

## Briefly Noticed

*Tennyson's Maud: A Definitive Edition*, ed. Susan Shatto. University of Oklahoma Press. Norman and London. 1986. 296 pp. and 5 illustrations. \$39.50

Susan Shatto presents a careful collation of all the textual materials, both published and unpublished, which went into the making of Tennyson's monodrama. Included is a facsimile of the set of stanzas "Oh! that 'twere possible", considered nuclear by some, as it appeared in *The Tribute* (1837).

In her introduction Shatto treats the much debated stages of the poem's composition and the role—no less vexed—played by Sir John Simeon in bringing the ambitious project to final fruition. She is illuminating on the subject of Tennyson's notorious evasiveness or ill-tempered abruptness when quizzed about his works-in-progress, such as *Maud* and *In Memoriam* (on a critical edition of which Shatto collaborated several years back). She also has shrewd things to say about the poet's close identification, bordering on infatuation, with *Maud*, which Tennyson never tired of declaiming to willing though at times somewhat overwhelmed audiences—readings marked by sonorous in-

tonation and not seldom interrupted by bursts of ecstatic self-congratulation.

In addition, the editor goes in some depth into the question of literary sources and parallels, and into the history of the work's critical reception: very mixed, this latter, and to Tennyson a frequent cause of intense annoyance.

*Jane Morris to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*, ed. Peter Faulkner. University of Exeter. 1986. 135 pp. £ 15.00

We wish to draw attention to this poignant portrait-in-letters of the ageing Jane Morris. The book is depressing, surely, but most revealing in showing facets of Mrs. Morris's emotional make-up not exhibited elsewhere. It is also somewhat frustrating since Scawen Blunt's part of the correspondence seems to have been irrecoverably lost. Edited with scrupulous care by a veteran Morris scholar, the slender volume provides a species of sombre delight not easily forgotten by its readers.

Francis Golfing