

**THE COMING OF  
ARTHUR, AND OTHER  
IDYLLS OF THE KING**

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The Coming of Arthur, and Other Idylls of the King by Alfred Tennyson & William J. Rolfe

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**ALFRED TENNYSON & WILLIAM J. ROLFE**

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LORD TENNYSON

*From a Photograph by Mrs. Cameron*

THE  
COMING OF ARTHUR

*AND OTHER IDYLLS OF THE KING*

BY  
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*WITH PORTRAIT*



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## PREFACE.

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THIS edition of the *Idylls of the King*, like that of *In Memoriam*, was begun more than ten years ago, but, like that, was laid aside for other work. I have been often urged by teachers and literary friends to finish it, but have not found time to do it until now.

The poet, who had given me valuable help in revising my editions of *The Princess* and the two volumes of selections from his works published in 1884 and 1887, kindly encouraged me in the plan of editing others, as the present Lord Tennyson has also done. I am particularly under obligations to the latter for calling my attention to the remarkable paper on the *Idylls* in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1873 (see pages 181-190), which gives the poet's own explanation of the allegory, as well as of certain "artistic unities" in the work which the reader might not detect, and which the critics have been slow to discern. It is the most important criticism of the *Idylls* that has appeared, but it seems to be little known in this country, — mainly, I suspect, on account of its accidental omission from the otherwise quite exhaustive list of reviews and criticisms in Poole's *Index to Periodical Literature*.

I have retained the poet's spelling of *Idylls*, though it is not adopted in other American editions, and is contrary to the analogy of *beryl*, *sibyl*, and other derivatives from Greek originals of similar form. It is curious, by the way, that in *The Princess* (vii. 176) all the English editions from 1847 down to the present time have "Idyl." I believe that this is the only instance of the word in Tennyson's verse except the one in the Dedication of these *Idylls*.

As in *The Princess* and the other books, I have followed the poet's orthography (except in words like *color*, *honor*, etc.) and his restricted use of the apostrophe in past tenses. I have, however, attempted (see *Addendum*, page 219), to correct the inaccuracies and incongruities in the pointing, capitalization, etc., of the English editions.

The Notes give the history of the poems, the variations in the text of



the earliest and latest editions, explanations of archaisms, obscurities, personal and local names, allusions, etc., and other matter which I thought likely to be serviceable or interesting to readers and students. On pages 180, 181, I give a select list of books which the teacher and the student will find useful for collateral reading and reference.

CAMBRIDGE, *May 25, 1896.*

## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
DEDICATION . . . . .	I
THE COMING OF ARTHUR . . . . .	3
THE ROUND TABLE:—	
GARETH AND LYNETTE . . . . .	20
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT . . . . .	67
GERAINT AND ENID . . . . .	94
BALIN AND BALAN . . . . .	125
MERLIN AND VIVIEN . . . . .	145
NOTES . . . . .	177
INDEX . . . . .	223

# IDYLLS OF THE KING.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

'*Flos Regum Arthurus.*' — JOSEPH OF EXETER.

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## DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory — since he held them dear,  
Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
Some image of himself — I dedicate,  
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —  
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
'Who revered his conscience as his king;  
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;  
Who loved one only and who clave to her —'  
Her — over all whose realms to their last isle,  
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,  
The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
Darkening the world. We have lost him: he is gone:  
We know him now: all narrow jealousies  
Are silent; and we see him as he moved,  
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,  
With what sublime repression of himself,  
And in what limits, and how tenderly;  
Not swaying to this faction or to that;  
Not making his high place the lawless perch

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