

**THE STUDENTS' SERIES OF  
ENGLISH CLASSICS. THE  
PRINCESS: A MEDLEY**

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The Students' Series of English Classics. The Princess: A Medley by Alfred Tennyson

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**ALFRED TENNYSON**

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ENGLISH CLASSICS. THE  
PRINCESS: A MEDLEY**



The Students' Series of English Classics.

# THE PRINCESS

A MEDLEY

*Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron*

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

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## PREFACE.

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No poem of Tennyson's has provoked such extremes of opinion as *The Princess*. The present editor, after a somewhat prolonged study of the work, finds himself, as in the beginning, at neither of these extremes. It is his desire, therefore, that this book may afford encouragement to the discriminating student, rather than to the zealously admiring or disparaging critic.

The notes aim to supply only such information as may not be found readily in the ordinary school reference library. The critical comments do not profess to be dicta; the student should take them simply for what they are — personal opinions. The starred notes, it is thought, may be used profitably in connection with a preliminary reading of the poem. As there is at this time no compact and easily accessible biography of Tennyson, the main facts of his life and work have been included in the Introduction to this volume. For further information, the student should be referred, if possible, to Arthur Waugh's *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Study of His Life and Works*. Valuable criticism upon Tennyson and *The Princess* may be found in Stedman's *Victorian Poets*, Van Dyke's *Poetry of Tennyson*, Bagehot's essay

on *Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning* (*Literary Studies*, vol. ii.), Bayne's *Essays in Criticism*; and in numerous magazine articles. An exhaustive chronological table, which contains much bibliographical matter, is a feature of Dr. Van Dyke's volume of criticism.

The editor has to acknowledge indebtedness to the editions of Messrs. W. J. Rolfe and P. M. Wallace; and to express his thanks to Mr. S. E. Dawson for aid received from his interesting *Study of the Princess*, and for permission to reprint Lord Tennyson's letter (Appendix I).

H. W. B.

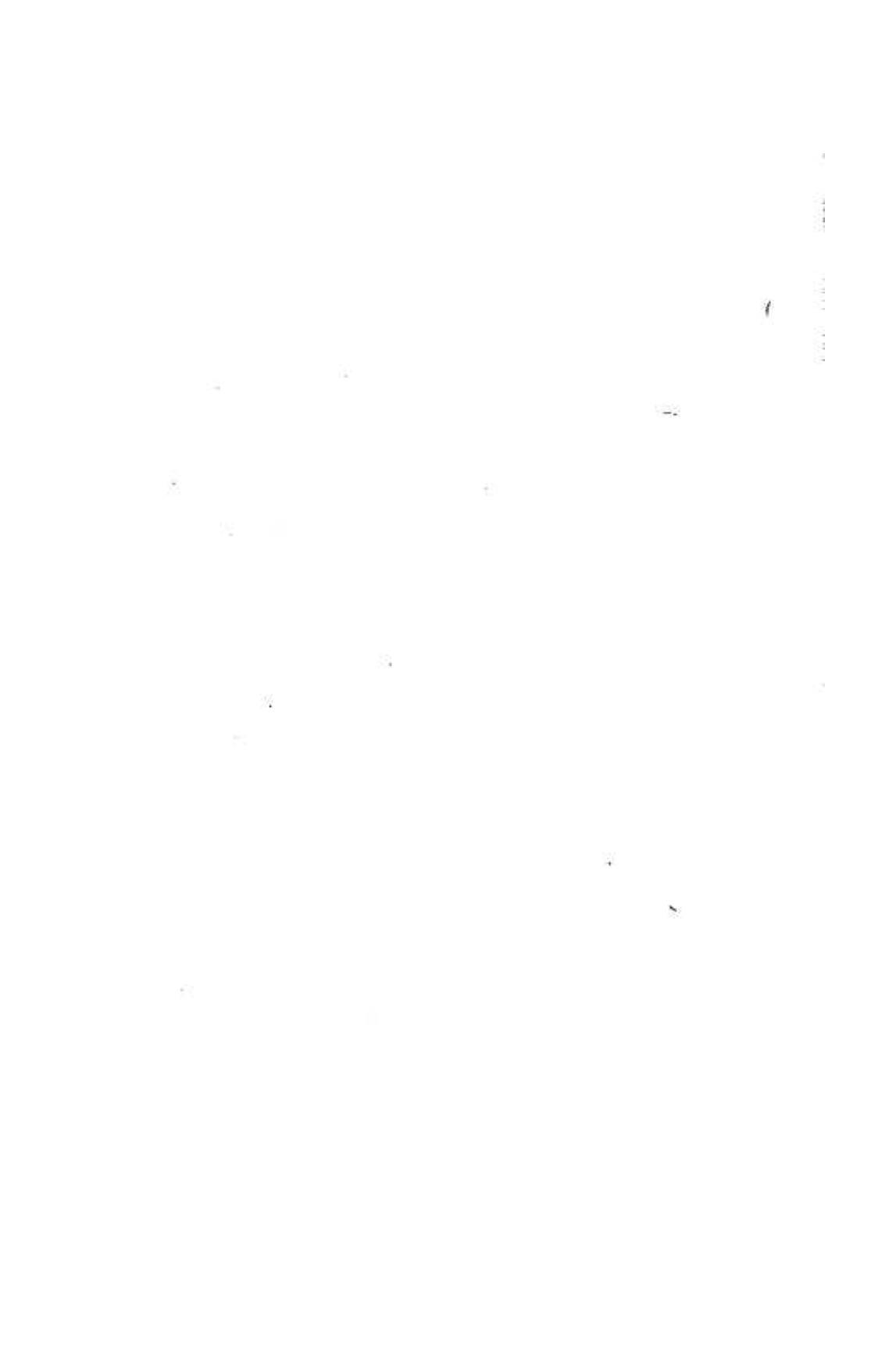
ANDOVER, April, 1896.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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### THE POET.

ALFRED TENNYSON was born on August 6th, 1809, in the rectory of the little Lincolnshire hamlet of Somersby. His father, who held this living in connection with two other small parishes, was notable for his union of scholarly and artistic tastes; his mother, for her sweetness of character. Alfred was one of the older children in a family of twelve, seven of whom were boys. The three whom we associate most closely with him were his two elder brothers, Frederick and Charles, and the sister Emily who was to share his mourning for Hallam. Of these three it was Charles, next in seniority and in sympathy, who meant most to the boy in his early years; it was Charles with whom he studied, and talked, and wrote, and rambled about the lovely Lincolnshire lanes; and it was Charles who halved with him the pains and the profits of his first literary venture.

The two boys began to write verse almost as soon as they could write anything. In his twelfth year Alfred produced an epic of five thousand lines or so, in imitation of Scott, who was then in the height of his vogue; and at fourteen he produced his first drama. Of infinitely more importance than his writing at this period, however, was his eager and intelligent reading. The two local schools, the village school at Holywell Glen and the grammar school at the neighboring town, of

Louth, seem to have left little impress on the brothers; indeed, before Alfred was twelve years old his schoolboy days were over. It was under their own father's tuition that the boys got their unusually thorough grounding in the classics, and it was with his encouragement, undoubtedly, that they became familiar with so much that was good in the literature of their own tongue.

In later life Tennyson had few distinct memories to record of these uneventful years. A vivid impression of the festivities which attended the coronation of George IV., a reminiscence of the boy Alfred's overwhelming personal grief at the news of Byron's death, — these are all. But we are able to picture not a little of the every-day life of the brothers during this quiet period: how Alfred's reticence and love of solitude contrasted with his companion's easy cordiality and high spirits; yet how much and how fondly they read and wrote together, criticising each other's work with friendly eagerness; and how at last (in 1826) their need of pocket-money was met by an obliging bookseller of Louth, and the *Poems by Two Brothers* was timorously launched upon the world. The world paid little attention to the slender volume, which, in fact, had little more merit than the average collection of boyish verse. Frederick, the oldest brother, in this year went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, and in 1828 the young poets followed him. Here their lack of public-school training showed itself at first in painful shyness; but before the year was gone they had found congenial friends, and felt very much at home in Cambridge. Alfred, indeed, never ceased to prefer solitude to the society of strangers. All through life his manner was marked by a certain brusqueness, which seemed affectation to those who did not know him; but in the eyes of his friends he was not less charming as a companion than as a poet.