

The critical reception of the Second Series was not, in fact, as cordial as that of the first. Theodore Watts, his long-standing friend, had gone so far as to associate him with 'the greater poets' among his contemporaries, but this, according to De Tabley, had little effect on sales, compared with Hutton's article in the *Spectator*: 'He has always been most malevolent to me . . . [a] thoroughly insincere man surrounded by a very bad set of flatterers'. It is as well that the correspondence ends, not on a note of rancour, but of fertility. Writing from the Isle of Wight in early September, De Tabley mentions a further 100 pages in preparation for another book of verse, none of it likely to be ready before November, the month of his death.

For a full record of De Tabley's thoughts and feelings during this Indian summer of poetic activity it would be interesting to complete the triangle of reciprocal communication, of John Lane to De Tabley and to Le Gallienne, who was constantly in touch with both of them, and the correspondence of Le Gallienne to De Tabley and Lane. 'A veritable stack' of De Tabley's correspondence with Le Gallienne was in the latter's possession in 1926, when *The Romantic '90s* was first published, and Le Gallienne's letters to Lane may have been sold at the auction of Lane's library in 1928. In the descriptive list of correspondence held at Tabley House there seems no record of Lane's or Le Gallienne's letters to the poet. What is abundantly evident, however, is the extreme tact with which Lane must have treated his aristocratic client, never intransigent, never discourteous, yet with a faith in the quality of the verse and in the commercial success of the enterprise; and as far as Le Gallienne is concerned, De Tabley's references are affectionate and generous, with the warmth of a shy and elderly man whose reserve has been overcome by the appreciative criticism of a younger poet.

It is a pity that the posthumous volume of verse, *Orpheus in Thrace and Other Poems*, 1901, could not be published under the conditions of eventual harmony which prevailed for the two series of *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical*. From surviving correspondence with De Tabley's sister and her agents, it is obvious that Lane was reluctant to surrender his rights in the verse already published, and he was clearly annoyed at the choice of a different publisher. It is best to leave De Tabley in terms of Le Gallienne's description of him at their first meeting:

I shall never forget the impression his wistful reserved figure, as of a king in exile, made upon me . . . There was something 'hierarchical' [hieratic?], too, about his noble head, with its longish rippled grey hair, and there was a curious mixture of gentleness and sympathy, with something almost of fierceness, in his melancholy but all-observant blue eyes. He was scarcely sixty, but he looked