

**THE RIVERSIDE LITERATURE
SERIES. ENOCH ARDEN AND
OTHER POEMS, WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND
EXPLANATORY NOTES**

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The Riverside Literature Series. Enoch Arden and Other Poems, with Biographical Sketch and Explanatory Notes by Alfred Tennyson

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ALFRED TENNYSON

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OTHER POEMS, WITH
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J. Hanson

The Riverside Literature Series

ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER
POEMS

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

*WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND
EXPLANATORY NOTES*



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

ALFRED TENNYSON was the third of twelve children of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, LL.D., ~~rector~~ of the village of Somersby, in Lincolnshire, and was born on August 6, 1809. So apart from the world was Somersby that even the news of Waterloo did not reach it for some time after the great victory was won. The low fen country of England in which the village lies has indeed such a quiet beauty of its own that it seems the very home of peace. Such surroundings were as well adapted as any could have been for the development of a nature like Tennyson's. Thackeray's daughter, Mrs. Ritchie, has given the most suggestive glimpses of the poet's childhood. She tells of him as a sturdy boy of five, opening his arms to the wind, letting himself be blown along by it, and as he went, making his first line of poetry, "I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind."

Another story of Mrs. Ritchie's must be told, as showing how a family of young people who nearly all were to do something one day in poetry entertained themselves: "These handsome children had, beyond most children, that wondrous toy at their command which some people call imagination. The boys played great games like Arthur's knights; they were champions and warriors defending a stone heap, or again they would set up opposing camps with a king in the midst of each. . . . When dinner-time came, and they all sat round the table, each in turn put a chapter of

his history underneath the potato bowl, — long, endless histories, chapter after chapter, diffuse, absorbing, unending as are the stories of real life of which each sunrise opens on a new part; some of these romances were in letters, like 'Clarissa Harlowe.' Alfred used to tell a story which lasted for months, and which was called 'The Old Horse.'

There are anecdotes, too, of Tennyson's early attempts at writing, which, under the stimulus of a sympathetic household, were not few. While he and his brother Charles were still mere boys they determined to face the world with a little book of verses. A firm of booksellers in Louth was persuaded to pay ten pounds for the copyright of the small volume which in 1827 appeared under the title "Poems by Two Brothers." As in most juvenile verses it was easy to see how greatly the young poets' minds bore the impress of their studies and reading.

There was nevertheless no lack of individuality in Alfred's mind, if not yet in his work. The fresh impulse of university life was needed to bring forth the best in the young man. A little schooling and his father's instruction had prepared him by 1828 to enter Trinity College, Cambridge. It was in large measure through his friendships that Alfred Tennyson's development at the University came about. He soon found himself one of a group of undergraduates known as "The Apostles," a literary society which bound together the choicest young spirits of the University. Of all "The Apostles," Arthur Hallam, the son of the historian of the Middle Ages, seems to have been endowed with the rarest gifts of mind and spirit. In Tennyson's enthusiasm for his friend he was said to come "as near perfection as mortal man can be."

Another of their coterie said: "His was such a lovely nature that life seemed to have nothing more to teach him." So closely allied were the two young men by every sympathy of taste and feeling that their friendship soon grew to be a very part of their lives.

Upon his father's death in 1831, Tennyson left the University without taking his degree. Meanwhile, in 1830, Hallam and he had together made an expedition to Spain — not unlike Byron's to Greece — with the purpose of helping the rebellion against the tyranny of Ferdinand. They carried with them money and letters written in invisible ink, and altogether bore themselves like true conspirators.

Through the college terms and the vacations spent mainly in Hallam's company, Tennyson's chief concern had been poetry. His "Timbuctoo" was honored as the Chancellor's Prize Poem in its year, and even attracted the notice of the public press. It was in 1830 that he brought forth the volume which set up his first public claim to be considered a poet. Its title was "Poems, chiefly Lyrical," and in its contents are to be found poems which still appear in Tennyson's collected works. The critics reviewed the volume with moderate praise, and one of them had the strange foresight to write, with special reference to "The Poet:" "If our estimate of Mr. Tennyson be correct, he too is a poet, and many years hence may he read his juvenile description of that character with the proud consciousness that it has become the description and history of his own work." The faith his friends had in him is shown by Hallam's prophetic words one day in the garden of Somersby rectory: "Fifty years hence, people will be making pilgrimages to this place."

Towards the end of 1832 Tennyson brought out his