



Balin and Balan

by: Alfred Lord Tennyson (Author)
from: Idylls of the King [1859-1885] 1859-1885

Pellam the King, who held and lost with Lot
In that first war, and had his realm restored
But rendered tributary, failed of late
To send his tribute; wherefore Arthur called
His treasurer, one of many years, and spake,
"Go thou with him and him and bring it to us,
Lest we should set one truer on his throne.
Man's word is God in man."

His Baron said

"We go but harken: there be two strange knights
Who sit near Camelot at a fountain side,
A mile beneath the forest, challenging
And overthrowing every knight who comes.
Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,
And send them to thee?"

Arthur laughed upon him,

"Old friend, too old to be so young, depart,
Delay not thou for aught, but let them sit,
Until they find a lustier than themselves."

So these departed. Early, one fair dawn,
The light-winged spirit of his youth returned
On Arthur's heart; he armed himself and went,
So coming to the fountain-side beheld
Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,
Brethren, to right and left the spring, that down,
From underneath a plume of lady-fern,
Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom of it.
And on the right of Balin Balin's horse
Was fast beside an alder, on the left
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.
"Fair Sirs," said Arthur, "wherefore sit ye here?"
Balin and Balan answered "For the sake
Of glory; we be mightier men than all
In Arthur's court; that also have we proved;
For whatsoever knight against us came
Or I or he have easily overthrown."
"I too," said Arthur, "am of Arthur's hall,
But rather proven in his Paynim wars
Than famous jousts; but see, or proven or not,
Whether me likewise ye can overthrow."
And Arthur lightly smote the brethren down,
And lightly so returned, and no man knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside
 The carolling water set themselves again,
 And spake no word until the shadow turned;
 When from the fringe of coppice round them burst
 A spangled pursuivant, and crying, "Sirs,
 Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the King,"
 They followed; whom when Arthur seeing asked
 "Tell me your names; why sat ye by the well?"
 Balin the stillness of a minute broke
 Saying "An unmelodious name to thee,
 Balin, 'the Savage'--that addition thine--
 My brother and my better, this man here,
 Balan. I smote upon the naked skull
 A thrall of thine in open hall, my hand
 Was gauntleted, half slew him; for I heard
 He had spoken evil of me; thy just wrath
 Sent me a three-years' exile from thine eyes.
 I have not lived my life delightsomely:
 For I that did that violence to thy thrall,
 Had often wrought some fury on myself,
 Saving for Balan: those three kingless years
 Have past--were wormwood-bitter to me. King,
 Methought that if we sat beside the well,
 And hurled to ground what knight soever spurred
 Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier back,
 And make, as ten-times worthier to be thine
 Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I have said.
 Not so--not all. A man of thine today
 Abashed us both, and brake my boast. Thy will?"
 Said Arthur "Thou hast ever spoken truth;
 Thy too fierce manhood would not let thee lie.
 Rise, my true knight. As children learn, be thou
 Wiser for falling! walk with me, and move
 To music with thine Order and the King.
 Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren, stands
 Vacant, but thou retake it, mine again!"

Thereafter, when Sir Balin entered hall,
 The Lost one Found was greeted as in Heaven
 With joy that blazed itself in woodland wealth
 Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers,
 Along the walls and down the board; they sat,
 And cup clashed cup; they drank and some one sang,
 Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, whereupon
 Their common shout in chorus, mounting, made
 Those banners of twelve battles overhead
 Stir, as they stirred of old, when Arthur's host
 Proclaimed him Victor, and the day was won.

Then Balan added to their Order lived
 A wealthier life than heretofore with these
 And Balin, till their embassy returned.

"Sir King" they brought report "we hardly found,
 So bushed about it is with gloom, the hall
 Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam, once
 A Christless foe of thine as ever dashed
 Horse against horse; but seeing that thy realm
 Hath prospered in the name of Christ, the King
 Took, as in rival heat, to holy things;
 And finds himself descended from the Saint
 Arimathæan Joseph; him who first

Brought the great faith to Britain over seas;
 He boasts his life as purer than thine own;
 Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse abeat;
 Hath pushed aside his faithful wife, nor lets
 Or dame or damsel enter at his gates
 Lest he should be polluted. This gray King
 Showed us a shrine wherein were wonders--yea--
 Rich arks with priceless bones of martyrdom,
 Thorns of the crown and shivers of the cross,
 And therewithal (for thus he told us) brought
 By holy Joseph hither, that same spear
 Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ.
 He much amazed us; after, when we sought
 The tribute, answered 'I have quite foregone
 All matters of this world: Garlon, mine heir,
 Of him demand it,' which this Garlon gave
 With much ado, railing at thine and thee.

"But when we left, in those deep woods we found
 A knight of thine spear-stricken from behind,
 Dead, whom we buried; more than one of us
 Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman there
 Reported of some demon in the woods
 Was once a man, who driven by evil tongues
 From all his fellows, lived alone, and came
 To learn black magic, and to hate his kind
 With such a hate, that when he died, his soul
 Became a Fiend, which, as the man in life
 Was wounded by blind tongues he saw not whence,
 Strikes from behind. This woodman showed the cave
 From which he sallies, and wherein he dwelt.
 We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no more."

Then Arthur, "Let who goes before me, see
 He do not fall behind me: foully slain
 And villainously! who will hunt for me
 This demon of the woods?" Said Balan, "I"
 So claimed the quest and rode away, but first,
 Embracing Balin, "Good my brother, hear!
 Let not thy moods prevail, when I am gone
 Who used to lay them! hold them outer fiends,
 Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake them aside,
 Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea, but to dream
 That any of these would wrong thee, wrongs thyself.
 Witness their flowery welcome. Bound are they
 To speak no evil. Truly save for fears,
 My fear for thee, so rich a fellowship
 Would make me wholly blest: thou one of them,
 Be one indeed: consider them, and all
 Their bearing in their common bond of love,
 No more of hatred than in Heaven itself,
 No more of jealousy than in Paradise."

So Balan warned, and went; Balin remained:
 Who--for but three brief moons had glanced away
 From being knighted till he smote the thrall,
 And faded from the presence into years
 Of exile-- now would strictlier set himself
 To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,
 Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore hovered round
 Lancelot, but when he marked his high sweet smile
 In passing, and a transitory word
 Make knight or churl or child or damsel seem

From being smiled at happier in themselves--
 Sighed, as a boy lame-born beneath a height,
 That glooms his valley, sighs to see the peak
 Sun-flushed, or touch at night the northern star;
 For one from out his village lately climbed
 And brought report of azure lands and fair,
 Far seen to left and right; and he himself
 Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred feet
 Up from the base: so Balin marvelling oft
 How far beyond him Lancelot seemed to move,
 Groaned, and at times would mutter, "These be gifts,
 Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,
 Beyond *my* reach. Well had I foughten-- well--
 In those fierce wars, struck hard--and had I crowned
 With my slain self the heaps of whom I slew--
 So--better!-- But this worship of the Queen,
 That honour too wherein she holds him--this,
 This was the sunshine that hath given the man
 A growth, a name that branches o'er the rest,
 And strength against all odds, and what the King
 So prizes--overprizes--gentleness.
 Her likewise would I worship an I might.
 I never can be close with her, as he
 That brought her hither. Shall I pray the King
 To let me bear some token of his Queen
 Whereon to gaze, remembering her--forget
 My heats and violences? live afresh?
 What, if the Queen disdained to grant it! nay
 Being so stately-gentle, would she make
 My darkness blackness? and with how sweet grace
 She greeted my return! Bold will I be--
 Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,
 In lieu of this rough beast upon my shield,
 Langued gules, and toothed with grinning savagery."

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought him, said
 "What wilt thou bear?" Balin was bold, and asked
 To bear her own crown-royal upon shield,
 Whereat she smiled and turned her to the King,
 Who answered "Thou shalt put the crown to use.
 The crown is but the shadow of the King,
 And this a shadow's shadow, let him have it,
 So this will help him of his violences!"
 "No shadow" said Sir Balin "O my Queen,
 But light to me! no shadow, O my King
 But golden earnest of a gentler life!"

So Balin bare the crown, and all the knights
 Approved him, and the Queen, and all the world
 Made music, and he felt his being move
 In music with his Order, and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in middle May,
 Hath ever and anon a note so thin
 It seems another voice in other groves;
 Thus, after some quick burst of sudden wrath,
 The music in him seemed to change, and grow
 Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall
 His passion half had gauntleted to death,
 That causer of his banishment and shame,
 Smile at him, as he deemed, presumptuously:

His arm half rose to strike again, but fell:
The memory of that cognizance on shield
Weighted it down, but in himself he moaned:

"Too high this mount of Camelot for me:
These high-set courtesies are not for me.
Shall I not rather prove the worse for these?
Fierier and stormier from restraining, break
Into some madness even before the Queen?"

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,
And glancing on the window, when the gloom
Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame
That rages in the woodland far below,
So when his moods were darkened, court and King
And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall
Shadowed an angry distance: yet he strove
To learn the graces of their Table, fought
Hard with himself, and seemed at length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat
Close-bowered in that garden nigh the hall.
A walk of roses ran from door to door;
A walk of lilies crost it to the bower:
And down that range of roses the great Queen
Came with slow steps, the morning on her face;
And all in shadow from the counter door
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,
As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced
The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.
Followed the Queen; Sir Balin heard her "Prince,
Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,
As pass without good morrow to thy Queen?"
To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,
"Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen?"
"Yea so" she said "but so to pass me by--
So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,
Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.
Let be: ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream."

Then Lancelot with his hand among the flowers
"Yea--for a dream. Last night methought I saw
That maiden Saint who stands with lily in hand
In yonder shrine. All round her prest the dark,
And all the light upon her silver face
Flowed from the spiritual lily that she held.
Lo! these her emblems drew mine eyes--away:
For see, how perfect-pure! As light a flush
As hardly tints the blossom of the quince
Would mar their charm of stainless maidenhood."

"Sweeter to me" she said "this garden rose
Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter still
The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of May.
Prince, we have ridden before among the flowers
In those fair days--not all as cool as these,
Though season-earlier. Art thou sad? or sick?
Our noble King will send thee his own leech--
Sick? or for any matter angered at me?"

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes; they dwelt
Deep-tranced on hers, and could not fall: her hue
Changed at his gaze: so turning side by side

They past, and Balin started from his bower.

"Queen? subject? but I see not what I see.
 Damsel and lover? hear not what I hear.
 My father hath begotten me in his wrath.
 I suffer from the things before me, know,
 Learn nothing; am not worthy to be knight;
 A churl, a clown!" and in him gloom on gloom
 Deepened: he sharply caught his lance and shield,
 Nor stayed to crave permission of the King,
 But, mad for strange adventure, dashed away.

He took the selfsame track as Balan, saw
 The fountain where they sat together, sighed
 "Was I not better there with him?" and rode
 The skyless woods, but under open blue
 Came on the hoarhead woodman at a bough
 Wearily hewing, "Churl, thine axe!" he cried,
 Descended, and disjoined it at a blow:
 To whom the woodman uttered wonderingly
 "Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of these woods
 If arm of flesh could lay him." Balin cried
 "Him, or the viler devil who plays his part,
 To lay that devil would lay the Devil in me."
 "Nay" said the churl, "our devil is a truth,
 I saw the flash of him but yestereven.
 And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon too
 Hath learned black magic, and to ride unseen.
 Look to the cave." But Balin answered him
 "Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl,
 Look to thy woodcraft," and so leaving him,
 Now with slack rein and careless of himself,
 Now with dug spur and raving at himself,
 Now with droopt brow down the long glades he rode;
 So marked not on his right a cavern-chasm
 Yawn over darkness, where, nor far within,
 The whole day died, but, dying, gleamed on rocks
 Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from the floor,
 Tuskl like, arising, made that mouth of night
 Whereout the Demon issued up from Hell.
 He marked not this, but blind and deaf to all
 Save that chained rage, which ever yelpt within,
 Past eastward from the falling sun. At once
 He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud
 And tremble, and then the shadow of a spear,
 Shot from behind him, ran along the ground.
 Sideways he started from the path, and saw,
 With pointed lance as if to pierce, a shape,
 A light of armour by him flash, and pass
 And vanish in the woods; and followed this,
 But all so blind in rage that unawares
 He burst his lance against a forest bough,
 Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and fled
 Far, till the castle of a King, the hall
 Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly draped
 With streaming grass, appeared, low-built but strong;
 The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,
 The battlement overtopt with ivytods,
 A home of bats, in every tower an owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam crying "Lord,
 Why wear ye this crown-royal upon shield?"
 Said Balin "For the fairest and the best

Of ladies living gave me this to bear."
 So stalled his horse, and strode across the court,
 But found the greetings both of knight and King
 Faint in the low dark hall of banquet: leaves
 Laid their green faces flat against the panes,
 Sprays grated, and the cankered boughs without
 Whined in the wood; for all was hushed within,
 Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise asked
 "Why wear ye that crown-royal?" Balin said
 "The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I, and all,
 As fairest, best and purest, granted me
 To bear it!" Such a sound (for Arthur's knights
 Were hated strangers in the hall) as makes
 The white swan-mother, sitting, when she hears
 A strange knee rustle through her secret reeds,
 Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly smiled.
 "Fairest I grant her: I have seen; but best,
 Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall, and yet
 So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are these
 So far besotted that they fail to see
 This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret shame?
 Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes."

A goblet on the board by Balin, bossed
 With holy Joseph's legend, on his right
 Stood, all of massiest bronze: one side had sea
 And ship and sail and angels blowing on it:
 And one was rough with wattling, and the walls
 Of that low church he built at Glastonbury.
 This Balin graspt, but while in act to hurl,
 Through memory of that token on the shield
 Relaxed his hold: "I will be gentle" he thought
 "And passing gentle" caught his hand away,
 Then fiercely to Sir Garlon "Eyes have I
 That saw today the shadow of a spear,
 Shot from behind me, run along the ground;
 Eyes too that long have watched how Lancelot draws
 From homage to the best and purest, might,
 Name, manhood, and a grace, but scanty thine,
 Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst endure
 To mouth so huge a foulness--to thy guest,
 Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!
 Let be! no more!"

But not the less by night
 The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his rest,
 Stung him in dreams. At length, and dim through leaves
 Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated, and old boughs
 Whined in the wood. He rose, descended, met
 The scorner in the castle court, and fain,
 For hate and loathing, would have past him by;
 But when Sir Garlon uttered mocking-wise;
 "What, wear ye still that same crown-scandalous?"
 His countenance blackened, and his forehead veins
 Bloated, and branched; and tearing out of sheath
 The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery "Ha!
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee ghost,"
 Hard upon helm smote him, and the blade flew
 Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the stones.
 Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward, fell,
 And Balin by the banneret of his helm
 Dragged him, and struck, but from the castle a cry
 Sounded across the court, and--men-at-arms,

A score with pointed lances, making at him--
 He dashed the pommel at the foremost face,
 Beneath a low door dipt, and made his feet
 Wings through a glimmering gallery, till he marked
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide
 And inward to the wall; he stept behind;
 Thence in a moment heard them pass like wolves
 Howling; but while he stared about the shrine,
 In which he scarce could spy the Christ for Saints,
 Beheld before a golden altar lie
 The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,
 Point-painted red; and seizing thereupon
 Pushed through an open casement down, leaned on it,
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from what side
 The blindfold rummage buried in the walls
 Might echo, ran the counter path, and found
 His charger, mounted on him and away.
 An arrow whizzed to the right, one to the left,
 One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry
 "Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly things
 With earthly uses"--made him quickly dive
 Beneath the boughs, and race through many a mile
 Of dense and open, till his goodly horse,
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to ground.

Half-wroth he had not ended, but all glad,
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet unslayed,
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and thought
 "I have shamed thee so that now thou shamest me,
 Thee will I bear no more," high on a branch
 Hung it, and turned aside into the woods,
 And there in gloom cast himself all along,
 Moaning "My violences, my violences!"

But now the wholesome music of the wood
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of Mark,
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode
 The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her Squire.

"The fire of Heaven has killed the barren cold,
 And kindled all the plain and all the wold.
 The new leaf ever pushes off the old.
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

"Old priest, who mumble worship in your quire--
 Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's desire,
 Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire!
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

"The fire of Heaven is on the dusty ways.
 The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.
 The whole wood-world is one full peal of praise.
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

"The fire of Heaven is lord of all things good,
 And starve not thou this fire within thy blood,
 But follow Vivien through the fiery flood!
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell!"

Then turning to her Squire "This fire of Heaven,

This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,
 And beat the cross to earth, and break the King
 And all his Table."

Then they reached a glade,
 Where under one long lane of cloudless air
 Before another wood, the royal crown
 Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm
 Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and her Squire;
 Amazed were these; "Lo there" she cried--"a crown--
 Borne by some high lord-prince of Arthur's hall,
 And there a horse! the rider? where is he?
 See, yonder lies one dead within the wood.
 Not dead; he stirs!--but sleeping. I will speak.
 Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet rest,
 Not, doubtless, all unearned by noble deeds.
 But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's hall,
 To help the weak. Behold, I fly from shame,
 A lustful King, who sought to win my love
 Through evil ways: the knight, with whom I rode,
 Hath suffered misadventure, and my squire
 Hath in him small defence; but thou, Sir Prince,
 Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,
 Arthur the blameless, pure as any maid,
 To get me shelter for my maidenhood.
 I charge thee by that crown upon thy shield,
 And by the great Queen's name, arise and hence."

And Balin rose, "Thither no more! nor Prince
 Nor knight am I, but one that hath defamed
 The cognizance she gave me: here I dwell
 Savage among the savage woods, here die--
 Die: let the wolves' black maws ensepulchre
 Their brother beast, whose anger was his lord.
 O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,
 Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted up,
 And been thereby uplifted, should through me,
 My violence, and my villainy, come to shame."

Thereat she suddenly laughed and shrill, anon
 Sighed all as suddenly. Said Balin to her
 "Is this thy courtesy--to mock me, ha?
 Hence, for I will not with thee." Again she sighed
 "Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often laugh
 When sick at heart, when rather we should weep.
 I knew thee wronged. I brake upon thy rest,
 And now full loth am I to break thy dream,
 But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,
 Though bitter. Hither, boy--and mark me well.
 Dost thou remember at Caerleon once--
 A year ago--nay, then I love thee not--
 Ay, thou rememberest well--one summer dawn--
 By the great tower--Caerleon upon Usk--
 Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair lord,
 The flower of all their vestal knighthood, knelt
 In amorous homage--knelt--what else?--O ay
 Knelt, and drew down from out his night-black hair
 And mumbled that white hand whose ringed caress
 Had wandered from her own King's golden head,
 And lost itself in darkness, till she cried--
 I thought the great tower would crash down on both--
 'Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on the lips,
 Thou art my King.' This lad, whose lightest word

Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,
 Saw them embrace: he reddens, cannot speak,
 So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,
 The deathless mother-maidenhood of Heaven
 Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with me!
 Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an thou would'st,
 Do these more shame than these have done themselves."

She lied with ease; but horror-stricken he,
 Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,
 Breathed in a dismal whisper "It is truth."

Sunnily she smiled "And even in this lone wood,
 Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper this.
 Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods have tongues,
 As walls have ears: but thou shalt go with me,
 And we will speak at first exceeding low.
 Meet is it the good King be not deceived.
 See now, I set thee high on vantage ground,
 From whence to watch the time, and eagle-like
 Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the Queen."

She ceased; his evil spirit upon him leapt,
 He ground his teeth together, sprang with a yell,
 Tore from the branch, and cast on earth, the shield,
 Drove his mailed heel athwart the royal crown,
 Stamp'd all into defacement, hurled it from him
 Among the forest weeds, and cursed the tale,
 The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,
 Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or beast,
 Thrilled through the woods; and Balan lurking there
 (His quest was unaccomplished) heard and thought
 "The scream of that Wood-devil I came to quell!"
 Then nearing "Lo! he hath slain some brother-knight,
 And tramples on the goodly shield to show
 His loathing of our Order and the Queen.
 My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil or man
 Guard thou thine head." Sir Balin spake not word,
 But snatched a sudden buckler from the Squire,
 And vaulted on his horse, and so they crashed
 In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,
 Reputed to be red with sinless blood,
 Reddened at once with sinful, for the point
 Across the maiden shield of Balan pricked
 The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's horse
 Was wearied to the death, and, when they clashed,
 Rolling back upon Balin, crushed the man
 Inward, and either fell, and swooned away.

Then to her Squire muttered the damsel "Fools!
 This fellow hath wrought some foulness with his Queen:
 Else never had he borne her crown, nor raved
 And thus foamed over at a rival name:
 But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast broken shell,
 Art yet half-yolk, not even come to down--
 Who never sawest Caerleon upon Usk--
 And yet hast often pleaded for my love--
 See what I see, be thou where I have been,
 Or else Sir Chick--dismount and loose their casques
 I fain would know what manner of men they be."
 And when the Squire had loosed them, "Goodly!--look!

They might have cropt the myriad flower of May,
 And butt each other here, like brainless bulls,
 Dead for one heifer!"

Then the gentle Squire

"I hold them happy, so they died for love:
 And, Vivien, though ye beat me like your dog,
 I too could die, as now I live, for thee."

"Live on, Sir Boy," she cried, "I better prize
 The living dog than the dead lion: away!
 I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead."
 Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,
 And bounding forward "Leave them to the wolves."

But when their foreheads felt the cooling air,
 Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,
 Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,
 Crawled slowly with low moans to where he lay,
 And on his dying brother cast himself
 Dying; and *he* lifted faint eyes; he felt
 One near him; all at once they found the world,
 Staring wild-wide; then with a childlike wail,
 And drawing down the dim disastrous brow
 That o'er him hung, he kissed it, moaned and spake;

"O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died
 To save thy life, have brought thee to thy death.
 Why had ye not the shield I knew? and why
 Trampled ye thus on that which bare the Crown?"

Then Balin told him brokenly, and in gasps,
 All that had chanced, and Balan moaned again.

"Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's hall:
 This Garlon mocked me, but I heeded not.
 And one said 'Eat in peace! a liar is he,
 And hates thee for the tribute!' this good knight
 Told me, that twice a wanton damsel came,
 And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,
 Whom Pellam drove away with holy heat.
 I well believe this damsel, and the one
 Who stood beside thee even now, the same.
 'She dwells among the woods' he said 'and meets
 And dallies with him in the Mouth of Hell.'
 Foul are their lives; foul are their lips; they lied.
 Pure as our own true Mother is our Queen."

"O brother" answered Balin "Woe is me!
 My madness all thy life has been thy doom,
 Thy curse, and darkened all thy day; and now
 The night has come. I scarce can see thee now.
 Goodnight! for we shall never bid again
 Goodmorrow--Dark my doom was here, and dark
 It will be there. I see thee now no more.
 I would not mine again should darken thine,
 Goodnight, true brother."

Balan answered low

"Goodnight, true brother here! goodmorrow there!
 We two were born together, and we die
 Together by one doom:" and while he spoke

Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept the sleep
With Balin, either locked in either's arm.

d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/tennyson-balin-and-balan