

**HEATH'S ENGLISH  
CLASSICS;  
TENNYSON'S IDYLLS OF  
THE KING (SELECTIONS)**

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Heath's English Classics; Tennyson's Idylls of the King (Selections) by Alfred Tennyson & Arthur Beatty

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**ALFRED TENNYSON & ARTHUR BEATTY**

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TENNYSON

1809-1892

Heath's English Classics

TENNYSON'S  
IDYLLS OF THE KING  
(SELECTIONS)

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

ARTHUR BEATTY, PH.D.

INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

"I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within himself make pure!"

BOSTON, U.S.A.

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## TO THE TEACHER

FOR the study of the *Idylls of the King* little direct help is to be obtained from the biography of the poet. For this reason the Editor has given only the most important dates in Tennyson's life, with special reference to the *Idylls*. The teacher who wishes a more extended biography can find it in the first three works mentioned in the List of Books (p. xxxiv). It has been the effort of the Editor to make the *Idylls* explain themselves; and in order to permit of this, it is necessary for the pupil to make himself familiar with the story of the *Idylls*, given on pages xiv-xxvi of the Introduction. In addition, the class ought to study carefully *The Coming of Arthur*, with the notes; as this poem, together with a knowledge of the story of the *Idylls* as a whole, forms the best possible introduction to the three *Idylls* that are prescribed for particular study.

The form of verse is an important matter, and should not be overlooked in any reading of the *Idylls*. On pages xxviii-xxxiii a brief account is given of some of the most important features of the verse; but the task of making such an analysis intelligible to the student must rest upon the teacher. This task can be accomplished only by persistent, sympathetic vocal interpretation on the part of the teacher, with equal encouragement to the student to do likewise. What Byron has said of Horace may equally well be said of Tennyson,

"— it is a curse  
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,  
To comprehend, but never love thy verse."

Constant reference to the map will help to give concreteness to the pupil's conception of the *Idylls*. It must be remembered, however, that the geography is exceedingly vague, and some of the places cannot be even approximately located. They are in the region of pure romance.

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97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>INTRODUCTION:</b>	
Outline of Tennyson's Biography . . . . .	vii
Tennyson and <i>The Idylls of the King</i> . . . . .	x
The Arthur Legend . . . . .	xi
The Story of <i>The Idylls of the King</i> . . . . .	xiv
The Meaning of <i>The Idylls</i> . . . . .	xxvii
The Verse . . . . .	xxviii
A List of Books . . . . .	xxxiv
<b>IDYLLS OF THE KING:</b>	
The Coming of Arthur . . . . .	1
Gareth and Lynette . . . . .	19
Lancelot and Elaine . . . . .	68
The Passing of Arthur . . . . .	116
MAP . . . . .	132
NOTES . . . . .	133



## OUTLINE OF TENNYSON'S BIOGRAPHY

- 1809, Aug. 6 Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby, a country village in Lincolnshire, the fourth son in a family of twelve children. His father, Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, was the rector of Somersby and West Enderby, and was a scholar and poet.
- 1816 At the age of seven Alfred, with his elder brother Charles, went to the Louth Grammar School, under "a tempestuous, flogging master of the old stamp." He was brutally used by the boys at first, and spent four unhappy years here.
- 1820 He then returned home, and studied under his father's direction. Besides studying Greek and Latin, he and his brothers Frederick and Charles read a large number of good books in English literature, and composed many poems.
- 1827 The first public sign of this verse-writing was the publication at Louth of a volume called *Poems by Two Brothers*. The present Lord Tennyson says that the poems were really written by the three brothers, Frederick, Charles, and Alfred.
- 1828, Feb. 20 He and his brother Charles went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where Frederick was already a student.
- 1829, June 6 He won the Chancellor's medal for his poem in blank verse, *Timbuctoo*. At this time he met Arthur Henry Hallam, with whom he formed a warm friendship, and whose early death was to inspire Tennyson's great poem, *In Memoriam*.
- 1830 He published his first independent volume of verse, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*.
- 1831 He left Cambridge without taking a degree, on account of the death of his father. He now became the manager of the household, and remained at home, diligently educating himself to be a poet.