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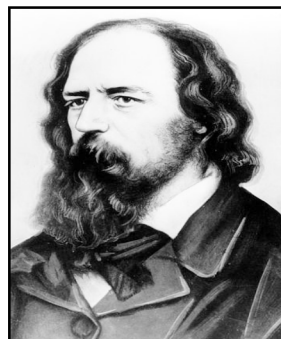
CHAPTER

From "The Passing of Arthur"

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

➡ About the Poet

Alfred Lord Tennyson was born at Somerby on August 6, 1809. His father's name was George Tennyson. His father was also a well known poet of his time. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. There, he became an intimate friend of Arthur Henry Hallam. He wrote his famous elegy, 'In Memoriam' after the death of his friend, A.H. Hallam. It was published in 1850. He was appointed Poet—Laureate in the place of Wordsworth after his death. He was also awarded the Chancellor's Medal in 1829 for his famous poem 'Timbuctoo'. Tennyson was one of the famous poets of Victorian age. He was praised by all. He also got chance to become a personal friend of Queen Victoria who made him a peer in 1884. He wrote so many poetic collections. These are — 'The Princess', 'Idylls Of The King', and 'Maud'. His notable poems are — 'Break, Break, Break, Idle Tears', 'Ulysses', 'Crossing The Bar' and 'The Charge of Light Brigade'. When he died in 1892, he was buried in Westminster Abbey.



➡ About the Poem

In this poem, King Arthur gives last message to his follower, Sir Bedivere, that change is the law of nature. It is necessary for the maintenance of the world. Even good customs and practices must change. If they continue for a long time, they turn into evils. We need not be perturbed by changes. We should continue to perform our duties under all circumstances. We should pray to God to shower His blessings. Prayer has the magical power. It can accomplish impossible things. Therefore, we should pray to God not only for himself but also for our friends. It is a kind of affection that binds us with God.



*And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :
The old order changeth, yielding place to new.
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.*

*Comfort thyself : What comfort is in me ?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done
 May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
 For what are men better than sheep and goats
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
 For so the whole round earth is every way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now, farewell!*

—Alfred Lord Tennyson

➔ Appreciation of the Poem

The poem has been composed by Alfred Lord Tennyson, one of the greatest English poets of the Victorian era and also poet laureate of England from 1850 to 1891. The poem is an extract from the longer poem, "Morte D' Arthur" which is the closing book of "Idylls of the King". The poem takes us to the last days of King Arthur, a semi-legendary king of England and the founder of the order of knighthood called the 'Round Table'. After a long era of chivalry and heroic adventures, The Round Table is slowly coming to an end. One by one, the members of the Round Table are gone. King Arthur himself has been badly wounded in the battlefield and his end, too, is coming soon. Sir Bedivere, the last of the knights of the Round Table, takes him to a small boat which will take the king away to an unknown destination. Sir Bedivere is naturally sorry. He asks the king what is to become of himself now that the Round Table is no more. King Arthur consoles him by saying that change is the law of nature and that it is inevitable. In the present extract, King Arthur is replying Sir Bedivere's misgivings.

||Glossary||

Slowly	: in low and slow tones (धीमी-धीमी आवाज में)
barge	: small boat (छोटी नाव)
order	: system (व्यवस्था, क्रम)
yielding	: giving (स्थान देना)
corrupt	: spoil (भ्रष्ट करना, बिगाड़ना)
may he within himself	: may God accept him as he is and purify him
make pure	of his <i>sin</i> (ईश्वर उसे उसी रूप में स्वीकार करे और उसे उसके पापों से मुक्त करें)

wrought	: done, worked (किया गया)
nourish	: bring up (पालना, बढ़ाना)
blind life	: life of ignorance about the greatness of God (ईश्वर की महानता से अनभिज्ञ जीवन)
gold chains	: chains of love (प्यार की कड़ी)

||Exercise||

➡ Answer the following questions :

1. Write the central idea of the poem 'From "The Passing Of Arthur"'.
2. What is the advice of King Arthur to Bedivere ?

➡ Explain the following lines with reference to the context :

1. The old order changeth the world.
2. For what are friend.
3. More things are night and day.
4. If thou shouldst hands of prayer.
5. And slowly answered corrupt the world.

