expression of his feelings. According to the precepts of the School of Sensibility which formed part of Jones' literary inheritance, man's feelings are naturally directed towards the good. Thus, whatever political or social conditions thwart their
expression become hindrances to progress, which may account for the revolutionary nature of much of Jones' work.

But, as has been suggested, the revolutionary aspects of Jones' work are not confined to political or social issues. In his selection of subjects and in his treatment of them Jones demonstrates a revolutionary's zeal in his willingness to experiment and innovate. Indeed, the generally poor reception of his book may in large part be attributed to what Rossetti described as 'the wilful newness' of his art; on the other hand, the praise of such people as Browning, Dickens, and Rossetti reflects the appreciation of writers for the efforts of another writer to break through to new dimensions of thought and expression.

Much of the originality of Jones' verse consists in his attempts to examine and describe sensations with an immediacy of language that would enable the reader to experience vicariously the intensity of the sensation; frequently these sensations were of an extreme nature such as inflamed sexual passion, virulent hatred, insanity, bloody vengefulness, and approaching death. Jones' choice of subjects suggest the measure of his radicalism. A comparison of Wordsworth's "The Idiot Boy" with Jones' "A Development of Idiotcy" illustrates Jones' break with traditionally sentimental attitudes towards
madness in verse and Jones' own efforts to give realistic expression to its causes and outward manifestations. Likewise, the physical appearance of death and the sensation of dying were also traditionally considered unfit subjects for poetry, and on this account Jones' choice of the theme merits some consideration.

Conventionally, the poetic treatment of death took one of two forms. It was customarily either personified or handled elegiacally, usually with a reverence inspired by fear. To Jones, however, death was an integral part of the cosmic unity and no more to be feared or shunned than any other part of man's experience. In the poems "To A Corpse - Watcher," "A Development Of Idiotcy," and "The Poet's Death," Jones describes in vivid detail the physical characteristics of death. "A Development Of Idiotcy," for example, opens with an account of a death-bed scene:

Fearful the chamber's quiet; the veil'd windows
Admit no breath of the out-door throbbing sunshine,
She moans in the bed's dusk,--some sharp revulsion
Shuddereth her lips as though she strives to cry,
But finds no voice: she draweth up her limbs,
They flutter fast and shake their covering.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

A gloom seems passing o'er her countenance,
As the shadow of a cloud across a field;
Perchance the ghastly expression of the horror
With which life ends; it darken'd but a moment;
Now she turns white as stone, as fix'd as dead.

(p. 69)

The poet goes on with unabashed candour to describe the husband's recognition of the finality of death:

All is still;
He rises from the ground, fast locks the door,
Breaks through her couch-clothes, feels about her heart;--
All there is motionless; he lifts her hand;--
There is nothing but dead form, it moves not, warms not,
It weighs, it slides away, it drops like lead,
Lies where it dropp'd:

(p. 70)

Jones was not morbidly obsessed with death; nor was he attracted to the dark beauty of corruption and decay that fascinated his contemporary Baudelaire. It is interesting, however, to discover in the poem "Two Sufferers" many of the motifs that recur in Les Fleurs Du Mal. For example, the liebestodt image of the worm at the flower's centre which Baudelaire frequently juxtaposes with carnal love is the central metaphor of Jones' poem. The final stanza brings together the two images whose union is seen to have been inevitable from the beginning:

From her whitening face
Now starts its lustre; closed her quivering lips;
Fall'n to the ground by passion, she lies paler
Than the lily at her side! Now, suddenly,
Trembled the moonlight from the gardens;
swiftly,
Clouds swept before the moon; a swift cold wind
Came, bending all the trees;—she shuddered dead;—
In her dark scatter'd hair the wind-snapt lily
Lay with its lifeless leaves; from its bare roots
Fierce sneak'd their worm.

(p. 46)

For the most part, however, Jones is concerned to describe death and dying simply as observable phenomena like all manifestations of human experience.

The subject of "A Development Of Idiotcy" and "To A Corpse-Watcher" is not death, as such, but its observable effect upon the main character in each poem. Death is the event that unleashes the powerful emotions which are Jones' primary interest. The significance of the second part of the title Studies of Sensation and Event, then, is a causative one. Often, as in these two poems, the incident is of some importance, but just as frequently the event is quite trivial. In "Car la pensée," which is central to Jones' poetic creed, a young boy, strolling in the woods, is impressed by the stillness and solitude of the place and suddenly recalls his local church and the priest's blessing. The impression is so great that he is filled with spiritual ecstasy. The episode is trifling; in fact, the poet
refers to it as such but warns against dismissing it on that account:

Deems any this vision insufficient cause
That I should love the hour that gave it me,
Oh! knew he his own human-nature's laws,
Much would he yearn to have been given it to see.

He continues to expand this cryptic reference in more detail:

The essence of mind's being is the stream of thought;
Difference of mind's being is difference of the stream;
Within this single difference may be brought
The countless differences that are or seem.

Now thoughts associate in the common mind
By outside semblance, or from general wont;
But in the mind of genius, swift as wind,
All similarly influencing thoughts confront.

Though the things thought, in time and space may lie
Wider than India from the Arctic zone;
If they impress one feeling swift they fly,
And in the mind of genius take one throne.

This order of mind is shaken to the core
With mighty joy, while therewithin cohere
Its far-brought thoughts; o'er the common mind's dull floor,
As of old, its thoughts, rejoicing not appear.

(p. 180)

Clearly Jones is working with the theory of
the "association of ideas," according to which the mind is the repository of sense impressions derived from all past experiences. What makes the young boy's vision so great an event for Jones is that he is enabled to observe at first hand the working of the imagination which has blended two discrete elements into a single and new entity filling the child with rapture. The term "mind's being" is synonymous with feeling; thus different feelings are believed to be the result of a different set of associations. Whereas the common mind is impressed by outward appearances only, the loftier imagination of genius enables such people as poets to penetrate to the essence of things; to grasp by a process of sympathetic identification the common elements of widely various entities and experience them as an indivisible part of a larger unity. The effect upon such an "order of mind" is one of spiritual ecstasy, a communion with a higher plane of reality.

In several of his poems, also, Jones can be seen working with the "associationist" theory. "A Crisis," "Early Spring," "Zingalee," "To A Corpse-Watcher," and "Ways of Regard" are experiments in which Jones seeks to discover hidden resemblances in various phenomena and show their workings upon the mind. "The Waits" is a poem inspired by a similar desire to examine and comprehend the nature of sensation and relate it to the
imagination. In addition to illustrating this aspect of his work an analysis of the poem should reveal characteristics which give much of Jones' poetry its distinctive flavour.

The pivotal episode in "The Waits" is even more trivial than is common in poems of this kind, which should alert the reader to look elsewhere for the significance of the poem. Typically, the central action follows a preamble, usually, as in this case, a natural description which establishes setting and atmosphere. The setting, characters, and mood move towards a harmonizing unity which sometimes is sustained to the poem's conclusion, as in "Early Spring," but which occasionally is the prelude to an abrupt change in tone, as occurs in "The Waits." Because this poem will be discussed as characteristic of Jones' style, "The Waits" is here quoted in full:

I had seen the snow sink silently to the ground;
    And beauteously its white rest
Quieted all things, and the hushing sound
Murmuring and sinking everywhere around,
    Blessed me and was blest.

I had seen the moon peep through the dark cloud-flight,
    Then gradually retreat;
And her re-appearing smile of gentlest might,
Beneath which all the clouds sank calm and bright,
    Me lustrously did greet.

And I had heard the ungovernable sea
    Earth's quietness loud scorn;
I had mark'd afar his raging radiancy,
And proudly, in his pride, had felt that he
    And I were twain god-born.
But than the under-uttering hush of snow,
Than the moon's queenly reign,
Than ocean's pride, more beautiful did
glow
One other beauty, --even now bending low
I adore to it again.

For on that night, while Christmas
melody plain'd
Our lonely house around,
Interpreting wild feeling, else restrain'd
From any utterance in the heart death
pain'd;
Suddenly, hushing sound.

Came from a lonely chamber's opening door
A beautiful boy child;
His pale face fear'd to dare the darkness
more,
His white feet hesitated o'er the floor,
And many a prayer he smiled.

Then tiptoe gliding through the gallery's
gloom,
His hands press'd on his heart,
Noiselessly enter'd he a distant room,
And stealthily its mellow'd moonlight
bloom
His gliding limbs did part;--

Till o'er a couch all bathed in slanting
sheen,
Where, lapt in splendour, slept
A little girl her childhood's sleep
serene;--
His look growing like to her look, he did
lean.
And a brief moment kept

Affection fixed, a reposing gaze
Upon the sleeping light,
Pleasuring beneath her eyes, and like
soft haze,
O'er the clueless beauty of her mouth's
sweet maze,
Glowing mildly bright.

When suddenly, with intenser utterance,
scream'd
The music's wild require;
And as suddenly his startled countenance
beam'd
In vivid pallor, and his wide eyes
gleam'd
With coming and going fire;--

And then he arrested her unclasped hand,
He kiss'd her gentle cheek;
Till sighing, as loth to leave sleep's peaceful land,
Her eyes look'd sadly up, and wearily scan'd
His face, while he did speak.

He whisper'd, "Hark! the music that you fear'd
Again we might not hear;
Wake! wake! it is very passionate, it has near'd--
It mourneth, like the wind o'er the moors career'd--
Listen! listen! Amabel dear."

Here! here! that beauty, which than hush of snow,
Than the moon's royal reign,
Than ocean's pride, more beautiful did glow,
He is that beauty; even now bending low,
I adore to it again.

Sweet peace to me the hushing snow had sent,
The moon had given me joy,
The ocean transport; but high thought-content,
Begotten of all things, measureless, yet unspent,
Gave me this gentle boy.

For, from the sanctuary of this scene,
Through the strange world around,
That never knew happiness, that fierce and mean,
Now whiningly grovelleth, with disease unclean,
That deepening, owns no bound;--

Where love loud rages, seeing throned the wrong
That all his hope destroys;
Where poetry pales, despairing, and for song
Raves, till her utterance, erst so sweet
   and strong,
   Sinks to mere maniac noise;

Where even science hath fall'n, with
terrible dread
   Palsied his strenuous limbs,
Dashing the diadem from his anguish'd head,
And howling atheist howlings --was I led;
   And, lifting solemn hymns,

Nor anger moved me, nor disgust, nor
   scorn,
   Nor suffer'd I any fear;
For when the drear was stormiest, most
   forlorn,
This boy illumined, soft his voice was
   borne,
   "Listen, listen, Amabel dear."

The opening three stanzas present three aspects
of nature which have been selected to suggest a universal
harmony that includes the narrator; the sense of natural
concord is reinforced by the texture of the verse. The
dying cadence of the opening line combines with its
gentle sibilancy to convey the sense of falling snow; the
tranquil mood is further established by the descending
rhythm of each stanza and the restful associations of
such words and phrases as "sink silently," "white rest,"
"quieted," "hushing sound/Murmuring and sinking." The
image of the moon peeping through the clouds continues
the feeling of nature in repose and is rescued from
banality by the context. The remainder of the stanza is
a further accretion of details that lend a quiet emphasis
to the situation. Even the strong image of the sea of
the third stanza with "his raging radiancy" is tempered by subdued assonantal echoes and the muted consonants of "proudly" and "pride."

The personification of the snow, the moon, the sea, is a deliberate device used to suggest a spirit animating all of nature. The narrator feels himself a part of the organic unity. He is "blessed" by the "hushing sound" of the snow; the moon smiles upon him; and his close empathy with the "ungovernable" sea creates in him a feeling of "god-likeness." The final words, "god-born," recall the spiritual overtones of "Blessed me and was bless'd" in the first stanza; they further emphasize the interrelatedness of the man and his surroundings and they prepare the way for the intimations of divinity which follow.

Stanza four is transitional; it introduces the theme of the poem and explains the significance of the opening stanzas:

But than the under-uttering hush of snow,
    Than the moon's queenly reign,
    Than ocean's pride, more beautiful did glow
One other beauty,—even now bending low
    I adore to it again.

(p. 12)

The poet indicates that each natural phenomenon has been selected as an example of a kind of beauty with which to compare "one other beauty." He has invested concrete phenomena with abstract qualities in
order to illuminate another beauty of a superior kind, the beautiful bond of love existing between a boy and his sister; and the final lines suggest a religious order of grace which seems to be confirmed by the fact that the incident occurred one Christmas.

The line, "But than the under-uttering hush of snow," is the first instance in this poem of Jones' original and bold use of diction. In his attempts to give immediacy to his verse, Jones often wrenched words out of their conventional context to give them added force. Examples that come readily to mind occur in "A Crisis," in which he refers to the "tumultuous armies" of a young man's passions, and the "murderous beauty" of the girl that set them raging.

Jones frequent use of oxymora such as "rapturous agony," "a storm of joy," "a maddening stillness," and a "calm carouse," evidences a dissatisfaction with common-place expressions and illustrates his attempt to convey deep emotions in a way that the reader will find meaningful. The inexactitude of conventional diction when used to describe feeling led Jones to resort to synesthetic images as a means of communicating more accurately his sensory perceptions. In "Eyeing the Eyes of One's Mistress," for example, he relates how his mistress's eyes "did appetite" which later in the same poem gives rise to "thine eyes and mine,/Devouring
distance into each other grew." In "Zingalee," he speaks of "the voluptuous gloom," and in "Emily" of a "caressing dream." The following is a more extended example of the same device which also occurs in "Emily":

She rose against the lipping wind,
So fondly its persistings wrestling,
I almost thought she still designed
Still to endure its boisterous nestling.

(p. 29)

Jones' blending of the palpable with the intangible enabled him to give new expression to feeling and also, as in this passage from "The Two Sufferers," it enriched the texture of his work too:

Now float amongst them gentlest sounds,
Confusing, folding them; with liquid light
O'erfilling their eyes; and teaching every voice
Yet gentler lingering; wreathing round each pair
Deliberate prisoning strains, resistlessly,
Yet fondly binding them; - .......

The merciless music gives no moment's respite,
Urging all action it sweeps out all thought,
Its secret hurrying notes bewilder sense.

(p. 40)

Similarly, the poet is seeking a particular textual effect when he describes the snow in "The Waits." The compound "under-uttering" has obviously been chosen not for its denotative effect but for the resonance and graphic qualities inherent in the words themselves.
Jones occasionally went too far in his attempt to be original as "The Waits" illustrates. In the passage describing the girl and her awakening, it is obviously the poet's concern to suggest the seraphic innocence and beauty of the young girl. The transfiguring quality of the auréole-like light which at times emanates from her sleeping person, at times surrounds it, is perfectly suggested by the words "sleeping light/Pleasuring beneath her eyes, and like soft haze. . . ." But the next line indicates the dangers inherent in too extreme an originality of thought or phrasing. The word "clueless" obviously relates to "her mouth's sweet maze" but the meaning is far from clear. There is a possible suggestion of naivete or unworldliness, but the word is not apt in this context. Furthermore, is the "sweet maze" of her mouth meant to suggest a mystery, or perhaps a snare? In that case it would seem to be opposed to the idea of "clueless" (quite apart from conflicting with the tone the poet has laboured to create). Here it seems Jones' "wilful newness" has defeated its own object. Instead of immediate communication of a new perception, he has succeeded only in confusing his reader.

At times, Jones' bold use of language is excitingly effective; much of the time, however, the attempt fails because the contrasting images are just
too extreme. It is this capacity to excite and
surprise together, with the tendency to confuse or make
his reader wince, that gives Jones' language its charac-
teristically rough texture. An example conveniently
occurs in the succeeding stanza:

When suddenly, with intenser utterance,
scream'd
The music's wild require;
And as suddenly his startled countenance
beam'd
In vivid pallor, and his wide eyes
gleam'd
With coming and going fire;--

"When suddenly, with intenser utterance, scream'd/The
music's wild require" is a characteristically nervous
combination of discrete images which in another context
might have been impressive. Here, however, the abrupt
introduction of the note of violence and hysteria
associated with "scream'd" appears an unwarrantable
intrusion. If the poet is seeking to convey a sense of
shock at the sudden penetration of the music, then
"scream'd" would appear to strike too strident a tone.
Of course, there is always the possibility that Jones is
here sounding an anticipatory note to prepare the
reader for the vehemence that concludes the poem. It
seems unlikely, though, because he leaves the word
hanging and makes no attempt later to refer back to it.
But then the inability to exploit fully the power of
his imagination is a distinguishing feature of Jones'
longer poems.

As noted earlier, the central event is quite trifling, a nocturnal communication between brother and sister but it becomes charged with emotional importance, the result of a fusing of several elements. The solemn atmosphere in the lonely house; the sound of the waiters (carol singers), whose singing magically interprets for the listener his inmost feelings; his empathy with nature, and the bond of love he has witnessed between the two children combine within the mind of the narrator to produce a sensation of religious ecstasy which is manifested in the young boy:

Sweet peace to me the hushing snow had sent,
The moon had given me joy,
The ocean transport; but high thought-content,
Begotten of all things, measureless,
yet unspent.
Gave me this gentle boy.

This stanza recalls the earlier and fuller account of the working of the imagination in "Car la pensee." The mind or "high thought-content," which is the sum of all previous sensations, selects the essential elements of all "similarly influencing thoughts" which "cohere" and create a new sensation, in this instance spiritual ecstasy.

The poem is written retrospectively as the final few stanzas indicate, and a large portion of the poet's
interest in the subject stems from the fact that the experience apparently made such a strong impression upon his mind that it continues to give him solace now that he has returned to a world characterized by disease, vice and "atheistic howlings."

The abrupt change of focus at the conclusion of a poem is not uncommon in Jones' verse. It is successfully employed in "Zingalee," "A Slave's Triumph," and "A Pagan's Drinking Chaunt," where the shift subtly alters the reader's perception of all that has gone before. In "The Waits," however, the break is too severe. The poet has not prepared his reader for the bitter sentiments and forceful language of the concluding stanzas. Even if one recalls the jarring juxtaposition of violence and music in "When, with intense utterance, scream'd/The music's wild require," it seems hardly strong enough in the context to support the sudden outburst of vehemence. The change of subject results in a change of mood which is reflected in the texture of the words themselves. The deep tones of "murmuring," "mourneth," "under-uttering"; the extensive use of suggestive modifiers; the mood of calm repose all give way before a vigorous impassioned tirade that is levelled at contemporary society.

Jones' sense of outrage is conveyed (as it always is when he is venting deep-seated passions) in
explosive sounds and hard, heavily stressed words. He resorts to strong, active verbs that connote violence, often yoking them for effect with "warring opposites" (as T.S. Eliot was to recommend nearly a century later); "love loud rages" and poetry, which "for song/Raves... sinks to mere maniac noise." The words rush and roar as though released from long restraints, and where the words lead the rhythm has to follow. Much of Jones' poetry reflects his powerful feelings and impulsive nature. Many passages in "Ways of Regard" convey a fierce intensity and barely contained violence, and they are a memorable tour de force; but in most instances where Jones gives expression to the intensity of his emotions, he threatens to shake the fabric of his poem apart, as here, and deserves the epithets of "rough" "jagged" "forceful" which past critics attached to his poetry.

Many of the studies of sensation in Jones' book reflect his own passionate commitment to life and some of these are clearly autobiographical--Sumner Jones indicated several that were inspired by particular events in his brother's life. However, another aspect of the Studies, which has gone unnoticed in the past, gives
unity to the entire volume. Throughout the work Jones can be seen trying to formulate a moral philosophy that will embody his views on the primacy of the feelings and also be meaningful to contemporary society.

The age Jones lived in was a period of crisis in which centuries of order and accepted values were suddenly called into question. The gradual transition from an agrarian to an industrial society that had begun in the eighteenth century gained increasing momentum at the beginning of the nineteenth. An improved canal system, macadam roads and the harnessing of steam made possible a rapid expansion of commerce. Fortunes were made at Bradford and Birmingham; and it was only a matter of time before the powerful middle-class received political as well as commercial power into their hands. With the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, society governed by commercial principles became an established fact.

The commercial spirit was alien to humanitarian impulses: the new trade principle of 
\textit{laissez faire} abolished the employer from any obligations of welfare, moral or physical, not negotiated and contracted for. With profit and loss the primary considerations, human relationships became skirskishes in the battle on the one side for existence, on the other for increased wealth. Charitable feelings were felt to have no place in the highly competitive world of business. Thomas Carlyle
spoke out passionately against the inhumanity resulting from the acquisitive preoccupations of his time:

True, it must be owned, we for the present, with our Mammon-Gospel, have come to strange conclusions. We call it a Society, and go about professing openly the totallest separation, isolation. Our life is not a mutual helpfulness; but rather, cloaked under due laws-of-War, named fair "competition" and so forth, it is a mutual hostility. We have profoundly forgotten every where that Cash-payment is not the sole relation of human beings; we think, nothing doubting, that it absolves and liquidates all engagements of man. "My starving workers?" answers the rich Millowner; "Did not I hire them fairly in the market? Did I not pay them to the last sixpence, the sum covenanted for? What have I to do with them more?"—Verily Mammon-worship is a melancholy creed.¹

The age desperately needed and demanded dogmatic support from its intellectuals, yet the deliberate and often conflicting pronouncements of Southey, Macaulay, Mill, Arnold, Newman, Carlyle, and Ruskin, often only served to increase the sense of confusion and crisis.

It was a time for earnest consideration of all aspects of life—of the state of society and of the nature of man; and writers, particularly, were held accountable to society. The Romantic concept of the poet as prophet and seer took on a new and dramatic significance as people cast about on all hands for the authoritative voice of demonstrable Truth. In the difficult transitional years when the new was proving
so difficult to comprehend as an ordered system, intellectuals saw their task as that described by Carlyle in his assessment of two books under review:

Both these Philosophies are of the Dogmatic or Constructive sort; each in its way is . . . an endeavour to bring the Phenomena of man's Universe once more under some theoretic Scheme . . . they strive after a result which shall be positive; their aim is not to question, but to establish.²

The same earnest ambition lay behind the cosmic fulminations of the "Spasmodic School." Unhappily, the lofty aspirations of "Festus" Bailey, Hengist Horne, Alexander Smith, Sydney Dobell, and J. Westland Marston, were not matched by complementary intellectual powers. Energy they exhibited in superabundance - Bailey's epic Festus eventually ran to 40,000 verses - but they lacked the necessary poetic discipline for epics on such a grand scale. Each of the major works is characterized by extravagant language tending towards incoherence, and punctuated at frequent intervals by purple patches of extended metaphor, which only served to invite satire from later more perceptive critics.³

The poetry of Ebenezer Jones has been categorized as "Spasmodic" as frequently as it has been labelled "Chartist," but neither label is a particularly useful aid to understanding his poetry. This is not to deny the existence of elements from both "schools" in his
verse, but to emphasize either is to lose sight of the critical, social atmosphere that prompted much of his work. Quite apart from the intrinsic merits of Jones' poetry as discussed earlier, his work takes on an increased importance as a mirror of the two major features of this time of transition --"bourgeois industrial society and widespread doubt about the nature of man, society and the universe."^4

There are particular episodes here and there in Studies of Sensation and Event to which the term "Spasmodic" may be applied, but the poem that is most characteristically "Spasmodic" is "Egremond." It was not reprinted in the 1879 edition (see Appendix I) which Shepherd relates, was compiled from two copies of the Studies revised in the author's hand. It is, thus, reasonable to conclude that Jones recognized its defects and prepared to discard it.

Confusion runs riot in "Egremond" as the poet tries to elevate his theme to cosmic proportions and still have relevance for his contemporaries. The poem is a thinly-veiled allegory of the poet-priest who is invested with divine powers with which to combat the evils of his time. The action is set in the "proud morn of time" when the "originating Power" had yet to complete "His cycles of creation." Egremont undertakes to assist the creator in the completion of his task.
The part-formed world is full of "wildly clouded evil" which, however, is capable of regeneration by "competent energies." Egremont dedicates his life to the purpose of human salvation, and the limitations of time and space are transcended by his vaulting intellect. He seeks out "the masked demons, that invoke/Suffering and wrong," but his quest is interrupted by a vision of man's future deliverance and ultimate redemption, of which he appears the author. Reflections upon the changes he has wrought excite him to a passionate demand that he receive his reward now, "while this frame can quiver/And the hot blood leaps swiftly to my brain." It is not sufficient for him that his achievement be ultimately recognized for "the dead feel not"; he wants to be acclaimed as a saviour during his lifetime. There appears to be a conflict in Egremond's nature between humanitarian impulses and egocentric considerations. His redemption of mankind appears inspired by altruistic motives, but his insistence on the glory due him takes on an increasingly pathological aspect. Also, his statement of his own worthiness is a little too self-assured:

Thou art so beautiful, moon! that there must be
Some present commune between thee and God!
Speak to him for me, tell to him my love,
His greatness daunts me not, for I am good:--
Yea, I am good, for I do procreate goodness;
Rapture unspeakable! though yonder skies,
Bending down round to me, should fiercely frown
One frown of condemnation, I should stand
Unangrily; yea, glad--yea, calm--yea, proud.
Power of infinite love!

It seems that the vision has become actuality in Egremond's mind for he goes on to address God:

My soul extends herself in fearless love,
And reverence that is ecstasy; if I,
In moulding this small isle to harmony,
Feel blessed--yea, so blessed, that this hour
Is worthier than years of common life,--
How vast must be thy blessedness, . . .

His "lifelong" work has suddenly become a fait accompli and he basks in the warmth of godly achievement. He considers death as the only fitting conclusion to a life of creation; when one's purpose is achieved what else is left? Confident that God cannot refuse to reward his success, he leaps into "unsheltered space" and claims

. . . by virtue of the peace I make,
Some dim, disorganized, sullen star,
That I may be to it in place of thee,
Teaching its heart all musics.

The final lines recall the conclusion of "St. Simeon Stylites" in which the speaker's hallucination also seems to culminate in divine assent:

His eyes wild rioted; his brow upturned
Pallidly grand against the vast empyrean,
As though he heard, echoing from star to star,
The voice of deity cry, "Come up hither."
(Appendix i, pp. 153-155)

As a study in paranoia, "Egremond" is remarkably successful; unfortunately, the evidence suggests that Jones intended it as an allegory--as a statement of the poet's capacity to transform society and ennoble the minds of men. The dramatic weakness of the action and the philosophical inconsistencies suggest that it is an early poem and as yet, it appears, he has not succeeded in formulating his philosophy of reform. For, even though Egremond achieves success by virtue of his "competent energies," the means of reclaiming mankind are left significantly vague; however, even at this stage fraternal love is obviously central to the regenerative process. Some time later, Jones came to recognize the necessity of encouraging an instinctive response to life, but in the early stages of his work this aspect is restricted to a generalized sense of ubiquitous love.

In retrospect, it seems clear that much of Jones' emphasis on the senses was an intuitive response to the needs of the time. Whether human feelings were neglected in favour of intellectual pursuits, or whether they were rejected as having no place in the competitive world of commerce, the result was the same--a diminishing capacity to respond to the needs of others, and the stunting of the individual personality.
It seemed to many imperative that the utilitarian spirit should be counterbalanced by a more vigorous assertion of the importance of feelings. In addition to the important curative effect upon the mind, as John Stuart Mill discovered, cultivation of the senses could lead to an appreciation of true and lasting beauty:

What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. . . . In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connexion with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed.  

Mill's autobiographical account summarizes perfectly the effect of poetry on the individual and the broader social ramifications that Jones conceived as his own poetic purpose, and which he fully articulates in "Car la pensé."  

The poet's own intellectual struggle to evolve a workable poetic philosophy is recorded in the "Ode to Thought" and "The Naked Thinker." The "Ode to Thought" declares the influence of Shelley, as much in the lyrical expression of prophetic idealism, as in the transcendent view of reality. The lofty mood of exaltation, the
ethereal quality of the language, and the suggestion of abstract natural beauty show clearly the primary influence upon Jones' early verse. Conclusive proof may be obtained by a comparison of the opening stanzas of Shelley's "Hymn To Intellectual Beauty" with the opening stanza of "Ode To Thought" which reads:

Whether you make futurity your home,
   Spirits of thought!
Or past eternity; --come to me, come!
   For you have long been sought;
I've look'd to meet you in the morning's dawn,
   Often, in vain;
I've follow'd to her haunts the wild young fawn;
   Through sunshine, and through rain,
I have waited long and fondly; surely you will come,
   Familiarly as doves returning to their home.

(p. 58)

As in the "Hymn," "Ode To Thought" reflects a concern, not solely with the poet's efforts to pierce the veil and illuminate his own soul, but also to reach the minds of others and found "Countries whose law is love, whose custom, liberty!" Through the power of thought, the poet apprehends the spirit of the universe which is manifested in natural phenomena:

There is a noise within this tranquil heaven!
   This ocean has a voice!
Through these tall trees a mighty tone is driven,
   That bids me to rejoice.

(p. 60)
Blessed with a revelation of transcendent reality, the poet seeks to quicken men's sensibilities which, with the attendant broadening of human sympathies, will lead to a more meaningful, more moral life. The poem concludes with an earnest plea for sufficient power to share his vision with others:

Fill me with strength to bear, and
power to tell
The wonders gathering round, that man
may love me well.

(p. 61)

The social and ethical aspects of Platonic idealism, also attributable to Shelleyan influence, are given greater emphasis in another poem which records the poet's striving towards a meaningful life. "The Naked Thinker," as the title suggests, further emphasizes the intellectual nature of the poet's dilemma. Before he can reach the hearts and minds of others, he must first increase his own powers of perception; he must learn to distinguish between the sham and the real. The poem is an allegorical interpretation of the theme of appearance and reality with an unmistakeable message for the times.

Lord Apswern (inspired by the Duke of Wellington) symbolizes worldly success; as a military leader whose glory and fame had been given the seal of approval by a grateful country, he stood to an admiring populace as an example of a fully realized and praiseworthy life. It was not until he reached his deathbed that Lord Apswern
realized that he had pursued spurious ideals that, like the masses who honor his name, he had been deluded by external forms:

"["I leave a veiled world,
Wherein, by unsuspected rule,
I thought no veils were furl'd;
I sink within the senseless tomb,—
The shapes I seem to leave
Now shake their masks, and midst the gloom
Some real glimpses give.

"Duped, unsuspecting, from my birth
Till now, my life has been;
And yet I flaunted o'er the earth,
As I all truths had seen;
I thought I fought for man, --I know
'Twas for the thing man seem'd;
I thought to man my love did flow,—
It flow'd to dreams I dream'd
(pp. 6-7)

In order that the truths he himself has discovered too late may not perish with him, Lord Apswern stipulates that his heir (to qualify for the inheritance) must spend a tenth of each day isolated and naked in a room specially built for contemplation.

Reluctantly complying with the terms of the will, the heir begins to perceive glimmerings of truth and as the veils slowly peel away he voluntarily pursues the old man's will. While his fellows outside are motivated by vain pursuits and selfish pleasures, the heir wrestles alone "to rend life's seemings and/Drag out the things that are."

The general masses are seen to be deluded by appearances and obsessed with circumstances. They join
a ceaseless round of careless pleasures and are beguiled and distracted by "beauteous garments" and like trivia;

Though thus through Kensington they glide,
While bright their light smiles play,
No thoughts to strive with, or deride,
And happiness all their way.

(p. 9)

The new Lord Apswern has alienated himself forever from the shallow, unthinking life that he lived formerly. Henceforth his purpose, like the poet's in "Ode to Thought," will be "To make men keenlier see."
The conclusion ends on a rising tone which suggests the magnitude of the self-imposed task that may never be fully complete but which once begun, heaps scorn on the superficial and ends forever the casual, thoughtless attitude towards life.

Whereas "Egremond," "Ode to Thought," and "The Naked Thinker" pay tribute to the earnestness of the poet's ambitions, and introduce a neo-platonic idealization of reality derived from Shelley, such poems as "Early Spring" and "High Summer" are clearly evolved from Wordsworth's pantheism. However, the exploration of sensations in these poems appears to owe less to Wordsworth than to Keats. In his reply to the original Notes And Queries request, Rossetti referred to Jones' efforts to portray a common ground between human sensation and Nature. He wrote of the poems:

. . . They struck me greatly, though I was not blind to their glaring defects
and even to the ludicrous side of their wilful "newness"; attempting, as they do, to deal recklessly with those almost inaccessible combinations in nature and feeling which only intense and off-renewed effort may perhaps at last approach.\(^6\)

Wordsworth is perhaps the poet who most nearly approached the effect referred to. Although there are many such, an example of the combination of feeling and Nature is "Nutting." In "Nutting" the poet gives vivid expression to his sense of a living spirit animating the natural phenomena about him. The reader is impressed by the close bond between man and nature so that, when Wordsworth describes the assault upon the hazel bough, it is as though a sentient being has been violated.

Several of Jones' poems attempt a similar communication of feeling between man and nature, most notably "Early Spring," "Inactivity," and "High Summer," of which Rossetti himself thought quite highly.\(^7\) The opening stanzas of "The Waits," as already noted, also seek to establish the same sort of close identification between man and his surroundings. But it is important to keep in mind that sensory communication with nature is only one facet, albeit an essential one, in Jones' evolving theory of existence.

In "Early Spring," the poet describes his first perception of a spirit that infused all natural phenomena, and to which he became attuned by suspending his
rational energies. Walking through woods, as yet bare of foliage, he senses an invisible force that, despite the feelings of tranquility it evoked, was so overpowering that he at first resisted, "Vex'd to be made the slave/Of influence I could not see,/Or appropriate, or outbrave." Soon, however, the emanation becomes so insistent that he submits to the urge to lie down and passively contemplate the strange phenomenon. Lying beneath an elm and looking up at the lattice work of bare branches laced above his head, he feels the vibrations increase until he becomes one with his surroundings. Suddenly, he realizes that he has tapped the life-flow of Nature; the tree and its branches are burgeoning with a strange vitality that communicates itself to him. The elm and the other surrounding trees seem poised, waiting. It is the pause prefatory to the Spring surge into animated leaf that is conveyed to the poet; "Hence cometh my rest, I cried":

And I saw the deep repose--
Not a torpid sleep, but a living rest--
In their soft and nervelike boughs,
Spread betwixt me and that azure heaven,
Whose lustre such vision allows.

(p. 65)

In "High Summer" one of the two sonnets in the volume—the other is "Opinion's Change"—there is no suggestion that the intellect must first be stilled before the senses can be enjoyed; nor is there any intimation of a
universal spirit to be approached via the senses. The sonnet is a glorious, if occasionally rough, hymn in praise of sensuality. The poet climbs up and away from all traces of civilization, the hedges "studiously fretted trim"; and, perfectly isolated, sheds his clothes, the last symbolic link with society. Returned to the elements, the poet celebrates the ritual fire-worship of the sun and relinquishes his hold on consciousness. His mind in a trance, his body no longer his own, the poet gives himself over entirely to sensual pleasure. The sonnet is not one of Jones' most finished poems; nevertheless, the totally abandoned enjoyment of bodily sensation is perfectly and agreeably communicated.

The concept of harmonizing with Nature by submerging one's individuality in the general flux is given more complete expression in the opening stanzas of "Inactivity." Here the poet deliberately shuts out the external world and induces a mood of lethargy and passivity in order to respond more readily to the spirit of his natural surroundings. Soon he is transported from a state of empathic communication into a trance-like condition:

Raising in sympathy to the tranquil heaven
My tranquil thought; like a great eye it shone,
It seemed to bend in love; I gazed and gazed;
Its look sank nearer me; I gasp'd and fell,
Panting to be embraced up by the heaven,
As virgin womanhood for love's caress;
My soul close clung to that far-stretching glory,
'Neath which I reel'd; it stretch'd there undisturb'd
By tower or boundary, and my tranced spirit
Passively drank in its elysian calm.

(\textit{p. 88})

Entranced by the unseen power that surrounds him, the poet achieves complete oneness; he achieves total renunciation of the self and becomes a "slave to the sky," until he is awakened into consciousness by a convolvulus which has fallen on to his face. He examines it and notices a ladybird. As he focuses upon the insect, his awareness spreads to include other natural objects which he describes in careful detail. His heart lifts as he contemplates the beautiful objects before him and he delights to feel an integral part of the "one soft utterance" being sung on the "Eternal Breeze." However, the mood of sensuous delight passes and is replaced by a melancholy in which

The unity in the boundlessness of life
Gave me no thrill.

(\textit{p. 90})

He muses upon the change and an incident with the village cur suggests to him the reason that man, capable of shaping his own destiny, can never be long satisfied to play a passive role, to be a "slave of any heaven or earth." He seems to intimate the inherent
nobleness of man, who alone on earth possesses the God-like capacity to shape his own destiny and who, therefore, can never be content to accept a passive existence. The ending, however, undermines this apotheosis of man. He is seen as basically insecure, as requiring the reassurance of affective actions:

The hermit

Must have his redbreast to supply with crumbs;
The dungeon'd captive makes himself of spiders
Things to protect and feed; the evil man,
To expend his passion to influence, will torture;
The good man blesses at the same impulsion;—
But to influence both require.

(p. 91)

In "Inactivity" Jones rejected the idea of passive indulgence of the senses. He recognized that by cultivating the senses he could increase his self-perception, could add a new dimension to his life; but he saw also that exclusive sensual gratification, like the over emphasis of the intellect, is an impediment to man's self-fulfillment, that it arrests the development of the individual who mistakes the means for the end. "Inactivity" thus has a central place in Jones' poetic philosophy for here he can be seen exploring and exploiting the intuitive faculties to the full and coming to the realization that an uncritical indulgence limits self-awareness and prevents social integration. As indicated previously, the complexities of his "theoretic
scheme" are finally resolved in "Car la pensée," in which Jones combines elements of Wordsworthian pantheism and Shelleyan neo-platonism in a moral philosophy with which he hoped to counter the insensibility of the age.

The structure of "Car la pensée" has been briefly dealt with earlier in the chapter along with the "associationist theory" which the poem is meant to illustrate. It will be sufficient then, to note here that Jones uses the poem to state his own belief in a unifying essence that is elemental to all things. The capacity of the poet to perceive the interrelated ideals beyond the material form, Jones suggests, is what distinguishes poets from other men:

This boy, then, suffering in the cedar-grove,
All rapturously, the uniting in his mind
Of these far-parted thoughts—the boughs above,
And the priest's blessing o'er his head declined—

Is, in embryo beauteousness, one of that band,
Who, telling the sameness of far-parted things,
Plants through the universe, with magician hand,
A clue which makes us following universe-kings.

One of the seers and prophets who bid men pause
In their blind rushing, and awake to know
Fraternal essences and beauteous laws
In many a thing from which in scorn they go.
Yea, at his glance, sin's palaces may fall,
Men rise, and all their demon gods disown;
For knowledge of hidden resemblances is all
Needed to link mankind in happiness round Love's throne.

Because of his unique vision, it is the poet's responsibility to lead his fellow men away from the life-denying aspects of material existence and to share with them the knowledge of a transcendent order of the eternal. It is the poet's ideal to awaken in mankind an awareness of beauty in everyday things and, thence, to direct his vision beyond the veil towards a perception of the true, the perfect, the unity of existence. By deepening man's understanding, by widening his vision, the poet trusted that eventually man's nobler nature would assert itself and extend itself in a sympathetic recognition of "Fraternal essences." The role of the poet is critical—he can no longer make an absolute commitment to art alone, he has a social responsibility.

Once the poet has succeeded through the medium of his art in broadening men's sympathies, it is hoped that love will prove the catalyst for uniting mankind in universal harmony. The view of love as a panacea for social ills is fundamental to romantic optimism; and it is the cornerstone of Jones' metaphysical construct. He can be seen working with the idea in the paired poems
"A Plea for Love of the Individual," and "Plea for Love of the Universal." The first poem ostensibly takes issue with a woman who raises a series of objections to the giving of one's heart. The poet deals with each issue in turn attempting to prove that not only does love enrich one's life, it also imparts the strength to rise above disappointment and inconstancy so that no matter what the outcome the rewards always outweigh the dissatisfactions.

The poem is not a good one and it merits notice only because of the pertinence of its theme to the discussion. "Plea for Love of the Universal" is superior, even though there is considerable overlapping in the treatment of the effects of love on the individual. However, Jones' conception of the liberating effects of love on the soul are clearly articulated and he gives a more complete account of the unifying aspects of love:

Love magnifies existence; love the world,—
The soul shall grow world-great in its sensation;
And 'neath the blaze of infinite life unfurl'd,
Pant with the passion of a whole creation.
Oh love then! love!

To shut love out, he suggests, is to shrivel one's soul.

For thine own heart's sake, love! the unloving mind,
Unemanating light, no light receiveth;
Tomb of itself, unable rest to find,
Buried alive, it low and wildly grieveth.
O love then! love!
(p. 149)

The poem concludes with a last exhortation to love but the effect is somewhat weakened by an inconsistency. The line before the final refrain reads "[Love] Dwelleth most in him who most of happiness gaineth," when the tone and theme of the poem suggest that the reverse would be more to the point.

As one might expect, considering its preeminence in Jones' moral philosophy and platform for reform, love and its attendant sensations is the subject of the majority of poems involving his study of emotion. The altruistic effects of love in the abstract inform much of Jones' canon, but the more personal and more physical aspects are also expressed in full.

Just prior to the publication of his volume, Jones had a love affair which ended unhappily, and several of the love poems seem to owe their origin to this affair. "A Prayer to a Fickle Mistress" and "The Face" are concerned with unrequited love, but from different viewpoints, and "A Happy Sadness" and "Repose in Love" illustrate the completeness of being that can result from perfectly realized love. Again each casts a different light on the subject. And, once more, this time with his subject the bereaved lover, Jones shifts
his focus in each of the three poems "The Mourner’s Isle," "To a Corpse-Watcher," and "A Development of Idiotcy."

Doubtless Jones’ experience in love furnished much of the content of the love poems. One could read much into the sexuality of "Emily," "Zingalee," and "Whimper of Awakening Passion," but to do those works justice they should be viewed in relation to the other love poems as an attempt to capture the essence of love by exposing its myriad faces and moods.

The importance of cultivating the senses to counter the rising tide of obduracy has been noted previously and the variations under one heading, indicated by the titles of the above poems, illustrate Jones’ concern to examine as fully as possible the nature of emotion and sensation. He seemed to intuit, in the days long before psychology became a science, that the only means of approaching psychological reality was to examine the different components from as many perspectives as possible and thus assemble an acceptable composite. That Jones was a student of human behaviour may be deduced from such poems as "A Development of Idiotcy," "A Slave’s Triumph," and "Ways of Regard" which demonstrate unusual insights into personalities under stress. Jones was seemingly as sensitive to the motivations of
the actions of others as he was analytic of the shifts in his own feelings. By holding up the mirror to society Jones hoped to generate change; by evoking sensations he hoped to sharpen men's sensibilities and increase their sensitivity. The subject of love, naturally, is one that commanded a great deal of his attention. In "Repose in Love" the poet describes a paradisal state to which the lover is able to retreat from earthly reality. He has been fortunate and gone on to attain the ideal. The love described in this poem approaches the Platonic concept of the ideal, and at the conclusion there is a suggestion of removal to a spiritual plane.

The poem describes a progression from the worldly to the ideal which is not found in any of the other poems. In stanza one, love is described as the place "where truth so calmly glows," but the lover recalls that originally love was simply a retreat from "a world where all's deceit." The moral influence of love is noted:

In former times beside thee glowing,  
I've seen all life grow bright;  
Kindness o'er hardest faces flowing,  
O'er falsehood new truth-light;  
(p. 99)

Although it is not clear whether it is the lover who has undergone the transformation or the others in society, it appears that it is the lover's vision of the world which changed, thereby ennobling him. Thus transformed, he is capable of achieving the ethereal realms of the highest
order—he transcends earthly reality and consummates his love in a spiritual plane:

But now I know joy deeper far
   Attends our love's career;
It now no more veils life's vile war,
   But lifts me past life's sphere;
And no joy may with this compare,—
   I see life's bare design,
Yet know no fear, no pain, no care,
   Because I feel me thine.

(p. 100)

Such absolute bliss was not easily attained, as "The Face" and "A Prayer to a Fickle Mistress" suggest. Each of these poems concern the theme of unrequited love. The former has a contemporary setting and adopts the persona of a maid who failed to trust her instincts and allowed herself to be turned by others against her love. The poem inclines momentarily towards sentimental melodrama as the maid learns that her former lover's affections remained unchanged at his death. But there is nothing sentimental about the conclusion as the woman faces the brutally cold fact that she is responsible for the blight that has suddenly descended upon her life:

Although my scorn that face did maim,
   Even when its love would not depart,
Although my laughter smote its shame,
   And drave it swording through his heart,
Although its death-gloom grasps my brain
   With crushing unrefused despair;—
That I may dream that face again
   God still must find alone my prayer.

(p. 135)

The reader frequently senses throughout Jones'
verse that his emotional commitment to life was absolute. Much that is defective in his work seems the result of unconstrained passion; "A Prayer to a Fickle Mistress" suffers in this fashion from a lack of artistic distancing. The reader is embarrassed by the nakedness of his emotion and the fact that he participates in the lover's grovelling self-abasement, as he seeks release from the torments of frustrated desire, only increases his discomfiture. One aspect of the lover's obsession should however be noted, and that is the resemblance between extreme passion and insanity. The same idea occurs in others of Jones' poems and will be discussed later.

It would be inconceivable, in a study of the various facets of love, not to include the sexual aspect and Jones, more resolute than most of his contemporaries, invited the critics' contumely, as noted earlier, with this passage from "Zingalee":

And he stagger'd towards the room,
And there, in voluptuous gloom,
Her breasts all naked and heaving,
Lay his bride;
And her beside
One like a man, around him cleaving
Her quivering limbs, while still she moan'd grieving
"I cannot even die from thee parted."
The river of his life stood still,
Rose at its woe
And gazed with terrible will
The abysm below;--
(p. 24)
Although the incident is carefully worked into the fabric of the poem and makes the husband's consequent insanity psychologically plausible, "Zingalee" was deemed to typify the poet's "gratuitous voluptuousness."

Even more than most quotations, the above passage suffers from being wrenched from its context. The incident is central to the action in its traumatic effect upon the cuckolded husband, but, given the austere propriety shaped by puritan ideals, one can imagine that many Victorian readers would consider such an outburst indecorous if not, in fact, obscene. But Jones is not to be vilified merely because, in refusing to compromise his attitude toward reality he outraged the guardians of contemporary morality. Time has vindicated his stance, for a modern reader would not find the above passage morally reprehensible.

"Whimper of Awakening Passion," which contains none of the mawkish sentimentality suggested by the title was one of the poems noticed by the Literary Gazette critic. After describing "Emily" as the worst type of "nonesense-verse trash we ever read," he went on to label the final stanza of "Whimper of Awakening Passion" as "indecent"; whereas, in fact, the note of ambiguity which closes the poem is a fittingly well-turned conclusion to a finely wrought lyric:

Your hands made a tent o'er mine eyes,
As low in your lap I was lain,
Perhaps half from yourself to disguise
The prayer that they could not restrain.*

You sang, and your voice through me waved
Such rapture, I heard myself say,
"Oh here is the heaven I have craved,
Never hence will I wander astray."

As I lay in your lap your limbs gave
Such beautiful smooth rest to me,
I told you that thus to be slave
I would never consent to be free.

But now mine eyes under their tent
Think such distance from yours, love, is wrong;
And my mouth wants your mouth to be sent
Down to him, all undrest, love, of song.

Oh I fear if your beautiful limbs
Still to have me their slave feel inclined,
You must either prevent all these whims,
Or a way, love, to humour them find.

Here, the poet succeeds in capturing the moment when the lover's passive contentment gives way to the irresistible urges of sexual instincts. The final stanza neatly sustains the climax by presenting the reader with an open-ended statement that may be interpreted as either a demand for the satisfaction of the lover's awakened desires, or else, merely the tolerant

*R.H. Shepherd notes that the "opening stanza runs thus in the original edition":

Your hands were a tent for mine eyes,
As low in your lap I was lain;
And I thought as I gazed at my skies
I will never know other again.
acceptance of his caprice.

To complete the various aspects of love, the poet considers the plight of the bereaved lover and once again he explores the emotion, in this case grief, as comprehensively as possible. "The Mourner's Isle" is a mood poem suggestive of Keats. The atmosphere of melancholy begins immediately with the opening lines:

The endless rains that gently fall
In Carisbrook Castle Island, dear,
Can soften the mourner's heart, and call
From his burning brain the loosening tear;

(p. 92)

The stanza explains the reason for the retreat to the "wizard isle," there the mourner can indulge her grief to the full, for the natural setting imparts a sense of sadness which has the effect of drawing out grief.

As has already been noted, Jones experimented with states of feeling reflected in nature. In "The Mourner's Isle," he succeeds in conveying a sense of languid dejection by such natural images as "gliding streams," "pensive" herds, "low" winds, and "each tree seems a pall." Further, the enchanted island has the capacity to attune to the mourner's state of mind and thus prolong the feeling until the spirit has been purged and made whole.

Bereavement becomes, in "To a Corpse Watcher," not an excuse to wallow in morbid self-pity, but the source of disaffection and alienation. In many poems,
Jones shares Tennyson's view that "it is better to have loved and lost . . ."; here he suggests that a total commitment to love involves a degree of estrangement from the rest of humanity which may under some circumstances prove disastrous.

The poem opens with the bereaved lover grieving by the side of his beloved's corpse and being addressed by a narrator who anticipates and directs the mourner's actions. One of the strange features of the poem is the note of bitter cynicism adopted by the speaker; another is the Gothic preoccupation with the macabre: "Turn thee! turn thee! sit by its bed; / With its hand in thy hand, learn the feel of the dead." The lover is counselled to confront the corpse and accept the reality of death in order to free himself from the shackles of the past:

Thou wilt weep; and when wept all thy greatness away,
Thou shalt start from the corpse, and its grave-clothes array,
And look with no love, but with horror, to its face,
And say that a cold smell doth steam round its place,
The cold smell of corruption; . . .

(p. 105)

The mourner will seek to affirm life anew, join "the quick busy world" and comfort himself with the thought that his own death is far away; but he will learn that his experience of death will prevent his return to life.
But earth hath no home for thee!—far as thou strayest,
Thy heart shall still sneer at all love that thou sayest.
At all love that is said; for thou shalt believe ever
Love to be a false friend, even Death's frown can sever;
And thus homeless, and hopeless of home, shalt thou mourn,
With bitter life-hate and gnawing self-scorn,
The time when thou thought'st that love could not fail so,
The time when such thought from thy damn'd heart did go,
That time when above thy slain love there did flow
Thy tears of self sorrow.
(pp. 105-6)

The penalty for investing all of one's dreams in an illusion is self-destruction. The bereaved lover becomes doomed to a death in life for believing in the immortality of love. The only escape for the alienated soul lies in insanity which, Jones frequently suggests, is never far from the deeper passions. It is significant that the studies of insanity all involve lovers. The undertones of madness in "A Prayer to a Fickle Mistress" and "To a Corpse-Watcher" are realistically developed in "Zingalee" and "A Development of Idiotcy." These lovers' are kindred spirits to the characters created by Emily Brontë; they feel passionately and unreservedly, and their passion, which fills every fibre of their being, will admit no other emotion. Confronted by death or infidelity (which have the same meaning for
the totally committed lover), the mind proves unable to absorb so powerful and painful a sensation and retreats from the reality of the event.

Madness is the last refuge of the poet/lover in "A Development of Idiotcy." From his youth, he had been filled with "bright visions" of "moral loveliness" which he "sang . . . to the world, and bade it worship." But the world violently rejected his ideals and sadly he took his leave of mankind. Yet, he possessed such great gifts of poetic perception that he felt he must communicate even if only to one sympathetic soul. When he fell in love his artistic as well as his emotional needs were fulfilled:

Then, no more
Lamented he the wingless minds of men,
Than pines the swan, who down the midnight river
Moves on considering the reflected stars,
Because dark reptiles burrowing in the ooze
Care not for starry glories.

(p. 72)

The death of his loved one thus resulted in a two-fold loss for him. The fact that she was the essence of his being needs emphasizing. She was the sole justification for his existence and thus carried within her the seeds of his insanity. There is an intimation that the bereaved lover's mind is becoming unhinged when the urge towards self-destruction is manifested in his cursing of God from a high mountain. While his mind is thus
overwrought, the imagined pressure of the corpse's fingers on his own is sufficient to tip the balance. The poem is very uneven in quality, but the motivation and the onset of madness are creditably and dramatically portrayed. The conclusion is particularly fine in its restrained, precise description of the manifestation of madness:

This singer of the beautiful, who retreated
Back from a scowling world; this force-fill'd man,
Who finding nothing whereunto he might sing,
Of power unutter'd, and of passion unshared,
Nigh died; this gentle minister of love,
Who, hail'd by loving sympathy, thrice lived
In singing his deities, and seeing them loved,
And loving their lover, and forgetting all else;--
Is now a thing that hideth most fair weathers,
Outwandering in most glooms,—after whose path
The village boys shout "idiot," that some sport
His face may make them, when it turns enraged
With idiot rage, that slinks to empty smiles,
And tears, and laughter, empty. His chief habit
Is secretly rending piecemeal beauteous flowers;--
Hé ever shows when the groaning thunder toils,
And when the lightnings flash! and they who meet
His shrinking, shuddering, blank countenance,
Wonder to heaven with somewhat shaken trust.

(p. 74)
Perhaps the finest psychological study in the entire book will also serve to introduce a body of poems aimed at stirring the social conscience. "A Slave's Triumph" is a masterly presentation of the corrupting influence of absolute power.

From the opening cry of "Death to the Aristocrats!" the poem resounds with the bitter rage of an incensed revolutionary as he savours his revenge. The mob-leader has at his mercy his former Lord, and he relishes the moment that has delivered his superiors into his power. He is bitter, full of hate, but above all, he recalls the shame and humiliation he was forced to endure:

Where is your scorn! where is the insolent eye,
Narrowing its lids to look at me;
where, where
The averted face that seem'd wrench'd awry,
Sick at my presence, that ye yet did bear,
Even to enslave me! seem thus sick once more!

(p. 83)

To a sensitive person, such as the mob-leader obviously is, it is the memory of that shame and self-abasement that is hardest to bear. When his frightened prisoners prostrate themselves, he recoils in disgust at the parody of his own former servility:

You merciless wretches! What! you kneel, you whine,
To smile to me you dare! one smile again,
And the mob is rending ye:—rise masters mine!

(p. 84)

The balance of power being reversed, the former slave reacts in a predictably tyrannical and sadistic fashion: he grants his Lord and his Lord's family a boon; he offers them one more opportunity to practice their disdain, to lash him once again with their insolence; and he taunts them with the thought that one hour ago he was still their slave, his very life at the mercy of their whim. Thus far the vengeful revolutionary's actions have been predictable, but another dimension is given to his character, and indeed to the entire episode, by the revelation of his scorn for the mob. It is a masterstroke of irony, that the aristocrats carry with them to their deaths the knowledge that could possibly save them, but which they are helpless to reveal:

Can you not tell these avengers of my shame
How I loathe, despise them;—ye were saved, saved, saved!
The beasts have lick'd your feet, and again would tame!
Aha! they will sword you when this hand is waved!
They will wrench your hearts out! stumble in your gore!
Can you not speak them! beasts they are like ye!
But mine, mine, mine! for you they rage and roar!

I hold the key!

(pp. 84-5)
The poem is set in revolutionary France but its application to contemporary England is transparent. The transition from the old agrarian order based on a rigid class system to a newer, more democratic society had been attended by widespread violence and bloodshed in France. In England, where reforms proceeded by the more cumbersome legislative process, the transitional movement lagged a couple of decades behind. The French example caused a lot of unease in England, where it was inevitable that Englishmen should measure local agitation with a yardstick made in France. The revolution of 1830 once again raised the spectre of insurrection and class war. The forties, too, were years darkened by the shadow of violent revolt in Chartism, some of whose leaders, Feargus O'Connor for example, were imprisoned for inciting sedition, and even armed rebellion. Jones' socialist poetry needed no interpretation to reveal its pertinence to contemporaries.

Oppression and revolt are the themes of "Ways of Regard" which contains some of the most vigorous oratory in the volume. The poem changes focus several times and the transitions are not strong enough to unify the whole; but there are passages of great emotional power and dramatic representation which fascinate at the same time that they repel. Nevertheless, despite the effectiveness of the language the poem remains a series
of highly charged episodes that touch but fail to adhere.

The poem should be read, however, if only to see the heights of impassioned oratory Jones attained when the subject was close to his heart. Furthermore, the poem gives fuller expression to the phenomenon of power and its dehumanizing effects, not only upon the oppressed, but also upon the oppressors. This is an aspect of subjection already touched on in "A Slave's Triumph"; it is also referred to time and again in the "Land Monopoly" pamphlet, and it was obviously seen by Jones as the most pernicious factor in a thoroughly evil situation.

After a lengthy introduction that illustrates the rapine and greed which characterize mankind, the poet recounts a vision in which he sees a multitude of slaves gathered in a cave. The leader, whose words recall the protagonist in "A Slave's Triumph," is trying to stir the slaves from the apathy to which custom has reduced them. The lurid cave scene recalls the nightmare quality of James "BV" Thomson's City of Dreadful Night:

In tumult lifted it [the crowd]
Its wither'd countenances, skinny jaws,
Wild eyes, and knotted brows, and bloodless lips,
One after the other rose the faces, till
They settled there, one pale dark stare of pain.

(p. 156)

While the chief is railing against their persecutors,
he is brought news that his child has been raped by their master, "Struck from the pedestal of maidenhood/To the cold ditch of harlotry." The chief uses the example of his daughter to illustrate how far each of the assembled slaves has degenerated. They have grown dependent upon the state of oppression; the will to act has been undermined by years of ill-usage passively accepted. Lacking the means to resist, and in the absence of objective moral standards, familiarity speedily changes tolerance to dependence. The chief says of his daughter that the day will come soon when she will cease to resist violation and lewd desires will supplant virtue: "The filth perpetually assailing her/Must alter her! 'Tis not in human nature;/Endless repulsion." She will change as they have all changed. None of them, the chief continues, has avoided the ignominy of self-abnegation; each has invited continuous and increased abuse by denying his manhood. The time has come to cast off the hand of the oppressor, to assert their masculinity and baptize their dignity in the blood of their oppressors:

They bade us feed on grass—we will grow drunk
With their red blood; they trample us as snakes--
We will rise dragon-like, and with our fetters
Act inconceivably!—Revenge! revenge!
Not that they violate our wives for sport,
And laugh at our unnatural endurance,—
Not that they tear our children from their mothers, Crippling their limbs, extinguishing their minds With endless toil,—the only things that love us,— Not that our food is garbage; that our babes Droop at the milkless teat; not that they dare, Oh shameless beasts! unnaturally deprive Our youth of manhood,— But because that they have so damned us That we've endured these shames! Oh for this murder, This poisoning, this pollution, this dead life, What, what revenge! They lash us into smiles! God! we will rush through blood up to our armpits! (pp. 161-2)

Absolute power also corrupts the possessor of that power. "The moral depravity of any individual, is in exact proportion to the disregard which he has for the elevation and the happiness of his Fellow-men," Jones later wrote in "The Land Monopoly" (p. 13), and clearly many of his "Socialist" poems are directed at the governing classes.

Obviously, the role of social conscience is an important feature of the poet's work, but before he could inspire men with a vision of a higher level of existence, they had to be made aware of their earthly short-comings. Before men could approach the ideal based on universal love as envisioned by the poet, they
must first be given a conscience. It was to this end that he wrote "Song of the Kings of Gold."

As in "Ways of Regard," autocratic tyranny is the subject of the poem. But, whereas the sentiments and several of the outrages are similar, in "Song of the Kings of Gold" the words are placed in the despots' mouths. The poem is dedicated to the new breed of dictators, the Molochs of the world. Money now wields the same power that once went only with title, and, because of the novelty of such authority, the modern despots have an even greater tendency to abuse their power.

The sweep and ring of the verse succeeds in echoing the supreme arrogance of the "Kings of Gold" as they revel in their sovereignty, taunting their victims and defying all opposition:

And all on earth that lives,
Woman, and man, and child,
Us trembling homage gives;
Aye trampled, sport-defiled,
None dareth raise one frown,
Or slightest questioning hold;
Our scorn but strikes them down
To adore the Kings of Gold.

(Chorus) We cannot count our slaves,
Nothing bounds our sway,
Our will destroys and saves,
We let, we create, we slay.
Ha! Ha! who are Gods?
(p. 49)

Physical force has been rendered redundant by the new order. When a man has been separated from the land and is, thus, dependent upon another for employment, "scorn"
is often sufficient to strike down resistance.

The dilemma of the landless working class is given poignant expression in "A Coming Cry," which was recited from the platform by the reform leader W.J. Fox (SJ, p. liii). The poem protests the setting up of workhouses and similar acts of charity necessitated by industrialization which attempt to alleviate symptoms rather than cure the disease. The opening lines anticipate Jones' proposals in his pamphlet that the inequities of capitalism be eradicated at the source, that all men be recognized as equal, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of Government. A tension runs throughout the poem as Jones works with the disparity between God's natural law and the earth-Lords' unnatural one—he states that God's intentions are being deliberately and consistently perverted by men with materialistic ideals.

The poem is in the form of a speech being addressed by an orator to a crowd. He proceeds carefully and deliberately, and the tone is one of dispassionate observation. He clearly knows that the facts will speak for themselves. The speaker carefully avoids inciting rebellion, but the frequent rhetorical questions clearly are meant to stir the emotions. The refrain, "We'll all go building workhouses, million, million men," that concludes each stanza gently lowers the temperature,
but in the final stanza the speaker's method becomes apparent: the refrain is repeated until it loses its intrinsic meaning and becomes a sword with which to goad the audience. The first stanza considers the alternative to the workhouse, but concludes "Perhaps its better than starvation." The final stanza, after recalling that his audiences forefather's fought at Cressy, and under Nelson, concludes:

Will we at earth's bidding, build ourselves dishonour'd graves?
Will we who've made this England, endure to be its slaves?
Thrones totter before the answer!--
      once we'll pray, and then
We'll all go building workhouses,--
      million, million men.

(p. 146)

The poems of social reform are among the best Jones wrote for they convey the passionate feelings of the man in vivid images and forceful language. Occasionally, as in "Ways of Regard," a particularly striking passage separates itself from the main work, but in the shorter poems such as "Song of the Kings of Gold," and particularly "A Coming Cry," to the fervour of the emotional appeal is added the restraint of an artistic form which adds aesthetic pleasure to sympathetic response. But, Jones' most pleasing poetry today remains the shorter lyrics which hymn the beauty of the earth and convey to the reader the poet's empathic response to the world around him.
The final selection of poems, which were to be included in a second volume called *Studies of Resemblance and Consent*, consists almost entirely of short lyrics (the exceptions are the parable-like "The Misanthrope's Cure," and "I Believe") and brings together several poems that can stand comparison with many of the finest lyrics in literature. Although all were written after the publication of the first volume, most belong to the years immediately following the book. The short untitled poem beginning "My wife and child . . ." is the only one of an autobiographical nature that refers to his family. Again, there is a reference to an ideal, transcendent love "That lifteth us to the saints above," but now the spiritual ideal must be forged out of suffering.

After a silence of fifteen years, Jones began to write poetry again when he visited Jersey in the last year of his life. Two poems, "I Believe" and "A Winter Hymn to the Snow," remain from this period; "To Death," written less than two months before he died, is dated June 10, 1860.

The title "Studies of Resemblance and Consent" has obviously been as carefully selected as the title of his published book. It is possible to see in "When the World is Burning" and "I Believe" elements of Jones' moral philosophy based on universal "resemblance" or "Fraternal
essences"; furthermore, there is a distinct tone of
tolerance and acquiescence to most of the final collec-
tion, a sense of having laid troubled and restive spirits,
and a sense of reconciliation with life. If one takes
"consent" as synonymous with acceptance, it is possible
to see a certain aptness in the title.

The apocalyptic vision of the earth, anticipated
in "Ode to Thought" and "Ways Of Regard," among other
poems, has apparently been realized in "When the World
is Burning." A parenthetical note states that these are
"Stanzas for Music" and they do have a delicacy of touch
and a rhythmic flow that would readily lend itself to
orchestration. The earth is described as burning, but
there is no sense of cataclysmic doom. The fire is
gentle; the flames are "small and blue and golden"; and
the light is "soft." The world has apparently passed
through the ritual purification by fire and, cleansed,
has been regenerated.

There is a sensation of airiness and light. It
is as though the industrial landscape has been wiped
clean and the earth returned to its elemental state.
Humanity has succeeded to a life of joyous fulfillment,
gone is the ugliness, the misery, and the alienation of
the senses; mankind and nature join in mutual accord, a
sensation that is reinforced by the rhythmic ebb and flow
of the verse. The poem exudes an air of innocence and
tranquillity that takes on a spiritual dimension as nature and mankind celebrate in unison the rebirth of the world:

When the world is burning,  
Fired within, yet turning  
Round with face unscathed;  
Ere fierce flames, uprushing,  
O'er all lands leap, crushing,  
Till earth fall fire-swathed;  
Up amidst the meadows,  
Gently through the shadows,  
Gentle flames will glide,  
Small, and blue, and golden.  
Though by bard beholden,  
When in calm dreams folden,—  
Calm his dreams will bide.

Where the dance is sweeping,  
Through the greensward peeping,  
Shall the soft lights start;  
Laughing maids, unstaying,  
Deeming it trick-playing,  
High their robes upswaying,  
O'er the lights shall dart;  
And the woodland haunter  
Shall not cease to saunter  
When, far down some glade,  
Of the great world's burning  
One soft flame upturning  
Seems, to his discerning,  
Crocus in the shade.  
(pp. 185-186)

Jones adhered to his theory of existence to the end. "I Believe" expresses a faith in a higher order of the eternal, and "A Winter Hymn to the Snow" reflects his continuing faith in the moral influence of nature working on the senses. His last work, however, introduces the view that if man ever achieves bliss it will happen in "some farther life." In "I Believe," the poet considers the temporal nature of life and the consequent
diss illusionment that man inevitably suffers:

    Every ship, except the ship we embark in,
      Gives us dreams
    Of bright voyaging, beauteous lands afar, and
      Glorious streams;
    Every maiden, until she has consented,
      Angel seems.

(p. 195)

In the theme of anticipation and fulfilment there is also a suggestion that Jones recognized the unlikelihood that his former vision of an ideal world would be realized, and certainly not in his own lifetime. The opening stanza strikes a note of cynicism, only exceeded by that of the "Song of the Gold-Getters," before the poet goes on to examine the reason why man's hopes are continually frustrated. He concludes that man is doomed to disappointment for as long as he is obsessed with the material and impermanent aspects of life. Only the intuition of a more durable reality can bring man the satisfaction he seeks; but it now appears to Jones that man is committed to perpetual disillusionment, for it seems to the poet that the majority of men are incapable of sublime vision:

    But most I pondering deem that it may be
      That thy sight
    To grasp the perfect 'neath Time's imperfections
      Hath no might,
    Whilst only before the perfect canst thou expand to
      Fit delight.

(p. 196)
Nevertheless, the poet reasserts his faith that the new order will come to pass but now it is associated with religious belief. The imminence of death and the frustration of his earthly ideals encourage him to contemplate the possibility of an after-life. The conception seems to give him consolation and strength:

Nor shake thou mockingly thy dart,  
oh Death!  
Know, oh King!  
We have made friends with Melancholy,  
and she  
Thee will bring  
Gently among us, yea to teach new music  
Them that sing.

There is a heaven, though we to hope to pass there  
May not dare;  
Where adoration shall for ever adore some  
Perfect fair;  
And we can wait thee, Death, our eyes enfixed  
Firmly there.  
(pp. 198-9)

Inevitably, the proximity of death caused Jones to reflect upon the apparent futility of being and to wonder about the immortality of the soul. But his commitment to life on earth had been absolute, and he was too much of a humanist to seek the support of religion in his last days. He had rejected religious belief in his youth and he was not a man to clutch at a solifidian straw, nor to offer "parasitical and insulting worship" inspired by fear. In his final poem, the poet goes to a churchyard to challenge death about the riddle of mortal
life—not to beg for reassurance, but to satisfy a rational craving. The opening stanza stresses his self-composure and the intellectual nature of the quest:

I see thee in the churchyard, Death,
And fain would talk with thee,
While still I draw the young man's breath
And still with clear eyes see.

(p. 204)

It does not take long for him to recognize that his presence in the graveyard constitutes an abrogation of the life-principle, and he prepares to take his leave, none the wiser but no less resolute than when he entered.

The solemnity of the mood is never allowed to degenerate into bathos for the poet throughout insists on his self-sufficiency.

Naturally, the reader who possesses biographical details will invest the poem with an emotional intensity that might otherwise be lacking; but, nevertheless, the poem can stand on its own as a fine evocation of the elegiac mood. Although the poet notices the continuing life-cycle of which death is only one aspect this is small consolation, the reader feels, to the individual soul about to die. But this is not necessarily Jones' response; it is the feeling one carries away from a poem whose final lines drive home the inevitable and inscrutable reality of death:

And vainly I desert my post
In life's poor puppet game,
And seek thee where this silent host
Of tombs thy power proclaim.

When midnight wraps the world in sleep,
Or when the vanishing stars
And morn once more, new day to keep,
Rolls back her golden bars.

In vain, in vain, but one reply
In thy sad realm I find;
Some fresh grave ever meets the eye,
And mocks the unanswer'd mind.

(p. 206)
CONCLUSION

An assessment of the work of any poet is fraught with difficulties and these are multiplied in Jones' case because his published work is limited to one single volume. In the past, critics (excluding the early reviewers) and literary historians almost without exception, have allowed a knowledge of the poet's unfortunate history to colour their discussion of his work. The following extract from Hugh Walker's The Literature of the Victorian Era is a typical example:

Jones' struggling, painful life, his grinding toil, his 'lamentable' domestic relations, all plead for recognition as generous as possible for the work he did in circumstances so untoward. His youth when Studies of Sensation and Event appeared is an excuse for many faults; and the manly strength he showed in other ways makes it probable that had he lived longer, or rather, had he been in a position to use for literature his forty years of life, he would have left a considerable name.1

As this study has tried to demonstrate, Jones' poetry is undeserving of the neglect that has been its fate since 1843. This is not to make any exaggerated claims about its importance but it does seem to merit at least as much attention as the work of other minor poets of the period such as Clare, Elliot, even Mrs. Browning. Neither Thomas Hood's "Song of the Shirt," nor Mrs. Browning's "Song of the Children," which
post-date Jones' book, and which were widely acclaimed at the time, can make as strong a claim to the label of poetry as, for example, "A Coming Cry"; and nothing in Ebenezer Elliot's verse exceeds the power and rhetoric of "Song of the Gold-Getters" and "Ways of Regard."

All of the foregoing poets have several examples of their work in W.H. Auden's *Nineteenth Century Minor Poets* whereas Ebenezer Jones is not represented by a single poem. As Auden points out in the introduction, errors of judgment and omissions will occur, but he goes on to say that the anthologist "must try to represent every genuine minor poet of the period he is covering, any poet, that is to say, who wrote one good poem." Jones wrote several *good* poems and some such as "A Slave's Triumph," "A Pagan's Drinking Chaunt," and "When the World is Burning," which would grace any collection of Victorian poetry.

By a quirk of the compositional process "A Pagan's Drinking Chaunt" has been omitted from the general body of poetry already cited. It is quite a short lyric and can be quoted in full; it will be seen to be as perfectly finished a lyric as any of the period:

Like the bright white arm of a young god, thrown
To the hem of a struggling maiden's gown,
The torrent leaps on the kegs of stone
That held this wine in the dark gulf
down;
Deep five fathoms it lay in the cold,
The afternoon summer-heats heavily
weigh;
This wine is awaiting in flagons of
gold
On the side of the hill that looks over
the bay.

There a bower of vines for each one
bends
Under the terracing cedar-trees;
Where, shut from the presence of foes
or friends,
He may quaff and couch in lonely ease;
The sunshine slants past the dark green
cave,
In the sunshine the galleys before him
will drowse;
And the roar of the town, like a far-
travell'd wave,
Will faintly flow in to his calm carouse.

No restless womanhood frets the bower,
Exacting and fawning and vain and shy;
But a beautiful boy shall attend the
hour
And silently low in the entrance lie,
As he silently reads the scrolls that
tell
The Cyprian's loves and the maiden's
dreams,
His limbs will twine and his lips will
swell,
And his eyes dilate with amorous schemes.

And his yearning limbs and his sultry
mouth
Will recall to the drinker his own youth's
prime;
When there seem'd crowding round his from
east, west, and south,
Countless sleek limbs of women with cap-
turing mime;
And he'll mourn for youth; and he'll deem
more dear
This cool bright wine;--to our bowers, away!
And nothing will witness the sigh or the tear
On the side of the hill that looks over the
bay.  

(pp. 129-130)
Ultimately, the true test of a poem is its continued capacity to surprise and delight, and such is the case in the above poem and the ones previously noted. A single poem, if it possesses this quality, is sufficient reason to recover the poet's name from obscurity; and it seems, finally, that after a period of more than fifty years, the poetry of Ebenezer Jones—notwithstanding Auden's neglect—is being noticed once more.

As Appendix iii indicates, Jones' poems were fairly regularly anthologized in the decade and a half after the death of Rossetti, in 1882. But in the first half of the twentieth century only Quiller-Couch, in 1919, anthologized one of Jones' poems, a fact which probably reflects the general reaction against Victorian poetry up to 1950. In 1949, Marjorie Evans included in her anthology Jones' most frequently published poem "When the World is Burning." Since that time Jones has been represented in two more anthologies including the very recent Penguin Book of Victorian Verse.

The late interest in Jones (perhaps Jack Lindsay may even decide to complete his Starfish Road) indicates a reassessment of the Victorian period itself and the realization that Victorians were afflicted with problems of identity and alienation that were thought peculiar to the tecnocratic world of the twentieth century.

The aspect of Jones' poetry that has been
emphasized in this study is his attempt as an artist to come to terms with a fragmented world characterized by doubt and despair, and by social injustices and exploitation. Many of the graver social hardships have disappeared today but the inability of men to relate to the needs of others is still a common theme in modern literature.

In summary, it has been the intention of this study to show that Jones' poetry may stand by itself as a sensitive response to a critical social period; and, further, that Jones produced a few memorable poems which, as Rossetti remarked so long ago, cry aloud for disinterment. But, after all the discussion, it is difficult to dissociate the man from his poetry--not to respond to the pathos in his life; to regret that its course was not otherwise, or that the indications of poetic ability were not allowed to mature. Perhaps the most fitting comment with which to conclude is that made by George Saintsbury, which has something of the gnomic quality of an epitaph about it:

Ebenezer Jones might have been at least as good a poet as most in this chapter; and there is hardly a case in it in which the phrase Dis aliter visum [the gods decided otherwise] is not at once more obvious and more explicable.
FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1Notes and Queries, 4th S.V., 5 Feb. 1870, p. 154.

2Watts-Dunton (1832-1914) was born Theodore Watts. In 1897 he added his mother’s maiden name of Dunton to his own name and it is this form that will be cited throughout this paper. A minor poet and novelist, Watts-Dunton was also a solicitor and it was in this professional capacity that he met D.G. Rossetti in whose later life he plays a large role. He assumes major importance in this paper because of a long article he wrote on Jones in the Athenaeum; he was the chief literary critic of the journal at that time and for many years afterwards.


7Lindsay, in Meetings with Poets, p. 157, also sees Jones as a transitional poet, but "as a type of failure"—Lindsay expresses his sympathy for his "baffled effort to break through into new dimensions of thought and feeling."

8All quotations from the text, including poetry quotations, refer to the 1879 edition which contains the memorial notices by Sumner Jones and William James Linton, hereafter, cited as (SJ) and (WJL). The later volume, in addition, contains nine poems not included in the original edition; the four poems in the original work which were omitted from the second edition are transcribed in Appendix I. The Watts-Dunton article in the Athenaeum (21 and 28 Sept. and 12 Oct. 1878) will subsequently be cited as (TWD, 1, 2, or 3). Finally, MSS in the Penkill or Angeli Papers at the University of British Columbia, are indicated by (PP) or (AP).
Chapter One


2 Ibid., p. 105.

3 In S.J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft's British Authors of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1936), p. 118.


5 Ibid., p. 782.

6 Ebenezer Jones, The Land Monopoly, The Suffering and Demoralization Caused by It; And the Justice & Expediency of Its Abolition (London, 1849).

7 For this and other facts about Owen, see Frank Podmore, Robert Owen: A Biography, 2nd ed.

8 The Land Monopoly, p. 3.

9 E.C. Stedman, in His Victorian Poets (Cambridge, 1888), p. 261 wrote: "Ebenezer Jones was another Chartist rhymester. . . . These men and their associates were greatly in earnest as agitators, and often to the injury of their position as artists and poets." See, also, W.M. Rossetti's review of the 1879 issue of Studies in Athenaeum, 14 Sept. 1878, p. 332.

10 Notes and Queries, 4th S.V., 8 Jan. 1870, p. 34.


12 Hood's Magazine, established in January 1844. Note, however, that the New Monthly Magazine, ed. T. Hood, in the same month, selected the "Naked Thinker" as typical of the whole and wrote of it: "An odd and not very agreeable holding in grand sergeantry; we congratulate the "Naked Thinker," on the unwonted mildness of the present Christmas. There are several "asylums" we believe, in the salubrious suburb alluded to, but the bard gives us no clue to the particular one in, or rather on, which Lord Apswern's mansarde is situate."
13See Sumner's letter to DGR dated 8 Sept. 1878, Appendix ii.

14Notes and Queries, 4th S.V., 5 March, 1870, p. 264.

15R.H. Shepherd, in his monograph, Forgotten Books Worth Remembering (London, 1878), and, also, in the 1879 edition of Studies, which he edited, dates the Gazette review as 23 Dec. 1843; however, although the review obviously exists, a search around the date has failed to locate it.


17The Critic, March, 1844, p. 113.

18Athenaeum, 13 April, 1844, p. 335.

Chapter Two

1See Appendix ii.


3See also Linton's Memories (London, 1895), pp. 79-81 in which he gives an account of their vacation in the North of England; he also pays tribute to his friends' "Heroic" qualities.

4Notes and Queries, 4th S.V., 5 Feb., 1870, p. 264.

5Autobiographical Notes, ed. W. Minto (London, 1892), I, pp. 252-3.

6In his 5 March 1870, letter to Notes and Queries, Bell Scott wrote: "After his marriage. . . . and the last time I saw him he told me with pain that he could not think a single poetic idea, or coin a single rhyme."

7See "In Memoriam," pp. iv and ix. Also, Bell Scott writing to W.M. Rossetti 30 September 1878, comments;
"one of poor Eben's galling troubles for some years before he died was that his brother Sumner and himself were not on speaking terms." Appendix ii.

8 *Athenaeum*. 14 Sept. 1878, p. 332. A similar recollection by the same author is found in his Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters with a Memoir (London, 1895), I, p. 111.

9 *Autobiographical Notes*, I, p. 252. See also the letter Jones sent to Bell Scott dated June, 1847. Linton quotes it extensively (WJL p. lxviii) but for a more substantial account see the Academy, Nov. 2, 1878. Jones is severely critical of his previous work and wonders "whether the condition of the percipient was a condition under which works of art should be undertaken."

Chapter Three

1 W. J. Linton, in an unpublished letter to Alice Boyd, William Bell Scott's mistress, dated July 20, 1891, and headed New Haven, Conn[ecticut], refers to "Herne Shepherd's failure, the edition of Studies of Sensation and Event in 1879." (PP), "Special Collections," U.B.C.

2 Extract from the published proceedings of the trial Shepherd v. Francis (the publisher of the *Athenaeum*), in The Times, June 17, 1879.


4 "Special Collections," U.B.C.


6 Ibid., pp. 471-472.


8 Also in several of his unpublished letters to Alice Boyd between 23 Oct. and 17 Nov. 1878, the subject of Ebenezer Jones is touched on. The tone of the letters,
however, indicates that Bell Scott was less concerned with reviving interest in Jones than in getting into print himself, however ephemeral the vehicle. He also wasted no opportunity in striking back at Watts-Dunton who had criticized his erroneous account in the first of his articles. On 23 Oct., he writes to Alice Boyd: "I found a long [letter] from Eben, which is so caracteristic and interesting I am thinking of sending it to either the Athenaeum or Academy. You know I hold it easy to overrate the kind of poetry of Eben under the enthusiastic feeling of resuscitation." And on 17 Nov., he wrote to her: "You will observe I take the occasion [Academy, 16 Nov] for quietly reiterating what I said before about Eben's interview with Hood and also of his entirely giving up poetry after publishing, both of which statements Watts affirmed were incorrect." (FP), "Special Collections," U.B.C.


10See reply from Sumner to Rossetti, dated 8 Sept. 1878, Appendix ii.


12Rossetti writes to Watts-Dunton, 13 Nov., 1878; "Thanks for yielding to my incitement re Skipsey. I am sure you feel as strongly as I do that it is always something to the good if one can help in making a fine fellow happy." Letters, IV, 1988, p. 1605. Sumner, too, expressed his gratitude "for your introduction of me to Mr. Watts, . . as it is that note which has resulted in the memorial to my brother Eben." Letter to Rossetti, 18 Oct. Appendix ii.

13Letters, IV, pp. 1592-1593.

14When the stock of Pickering and Co. was transferred to George Redway there were sufficient copies to justify tipping in a new title page and calling it a "New Edition."

Chapter Four


3 See, for example, [W.E. Aytoun]'s Firmilian: or the Student of Badajoz: A Spasmodic Tragedy, by T. Percy Jones (Edinburgh & London, 1854). Also W.H. Mallock's "How to Make a Spasmodic Poem like Mr. R*B*R*T B*C*H*N*N*," in Every Man his own Poet: or The Singer's Recipe (Oxford, 1872).

4 Houghton, p. 22. These two characteristics are the starting point for his examination of the years 1830-1870.


6 Loc. cit.

7 In his Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (London, 1882), p. 263, T. Hall Caine recalled that when he asked Rossetti for recommendations for his projected anthology of sonnets, Rossetti sent a list including examples from Shakespeare, Donne, and Wordsworth; he also wrote: "There is a sonnet by Ebenezer Jones, beginning 'I never wholly feel that summer is high,' which though very jagged, has decided merit to warrant its inclusion."

8 It is more than likely that "Ways of Regard" is the poem referred to by Browning in a letter to Edmund Gosse dated 21 Sept. 1878; "Has your attention been directed to an article in last week's Athenaeum, on a reprint of some of the poems of Ebenezer Jones, in which my name was introduced as that of one who 'thoroughly appreciated' the author? That is undoubtedly true: but I never saw nor heard anything of him except his one book,—which was lent to me for a somewhat hurried reading. I remember speaking about it to W.J. Fox,—who told me he knew the writer personally and shared in my opinion of his power; and, I almost think it may have been from one of those 'roughly-printed blue-paper books' that Eliot Warburton, at breakfast once, declaimed to me an impassioned Chartist tirade in blank verse,—the speech of an orator addressing a crowd," in Letters of Robert Browning; Collected by Thos. J. Wise, ed. Thurman L. Hood (New Haven, 1933), p. 184.
Conclusion


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b) Printed


———. The Land Monopoly, the Suffering and Demoralization caused by it; and the Justice & Expediency of its Abolition. London: Charles Fox, 1849.


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Background and Miscellaneous Sources


APPENDIX 1

The poems printed in the 1843 edition of the *Studies* which were omitted in Herne Shepherd's 1879 edition.

**Egremond**

Ages agone, when life was swift and bright;
Before the originating Power had ceased
His cycles of creation; when men found
Oft in the morn, new beasts upon the hills,
New trees amidst the woods, new flowers, —create
Then first; when on this planet's vaulting shell,
Man laid not down supine, but up, erect,
Waited and watched; in youthfulness so keen,
That days effected in his thoughts and forms
Those revolutions, which, in these dull times,
Long years alone can instigate, while centuries
Toil with their consummation; --then, the sage,
Who reverence won for sciences; the hero,
Who made a nation free; the Saviour,
Who human viciousness to goodness changed;--
Did so within their lifetimes, with completeness;
And gained a glory, and sustained a joy,
The best of us may dream not.

In this proud mom of time lived Egremond;
His life a star 'midst wildly clouded evil,—
Evil that speedily could be changed to good
By competent energies. And Egremond
His life did dedicate to effect this change.
The world slept on; the creating Power toiled;
Egremond, through the midnight, in his cell,
Leaps with his passionate reason down the depths
Tempestuously tossed, of human nature,
Seeking the masked demons, that invoke
Suffering and wrong; he pauses for a while;
In thought he overbounds the travelling hour;--
Past man's redeeming, he beholds redemption;--
He sees beyond the hurtling cloudinesses,
A fair bright time; he hears the vast rejoicings
Of myriads changed by him to virtuous gods;--
They shout his name; --divinely burns his eye,
As though a lonely spirit of the night
Were staring in it, and a flash leaps through
His toil-worn face, and quivering, up he springs,—
"Pour no libation, drop no useless tear
Above my sepulchre, the dead feel not:—
But now, oh! now; now, while this frame can quiver,
And the hot blood leaps swiftly to my brain,—
Now when the wildest hurricane of passion
Were but a power to whirl my fearless spirit
In dizzy transport, --while I would be driven
Straight through the universe, swift as a leaf,
So that my soul might widen to her fate,
And throb exultingly against the storm,—
Now give me fame, let nations fill the cup,
And to the music of their myriad shoutings,
I'll drain it to the dregs; it will be, is,
Mine, great God! --mine." Swift from his face all passion
Fled, thereupon a magnificent smile;
He leaned against the window, a full hour
Considering his own majesty; Adonis,
Gazing within the stream, endured delight
As incomparable to Egremond's,
As is the soulless splendour of the sun,
To the enveloping smile of a new bride.
The moon slants light on his sky-lifted face,
Haggard with eager intellectual toil,
Beautifully haggard as the face of a corpse,
That peering from its riven sepulchre
Lists to the resurrection trumpetings,
He hails her wandering thro' the tranquil heaven:—
"Beautiful moon! I would that thou wert God,
Or that he looked on me where thou art now,
In that blue chasm; so that I might tell him,
And watch the love grow softer o'er his brow,
The while I told him, all my mighty joy,—
Creating love where hate was, peace where war;
Thou art so beautiful, moon! that there must be
Some present commune between thee and God!
Speak to him for me, tell to him my love,
His greatness daunts me not, for I am good;—
Yes, I am good, for I do procreate goodness;
Rapture unspeakable! though yonder skies,
Bending down round to me, should fiercely frown
One drown of condemnation, I should stand
Unangrily; yea, glad— yea, calm— yea, proud.
Power of infinite love! I thee not offer
The parasitical and insulting worship
Of terror wrenched thanks; nor basely seek I,
By false disparagement of my goodly nature,
To render thee contrastedly exalted;
Thy greatness needs it not:-- to thee, oh God!
My soul extends herself in fearless love,
And reverence that is ecstasy; if I,
In moulding this small isle to harmony,
Feel blessed— yea, so blessed, that this hour
Is worthier than years of common life,—
How vast must be thy blessedness, aye spherling
Happy bright planets from the galaxy,
Thereon inhoming us intelligent
Lover that knows no weariness! when all stars
Turn up to thee their beautiful bright eyes,
And pause for joy, —methinks thy very godhead,
On its caressing firmament must lean,
C'ercome with love! My soul ascends to thee;—
Thou, infinite in Knowledge, must be happy;
Time sounds of life, which scare us listening here,
Shaking our faith with their unanswered plainings,
Play sweetly unto thine eternal mind,
The discords of one deepening harmony!"
The expectation of some answering, shaded
Egremond's face; again he hailed the moon;—
"How hast thou made the sky like one fair flower!
Laying aside thy vestments, so that heaven,
And the valleys, and the hills, and the floods of earth
Gaze on thine unveiled loveliness, expressing
Their ravishment in one soft smile.
Like thee, do I arise in life's dark night,
But not like thee, fair moon! would I descend
Down in my heaven, but when I shall reach
The zenith of my glory, from the top
I would outspread a pair of angel wings,
And soar to God. Yea, presently, must I die!
When ended my creation, wherefore life;
A life of conservation metes not me,
I know creation rapture; what, creation,
Save harmonizing elements!" "Yes, God!"
He cried, and sprang into unsheltered space;
"I claim, by virtue of the peace I make,
Some dim, disorganized, sullen star,
That I may be to it in place of thee,
Teaching its heart all musics; through thy worlds
Dismiss me glorying!"
His eyes wild rioted; his brow upturned
Pallidly grand against the vast empyrean,
As though he heard, echoing from star to star,
The voice of deity cry, "Come up hither."

To a Personification of Ariel at the Theatre

Beautiful Croucher under old Prospero's power!
Ever didst thou hold in sight that jubilee day,
Whose gates should free thee into many a bower,
Where boughs drop blossoms, and where wild bees stray;
The alacrity with which thou didst obey
Sprang from this very expectancy; and how well,
Every expression of thy body did display
This one vivid motive, might peradventure tell,
Thy poet, the Ariel's God, the God of Prospero's cell,

For was no fear on thine obedient brow;
Nor pleasuring of the present; eagerly bright,
With hope, and not with joy, did it avow
Impatient anxiousness of coming delight;
While still thy swift form fluttered for flight,
Ever with glanced out head, and bended knees;
A beautiful restlessness, an earth-bound sprite
Listening its own heaven-music tinge the breeze,
Noticing not earth's sands, heeding not earth's green trees.

A thousand eyes did watch thy restless stay;
A thousand ears heard thy fine wits retrieve
Repeated promises of thy jubilee day;
And as for some caged bird whose bonds aggrieve,
They grieved for thee; --but when thou didst enweave
Into thy song, "Do you love me, master? No!"
Oh a thousand hearts did yearn for thy reprieve,
For they felt thy heart with love overflow,
And that to expend that love thou didst desire to go,

"Thing of the elements!" beautifully started
Thy touching question; unconnectedly asked;
Beautuously unconnect, --for when deep-hearted
Have questionings long been, from the heart thus tasked,
They will gush at any time, unbidden, unmasked;
And thy sudden "Do you love me Master? No!"
Told us, that though in cowslip's bell thou hadst basked,-
Ever since thou hadst served the churlish Prospero,
Thou hadst deeply longed that love betwixt ye twain
might grow.

If a new sound should music through the sky,
How would all hearing drink the challenging tone;
And when thou utterest thy denying reply
To this questioning of love, as Ariel alone
Only could utter it, suddenly making known
New voice, new human music: -- then did burn
Each listener, to divine, ere it were gone,
What feelings toned it; though none might learn,
How many divine, and deep, in that sweet "No" did yearn.

And when old Prospero's farewell set free,
Heavens! how we rose, as brake thy farewell singing
Richly and strong, to hail thy beauteous glee;
We saw thee bend, as though even homeward winging;
We saw thine eyelids quiver beneath the springing
Anew to thine heart, of the memory of thy life,
Where the bee sucks, where summer sounds are ringing;
Merrily, merrily abandoning, rose thy strain,
And our hearts did sink with bliss e'en while thy flight did pain.

Life

Oh! who said that life was a vanishing show!
A cheat to humanity given!
How could he be poet, when poets, we know,
Can change even Hell into Heaven!
Oh! how could he slander my beautiful world,
So softly and brilliantly changing;
Over each fading scene fairer hues are unfurled,
So that fancy may ever go ranging,
    Oh lovely is the green green earth,
    With stars around her beaming;
    And glorious is a mortal's birth,
    For life is more than dreaming.

He sighed that the blossoms of beauty and youth
    Should brighten the path to a tomb;
Why did he forget that their goodness and truth,
    Would shine on and soften its gloom!
Would shine on and soften? sweet minstrel! - no rather
    Would change to a sweet quiet shade,
That haven of rest where mortalities gather,
    Like babes, in a calm cradle laid!
    Oh lovely is the green green earth,
    With stars around her beaming;
    And glorious is a mortal's birth,
    For life is more than dreaming.

A Christian's Drinking Chaunt

Oh! the world is a place where the happiest of things
    Is to blind one's eyes to the cruel guile,
That looks with a thousand ready stings
    Often under the beautiful smile;
And the finest of magics to dim the sight,
    Is the wine, the wine, the wine we pour!
Then drink! and dream that the world goes right;
Oh drink! and dream that we'll doubt no more.

They tell us the silliest of things is to trust,
    If it be not yet sillier, disgust to show;
We give to them back, that trust we must,
For it is the most beautiful pleasure we know;
Let them nickname it folly, and sober, depart; -
The wine, the wine, the wine we pour!
That glorious young folly shall rouse in each heart,
To make ancient music, and fling wide the door.

The wine cups are foaming, our brows shine delight;
The world raves behind us; arise we, arise!
Drink deep our contempt for each low-hearted wight,
Who prefers sober sneers to our love-bedimmed eyes!
Again, fill again, all together, drink again,
To this wine, this wine, this wine we pour!
It rolls to our lips, and it woos us to drain;
And we kiss as we drink, and each kiss yearns for more.

The sober ones say, when this wine-dream has passed,
We shall each doubt the other, be deceived, and deceive;
Is it so? - then exhaust we our joys while they last,
And wring from the hour what weeks can't retrieve;
Sober life comes amain with its cares and gloom;
But the wine, the wine, the wine we pour!
Now is ours! and defying the worst that can come,
Over time and fate conquering, drink, drink to the core!
APPENDIX II

Unpublished letters which relate to the attempt to revive interest in Jones' poetry in 1878. They are included in the Angeli Papers located in the Special Collections division of the University of British Columbia library.

Sumner Jones: D.G. Rossetti [no address] Sunday, 8 Sept. 1878

My dear Sir

Very welcome to me was your note which I found at the Office in the City yesterday. For its own sake and that of the subject it revives. Seeing the word 'prompt' in your note I did not leave my desk until I had acted on your suggestion to write to your friend Mr. Theodore Watts—and if at home he will have received my note at Putney last night:—

I gladly availed myself of your kind introduction and knowing that his official address is 18 Bedford How I proposed to call on him there --if that will suit Mr. Watts—as it will me, any day and how he may appoint. I will take with me my own copy of the 'Studies' & it is marred with youthful jottings of my own—all those years ago --but is the only copy accessible to me just now --and it is complete. I am sorry you have lost the copy you had, as this solitary and ill-starred book is scarce now --and seems to have disappeared from the book-stalls. The "borrowers" have dealt heavily with me also—but this has escaped them —though it too has been lent I see but to one who pencilled in it where it came from— for return. Would that all borrowers were as conscientious as that! Jones had several copies but some have been given —some lent —to the non-returning ones. Yet I think —nay I feel sure —that in a box full of 'Ghosts' as I term relics & old letters etc I shall find --when I can nerve myself to search —another copy which I will ask you kindly to accept from me when Mr. Watts has in his own time done with the copy I will leave with him.

I know nothing of Mr. Shepherd or his "pamphlet" about my brother. But I thank you for telling me of it. I never heard my brother mention a Mr. Shepherd. Linton—
always a shy man --and since I became a Widower have positively shunned society --but I can assure you that I have often wished to see you since your notice of 8 years ago in N. & Q. and to thank you in person for it--as I did by letter --the moment it came to my knowledge. Mr. Watts - and I do thank you so much for having introduced me to him - will I know have reported to you faithfully that I said I should consider it an honour to meet you --but I felt the 14th Sept was coming on, always a very trying time for me. Now that has gone into past Eternity less painfully for me than in any year since my brother died - and I should be a churl indeed if on any other ground I could even dally with your kind invitation to come and dine with you & Mr. Watts. Your clause 'without any ceremony' which I dislike clenched the matter, and it will give me great pleasure to come on Sunday next the 22nd inst. --presenting myself about 6p.m. if that day and hour will be agreeable to you.

I will not affect to waive aside what you say about "Burns" for it is one of the few things I have written that pleased me at the time and does still --though I spy plenty of little faults in the wording. Mr. Holmes and Lord Lytton to whom knowing them I sent copies said very nice things to me about it --but Eben's good word pleased me most as he put his finger on "The Bruce is out" and some other verses. At the time the other piece was written which ought to be shorn of the word 'ode'. I do really think I saw (whether I had the power or not is another thing) how to put things as it were in transfiguring light & so deal with them --but that is an age ago, and I have never put anything in type but those two things --& what you sent for me to St. Paul's, and the 'Two Millionaires' in that Mag; also.

Your meeting me so kindly in what is being done for my dear dear brother (in fact you set it all on foot) has given me courage to dive into my Mortuary Box --and I have found a fairly clean copy of the 'Studies' there which I shall be happy to bring with me on Sunday with a 'Burns' in it.

And now just let me come to what is at this moment next my heart. Is in fact my reason for writing at once when as you perhaps see I can scarcely hold my pen. You and Mr. Watts and myself have at this moment one object in common, as regards the 'Studies.' You say his own "Starting Point" after last week's notice is a difficult [one] --and I see it too, to some extent. But I think I also see this --if you will allow me to put it so. Mr. Shepherd's notice, who has little or nothing to say of his own --followed by your Brother's notice who says well what he says - in re the poems --still leaves room to
style which I have found sometimes in tributes to the dead, and felt was a false note. It comes simply, sweetly—as wings beat—as flowers grow;—so came the words—"No bolder heart than his ever beat in the breast of poet or soldier"—and so went into my heart a thrill of satisfaction as I read those words. They are so absolutely true. They form such a consummate epitaph for my brother's life—from his 'You shall not!' of his child's school days to the moment when he breathed his last. Nothing said about his poetry—nothing about what he might, could, would, or should have done—comes home to me like those words. You will now & Mr. Watts also, be able to somewhat understand the relief to me as compared with my dumb stifled feeling from 1860—1870 and again from 1870—1878. Instead of all that, so chaotic, suppressed, formless and dark—there is now form and atmosphere and colour, and the breath of life and love in this Memorial of my brother by your friend. The dead cannot give thanks unless as one might finally deem by turning round to a still deeper root—when faith and honour shield from attack the forgotten name—but the living, they can give thanks and were it but for this alone—I count it well, and more than well, to be among the living to-day.

I have written several times to Mr. Watts during my 3 weeks sojourn with two of my daughters in this place, and on one occasion, after reading in the Athenaeum for October 5th Your Sonnet & [illeg.] others in which is framed your "Fiammetta"—which I have been privileged to see and which, as I told Mr. Watts has been a haunting loveliness to me ever since I beheld her face. Your Sonnet wonderfully illustrates the picture, even to me, who have seen it—and heard you describe, on an occasion which is often in my mind,—And will be often and is now—as I am preparing myself on Monday next the 21st to re-enter this soulless world in which I have to dwell—and see faces from which I shrink.

But not as I last left it shall I return, but rather with the sweet consciousness that what truth and love both desired should be done has now been done and great and abiding is the satisfaction to me and my daughter—who has been intensely interested in what has been done for her Uncle's memory and for my sake.

Believe me
My dear Mr. Rossetti
Very sincerely yours
Sumner Jones.
APPENDIX III

A chronological arrangement of anthologies which include one or more of Jones' poems.


