

“The Lady of Shalott”
(1832, 1842)
Alfred Tennyson

1842 version, compared with
1832 version

"The Lady of Shalott"

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot; 5
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd 20

By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd

Skimming down to Camelot:

But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand? 25

Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

"The Lady of Shalott"

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
From the river winding clearly,

 Down to tower'd Camelot:

And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy 35
 Lady of Shalott.'

"The Lady of Shalott"

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay 40

 To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott. 45

"The Lady of Shalott"

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near

 Winding down to Camelot: 50

There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, 55
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights, 65
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
 And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed; 70
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves, 75
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
 Beside remote Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.

The bridle bells rang merrily 85

 As he rode down to Camelot:

And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,

And as he rode his armour rung,

 Beside remote Shalott. 90

"The Lady of Shalott"

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot. 95
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd; 100
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river 105
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

"The Lady of Shalott"

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room, 110
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side; 115
'The curse is come upon me!' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks
complaining, 120

Heavily the low sky raining

Over tower'd Camelot;

Down she came and found a boat

Beneath a willow left afloat,

And round about the prow she wrote 125

The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance 130

 Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott. 135

"The Lady of Shalott"

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot: 140

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

Heard a carol, mournful, holy, 145
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery, 155
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 160
And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott"

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer; 165
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace, 170
 The Lady of Shalott.'

“The Lady of Shalott”

1832 version (Parts 1 & 4 only)

passages later modified are bold-faced

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832) Part I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold, and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To manytower'd Camelot; 5
**The yellowleavèd waterlily,
The greensheathèd daffodilly,
Tremble in the water chilly,
 Round about Shallot.**

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832) Part I

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10

The sunbeam-showers break and quiver

In the stream that runneth ever

By the island in the river

Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15

Overlook a space of flowers,

And the silent isle imbowers

The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832)

Part I

**Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early, 20
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
 O'er the stream of Camelot.
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary 25
Listening whispers, " 'tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."**

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832) Part 4

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining, 120
Heavily the low sky raining

Over tower'd Camelot;

Outside the isle a shallow boat

Beneath a willow lay afloat,

Below the carven stern she wrote, 125

The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832)

Part 4

**A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight.
All raimented in snowy white
That loosely flew, (her zone in sight,
Clasped with one blinding diamond bright,) 130
Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,
Though the squally eastwind keenly
Blew, with folded arms serenely
By the water stood the queenly
Lady of Shalott. 135**

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832) Part 4

With a steady, stony glance—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Beholding all his own mischance,
Mute, **with a glassy countenance—**
 She looked down to Camelot. **140**
It was the closing of the day,
She loosed the chain, and down she lay,
The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832)

Part 4

As when to sailors while they roam, 145
By creeks and outfalls far from home,
Rising and dropping with the foam,
From dying swans wild warblings come,
Blown shoreward; so to Camelot
Still as the boathead wound along 150
They heard her chanting her deathsong,
The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832) Part 4

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,
She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her **eyes were darkened wholly,** **155**
And her smooth face sharpened slowly
 Turned to towered Camelot:
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the waterside,
Singing in her song she died, **160**
 The Lady of Shalott.

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832)

Part 4

Under tower and balcony,
By gardenwall and gallery,
**A pale, pale corpse she floated by,
Deadcold, between the houses high. 165**

**Dead into towered Camelot.
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
To the planked wharfage came:
Below the stern they read her name,
"The Lady of Shalott." 170**

"The Lady of Shalott" (1832)

Part 4

**They crossed themselves, their stars they blest,
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire and guest.
There lay a parchment on her breast,
That puzzled more than all the rest,
 The wellfed wits at Camelot. 175
"the web was woven curiously
The charm is broken utterly,
Drawn near and fear not—this is I,
 The Lady of Shalott."**