

**THE SILVER SERIES OF  
ENGLISH  
CLASSICS: IDYLLS OF  
THE KING (SELECTIONS)**

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The Silver Series of English Classics: Idylls of the King (Selections) by Alfred Tennyson & James E. Thomas

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**ALFRED TENNYSON & JAMES E. THOMAS**

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ALFRED TENNYSON.

THE SILVER SERIES OF ENGLISH CLASSICS

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# IDYLLS OF THE KING

(SELECTIONS)

BY

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EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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## PREFACE.

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IN adding another to the many text-books of English poetry already published, the editor ventures to hope that the present volume may fulfil a useful purpose in bringing the student of literature into closer touch with the greatest artist-poet of the present century, and to a better understanding of the only great English epic since the days of Milton. The "Idylls of the King" have not been a favorite subject of study in secondary schools. This is unfortunate, and is due, perhaps, to a mistaken impression concerning the adaptability of the poems for school use. If the present volume shall serve in any way to efface such an impression, its primary mission will be accomplished.

Are the "Idylls of the King" beyond the comprehension of pupils of secondary schools? If we attempt to follow in detail the spiritual significance of the poems, the question must be answered affirmatively. But to enjoy the beauty of the lines it is not necessary for us to seek out their allegorical meaning; this may well be left for subsequent consideration. Apart from their spiritual significance, the poems present sufficient material for pleasant and profitable study. The form and substance of these tales of wonder and woe, of chivalry and amatory devotion, their rich pictorial fancies, musical cadences, and delightful melodies,



will always afford abundant charm to the student. It matters not what may be the spiritual significance of "Lancelot and Elaine." The pathetic story of Elaine, the knightly courtesy of Lancelot, and the passionate love of Guinevere will always touch a tender chord in our hearts. Other features will commend themselves to the student, — the brilliancy of style, the rapidity of movement, the swift changes of scene, the striking contrasts, — all contributing to the "poetry of action" which should lead to the study of the sentimental and reflective in Tennyson. These all appeal to a more general study of this epic in our schools.

In studying the poetry of Tennyson certain books should be available to the pupils for reference, and a list of these is given in part in this volume. The editor desires to call attention, also, to the accompanying life of the poet, the History of the Arthurian Romances, and the Introduction to the "Idylls," all of which he believes will conduce to a better understanding of "Lancelot and Elaine" and "The Passing of Arthur." Malory's "Morte Darthur" will be found useful, to show how closely the poet has followed the original narrative. Lest the book should not be at hand in all schools, the editor has made frequent quotations from Malory's work, in the notes. The glossary at the end of the book, containing the archaic and obsolete terms used by Tennyson, together with their meanings, will be found valuable to the pupil. The editor hopes that the present volume may stimulate the student to a more extended study of Tennyson and his poetry.

J. E. T.

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## BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

The following books, among many, are recommended as being helpful to those who desire a more intimate knowledge of Tennyson and his works:—

Poetic and Dramatic Works of Tennyson. Houghton, Mifflin & Company's Edition.

Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir, by his son.

Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Study of his Life and Works, by Arthur Waugh.

The Poetry of Tennyson, by Henry Van Dyke.

Victorian Poets, by E. C. Stedman.

Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life, by Stopford A. Brooke.

The Teaching of Tennyson, by John Oates.

Studies in the Idylls, by Henry Elsdale.

Essays on Lord Tennyson's Idylls, by Bishop Littledale.

A Study of the Works of Tennyson, by E. E. Tainsh.

The Growth of the Idylls of the King, by Richard Jones.

Illustrations of Tennyson, by J. Churton Collins.

The Arthurian Epic, by S. H. Gurteen.