

LORD ALFRED TENNYSON 1909

CENTENARY OF THE "SWEET LAUREATE OF THE HUMAN HEART" TO BE CELEBRATED THIS WEEK.

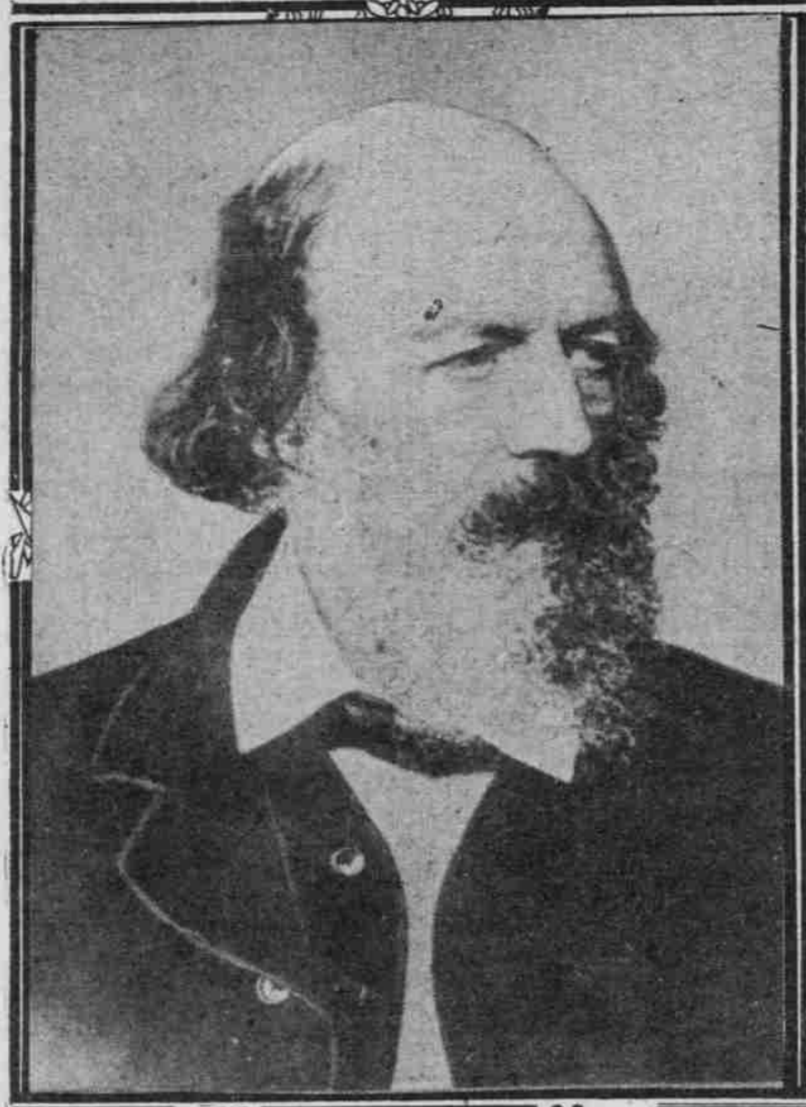
AN APPRECIATION BY ANDREW LANG.

THE life and work of Tennyson present something like the normal type of what, in circumstances as fortunate as mortals may expect, the life and work of a modern poet ought to be. A modern poet, one says, because even poetry is now affected by the division of labor. We do not look to the poet for a large share in the practical activities of existence; we do not expect him, like Aeschylus and Sophocles, Theognis and Alcaeus, to take a conspicuous part in politics and war; or even, as in the age of Anthe, to shine among wits and in society. Life has become, perhaps, too specialized for such multifarious activities. Indeed, even in ancient days, as a Celtic proverb and as the picture of life in the Homeric epics prove, the poet was already a man apart—not foremost among statesmen and warriors, but backward among warriors. If we agree with a not unpopular opinion, the poet ought to be a kind of "Titanic" force, wrecking himself on his own passions and on the nature of things, as did Byron, Burns, Marlowe and Musset.

But Tennyson's career followed lines really more normal, the lines of the life of Wordsworth, wisdom and self-control directing the course of a long, sane, sound and fortunate existence. The great physical strength which is commonly the basis of great mental vigor was not ruined in Tennyson by poverty and passion, as in the case of Burns, nor in forced literary labor, as in those of Scott and Dickens. For long he was poor, like Wordsworth and Southey, but never destitute. He made his early effort; he had his time of great sorrow, and trial, and apparent failure. With practical wisdom he conquered circumstances; he became eminent; he cultivated reaction against his genius; he died in the fullness of a happy age and of renown.

This full-orbed life, with not a few years of sorrow and stress, is what nature seems to intend for the career of a divine minstrel. If Tennyson missed the "one crowded hour of glorious life," he had not to be content in "an age without a name."

It is, for "the days that remain," to bear witness to his real place in the great hierarchy, amongst whom Dante holds yet justly ranked himself. But if we look at Tennyson's work in a twofold aspect: Here, on the exquisite art in which, throughout, his verse is



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

My dear B.T. I was so busy yesterday, I am sorry that I could not have my agreeable appointment with you; I am glad I did not forget you to Greenwich. Here is a note for you, as I am ever yours, June, 1857. B.T.

My dear Thackeray,

Your American friend & poet-traveller has never arrived, he has I suppose changed his mind. I am sure I should have been very glad to see him for my 'castle' was never yet 'besieged & entrenched' against good fellows. I write now this line to say that after the 30th I shall not be here.

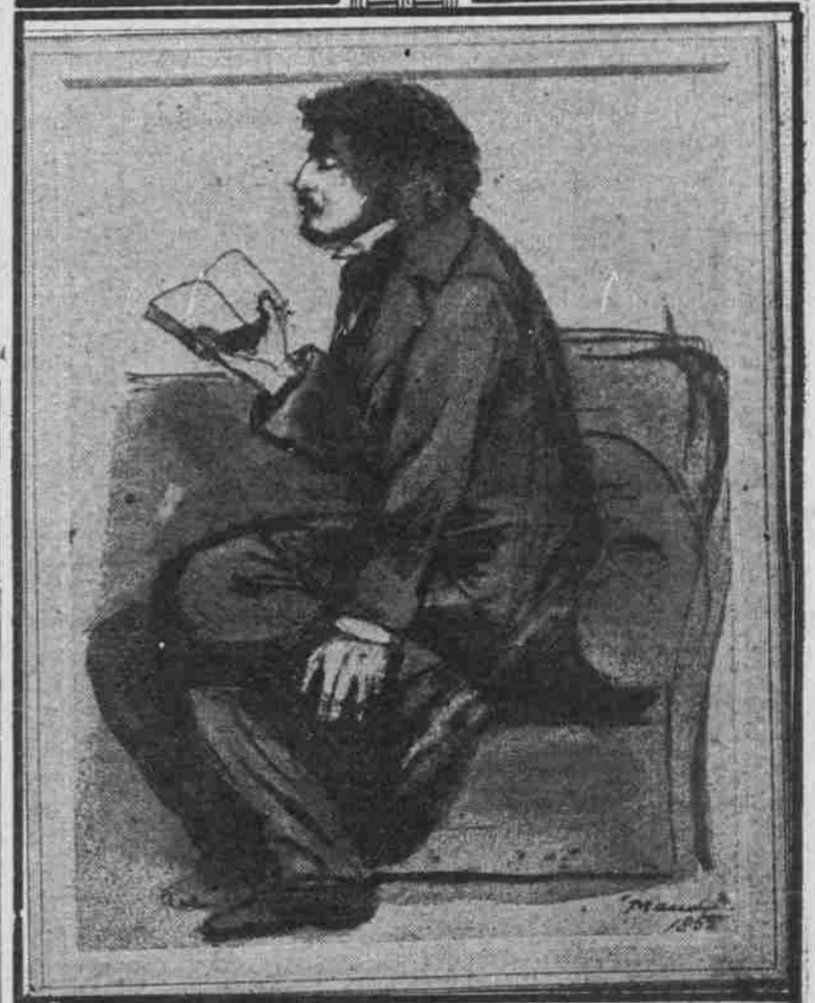
My best remembrance to your daughter whom I have twice seen once as little girl & again a year or so later.

Yours ever A. Tennyson

FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER FROM TENNYSON TO THACKERAY. THE NOTE AT TOP WAS ADDED BY THE RECIPIENT.



"THE FAILURE OF LAUNCELOT" DESIGNED BY BURNE-JONES AND EXECUTED IN TAPESTRY



A DRAWING BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI OF TENNYSON'S READING OF MAUD.

GREAT MEN FOR THREE GENERATIONS HAVE PRAISED HIS VALUED LABORS

He is decidedly the first of our living poets.—William Wordsworth. Take my word for it, he is a noble fellow, every inch of him.—Bayard Taylor.

Poet! I come to touch thy lance with mine; Not as a knight, who on the listed field Of tourney touched his adversary's shield In token of defiance, but in sign Of homage to the mastery which is thine. In English song; nor will I keep concealed, And voiceless as a rivulet frost-congealed, My admiration for thy verse divine. Not of the howling dervishes of song. Who crane the brain with their delicious dance. Art thou, O sweet historian of the heart? Therefore to thee the laurel leaves belong, To thee our love and our allegiance, For thy allegiance to the poet's art.

I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe.—Thomas Carlyle.

Stimplicity and stateliness were vital in the texture of his poetry.—Stepford Brooke.

Others, it may be, touched a note more strong, Scaled loftier heights, or glowed with fiercer rage; But who like thee could stay our modern Doubt? Or soothe the sufferers with a tenderer heart? Or dress gray legends with such perfect grace? Or save life's world-worn pilgrims for their part? Who, since our English tongue first grew, has stirred More souls to noble effort by his word?—Lewis Morris.

One sees qualities in him that predict more than a Wordsworth's fame.—David Masson.

Of poetry—illustrious and consummate; of friendship—noble and sincere.—Robert Browning.

Father far than the morning star, and sweeter far than the songs that rang Loud through Heaven from the choral Seven, when all the stars of the morning sang.

Shines the song that we loved so long—since first such love in us flamed and sprang.—A. C. Swinburne.

Take away Hawthorne's bashfulness, and let him talk easily and fast, and you would have a pretty good Tennyson.—R. W. Emerson.

He shows how one can be royal laureate, quite elegant and "aristocratic," and a little queer and affected, and at the same time perfectly manly and natural.—Walt Whitman.

When, like light withdrawn from earth to heaven, Your glorious glowering fades into the sky, We, looking upward, shall behold you there, Shining more brightly than the stars.—Alfred Austin.

Tennyson's poetry is the newspaper of his era, and he the supreme journalist of the time. It is not that he has been the mere reporter or chronicler of passing events, but he has been an assiduous commentator on them.—P. C. Gilman.

I call him, and think him, the noblest of poets—not because the impressions he produces are, at all times, the most profound—not in that the poetical excitement which he produces is, at all times, the most intense—but because he is, at all times, the most ethereal—in other words, the most elevating and the most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy.—Edgar Allan Poe.

When the New World clasp hands with the Old, In newer fervor and with firmer hold And nobler fellowship, O Master-Singer, with the finger tip Of death laid thus on thy melodious lip, All ages that have honored with thine art, And ages yet unborn, will be part Of all songs pure and true.

Thine now the universal homage due From Old and New World.—James Whitcomb Riley.

"BORN A POET, HE LOOKED A POET;" HIS STRENGTH AND TRAITS AND AIM.

Six feet high, broad-chested and strong-limbed; his face Shakespearean, with deep eyelids; his forehead ample, crowned with dark wavy hair; his head finely poised; his hand the admiration of sculptors, long fingers with square tips, soft as a child's, but of great size and strength.—Hallam Tennyson.

I am always a little disappointed with the exterior of our great poet, in spite of his eyes, which are very fine, but his head and face, striking and dignified as they are, are almost too ponderous and massive for beauty in so young a man; and every now and then there is a slight sarcastic expression about his mouth.—Fanny Kemble.

He was a poet from the first, feeling himself born (as had Milton and Keats) to convince the world of the eternal truth of love and beauty. "For us we have no other aim than to call into life nobler and better sentiments than we feel and express in every-day life."

He lacked Byron's vigor and the bluff manliness of Sir Walter, but he stood full as close to nature as Wordsworth's self, his melodies are as liquid as Coleridge's, his songs as pure as Shelley's, and his color as deep and splendid as Keats'. "Color, like the dawn, flows over the horizon from his pencil"—Emerson.

He is picturesque, rather than statuesque; ornate rather than severe. With rich imagery, pure poetic diction, and genuine inspiration, he yet left nothing to chance, in the minutiae of finish he was as true a master-workman as Horace or Metastasio.

But neither skill nor scholarship is so precious or so palpable in his work as the peace and courage, the hope and faith, which it breathes.—Hallam Tennyson.

It is said Tennyson failed of the loftier note of Browning, but if this be true, it is equally true that where Browning was a sealed book, Tennyson was an open fountain of perpetual delight. It is his many-sidedness and large-heartedness, the intensity with which he identified himself with his country's needs and interests, her joys and griefs, quite as much as his purely poetic genius, which has made him beloved of a far larger public than perhaps any poet of his century.

He saw evils and knew them, but looked for their eradication through the development of the individual rather than through any radical break with the established order.

Yet I doubt not through the Ages one increasing purpose runs, And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

clothed, the lucid beauty of the form, the melody almost audible as music, the mysterious skill by which the words used constantly strike as the inevitable words (and hence, unforgettable), the subtle allusive touches, by which a secondary language is suggested to enrich the leading thought, as the harmonic "parallels" give richness to the note struck upon the string; There, when we think of the vast fertility in subject and treatment, united with happy selection of motive, the wide range of character, the dramatic force of impersonation, the pathos in every variety, the mastery over the comic and the tragic alike; above all, perhaps, those phrases of luminous insight which spring direct from imaginative observation of humanity true for all time, coming from the heart to the heart—his work will probably be found to lie somewhere between that of Virgil and Shakespeare; having its portion, if I may venture on the phrase, in the inspiration of both.

TENNYSON AND MILTON.

A Comparison and a Contrast, From the Pen of Henry Van Dyke.

COMPARISON has long been recognized as one of the fruitful methods of criticism. But in using this method one needs to remember that it is the least obvious comparison which is often the truest and the most suggestive. The relationship of poets does not lie upon the surface; they receive their spiritual inheritance from beyond the lines of direct descent. Thus a poet may be most closely connected with one whose name we never join with his, and we may find his deepest resemblance to a man not only of another age, but of another school.

Tennyson has been compared most frequently with Keats, sometimes, but falsely, with Shelley; and sometimes, more wisely, with Wordsworth. Our accomplished American critic, Edmund Clarence Steadman, who touches nothing that he does not adorn, has a chapter in his "Victorian Poets" on Tennyson and Theophrastus. But the best comparison—one which runs far below the outward appearance into the profound affinities of genius—yet remains to be carefully traced. Among all poets—certainly among all English poets—it seems to me that Tennyson's next to his is Milton.

By this I do not mean to say that they are equally great or exactly alike. For so far as perfect likeness is concerned, there is no such thing among the sons of men. Every just comparison involves a contrast. And when we speak of greatness, Milton's place as the second poet of England is not now in question. Yet even here, when we ask who is to take the third place, I think there is no one who has such a large and substantial title as the author of "In Memoriam" and "The Idylls of the King." The conjunction of the names of Milton and Tennyson will be no unfamiliar event for the future, and for the present there is no better way of studying these two great poets than to lay their works side by side and trace their lives through the hidden parallel of a kindred destiny.

"In Memoriam" is an elegy for Arthur Hallam, finished throughout its 74 stanzas with all that delicate care which the elegiac form requires, and permeated with the tone of personal grief, not passionate, but profound and pure. But it is such an elegy as the world has never seen before and never will see again. It is the work of years, elaborated with such skill and adorned with such richness of poetic imagery as other men have thought too great to bestow upon an epigone. It is the most exquisite structure ever reared above a human grave, more wondrous and more immortal than that world-famous tomb which widowed Artemisia built for the Carian Mausolus. By this I do not mean to say that it is also something far grander and better. Beyond the narrow range of personal loss and loneliness, it sweeps into the presence of the eternal realities, faces the great questions of our myste-

TWELVE VOLUMES OF TRUE VERSE MARK 65 OF HIS 83 DEVOTED YEARS

He told his son Hallam that at eight he had written "Thomsonian blank verse in praise of flowers, and at ten and eleven, under the spell of Pope's Homer, hundreds and hundreds of lines in the regular pattern of Scott.

1827 "Poems by Two Brothers." Jackson, a Louth publisher, gave Charles and Alfred £10 worth of copies free, with £10 in cash for the manuscripts, which were sold (Southey's, December, 1827) for £240. Matthew Arnold and Elizabeth Barrett merit here, and Jowett said: "It's wonderful the whelp should have known such things."

1829 "Timbuctoo." A poem of 250 lines, with which Alfred won the Chancellor's Medal at Cambridge. When it came time to read it, the author was too diffident to appear, and Charles Merivale (later the historian) performed the office for him.

1850 "Poems." Chiefly lyrical. "Warmly welcomed by Hunt, who was especially charmed with 'Lilias' and 'Mariana in the Moated Grange'."

1822 "Poems." Including "The Lady of Shalott," "The Miller's Daughter," "The Palace of Art," "The Dream of Fair Women," etc.

1822 "The Lover's Tale." This was the first of several privately printed volumes ("Helen's Tower" is another instance), all of which are today excessively rare, realising from \$150 to \$500 each when occasionally sold.

1842 "Poems." (2 vols.) Notable with "Locksley Hall," "Ulysses," "Morte d'Arthur," "Godiva," "Break, Break, Break," etc.

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1846 (February 28) "The New Timon and the Poets" (in Punch), an allusion to an attack upon him made earlier in the year by Bulwer-Lytton.

1847 "The Princess: a Medley." ("Wadding the England of Victoria to the Examiners' under spur of Russell's phrase, 'Some one had blundered.' This is ranked as one of the only three successful examples of metrical tale invention in modern letters. The six famous 'incidental lyrics'—'Between the rougher voices of the men,' 'Like Minnets in the pauses of the wind,'

were not added till the second edition of 1850.

1850 (June) "In Memoriam: A. H. H." published anonymously, though the authorship was never in doubt. Tennyson said the poem, elaborated for 17 years under his hand, was "the voice of the whole human race speaking through me." It was reviewed with highest praise by Gladstone; Victoria preferred it to all other English books save only the Bible, and its appearance decided the Laureateship in Tennyson's favor. The manuscript is now in the library at Trinity, Cambridge.

1852 (November) "An Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." (December 9) "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "Lucretia," etc.

1854 "Maud" and other poems, including also the two poems last mentioned, "The Brook," "The Daisy," etc.

1859 "The Idylls of a King." Six others were added to these initial four during the next 13 years, completing a theme of which the poet had dreamed since 1830. Men as different as Jowett, Macaulay, Ruskin and Dickens helped swell the chorus of praise that met the volume, which has been called "the greatest narrative poem since 'Paradise Lost.'" (1875.)

1863 "A Welcome to Alexandria." ("Saxon or Dane or Norman we, Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be, We are each all Dane in our welcome to thee.")

1864 "Enoch Arden" (originally published under the pseudonym "Tithonus," "The Grandmother," "The Northern Farmer," "Old Style," etc. Through the title poem it has become the author's best known and most popular work, and has been translated into 17 languages.

1869 "The Holy Grail and Other Poems," including "The Northern Farmer, New Style," "The Passing of Arthur," etc.

1875 "Queen Mary," which was put on at the Lyceum by Henry Irving in the April of the year following. This was the first of a half dozen dramatic pieces, the others being: "Harold," "Becket," "The Cup," "The Promise of May" and "The Foresters." Each was promptly staged by Irving or the Kendalls in England or by Daly in America.

1880 "Ballads and Poems," including among others "The Revenge," "The Defense of Lucknow" and "Rishpal."

1885 "Tithonus and Other Poems," dedicated to Fitzgerald, who had died six years before.

1885 "Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After."

1889 "Demeter and Other Poems," including "Merlin and the Gleam" and the immortal "Crossing the Bar," now placed as the final poem in all collected editions at the author's request.

1893 "The Deal of Genoa and Other Poems." "The 'Genoa' and 'Tithonus' are steeped in the golden beauty of Syracuse art."—J. A. Symonds.

rious existence, and reaches out to lay hold of that hope which is unseen but abiding, whereby alone we are saved, its motto might well be given in the words of St. Paul: "For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." At first sight it may seem almost absurd to compare the elegy with the epic, and impossible to discover any resemblance between those long-rolling, thunderous periods of blank verse and those short, shallow flights of song, which "dip their wings in tears and skim away." The comparison of "In Memoriam" with

"Lycidas" would certainly appear more easy and obvious; so obvious, indeed, that it has been made a thousand times, and is fluntyly repeated by every critic who has had occasion to speak of English elegies. But this is just one of those cases in which an external similarity conceals a fundamental unlikeness. For, in the first place, Edward King, to whose memory "Lycidas" was dedicated, was far from being an intimate friend of Milton, and his lament has no touch of the deep heart-sorrow which throbs in "In Memoriam." And, in the second place, "Lycidas" is in no sense a metaphysical poem, does not descend into the depths or attempt to answer the vexed question. But "In Memoriam" is, in its very essence, profoundly and thoroughly

(Concluded on Page 5.)

FAVORITE LINES FROM A MASTER PEN KNOWN BY HEART A WIDE WORLD OVER

Jewels five words long
That on the stretched forefinger of all Time
Sparkle forever. —The Princess.

Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.—Locksley Hall.
I, the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time. (Ibid.)
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change. (Ibid.)
In the Spring a lulliver liras changes in the burnish'd dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love. —Locksley Hall.

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control—
These three alone lead life to sovereign power. —Oenone.
Because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence. —Oenone.
I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Which at ease forsook to dwell. —Palace of Art.
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true. —Launcelot and Elaine.

That tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew,
How'er it be, it seems to me,
"Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood. —Lady Clara.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use.—Ulysses.
I held it true with one who sings
To one clear harp with diverse tones,
That men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things. —In Memoriam.
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry. —In Memoriam.
And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman.
Believe me, than in half the creeds,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breathes the blows of circumstance. —In Memoriam.
"Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.
Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn Fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more. —The Princess.
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees. —The Princess.
The old order changeth, yielding place to new;
And God fulfills himself in many ways.—Passing of Arthur.
A daughter of the gods divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.—Dream of Fair Women.
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne.—Idylls.
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.—Maud.
Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown;
I am here at the gate alone.—Maud.
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.—The Brook.