

shall probably better consult the interest of our hearers if we restrict our remarks mainly to comments on his writings.

It is said that Tennyson's first efforts in poetry belong to his eighth year, when he covered two sides of a slate with a poem on flowers. He had been challenged by his brother Charles to write poetry, and, when he showed what he had done, he received the assurance, "you have done it." Between the age of eleven and twelve he is said to have written an epic of more than four thousand lines in Scott's metre, in the "Lady of the Lake." About fourteen, he commenced a drama in Iambic metre which is said still to exist. We sincerely hope that it may never be permitted to see the light of day unless its publication had the sanction of its author. Both of Tennyson's brothers, Charles and Frederick, had poetic gifts of a very high order, as their publications have shown.

The first of Alfred's published poems appeared in connection with those of Charles in 1827, under the title of "Poems by Two Brothers." The volume was published in Louth, and brought the authors ten pounds. No intimation has been given of the authorship of the separate poems. Two years later he gained the Chancellor's Gold Medal for the English poem at Cambridge. The subject was "Timbuctoo." In 1830 he put forth "Poems Chiefly Lyrical," forming, generally, the first part of the volumes published in 1842 under the title, "Poems." In 1832 he published "Poems," beginning with the "Lady of Shalott," constituting the second part of the 1842 publication. In 1850 a third edition of this first collection was put forth very much in the form in which we now possess it.

The influences which helped the poetic genius of Tennyson were manifold. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott,

Byron, Keats, may be mentioned. The influence of Byron has perhaps been underrated. At any rate, as we have mentioned, Tennyson was deeply moved by the intelligence of his death. "I thought," he said, "the whole world was at an end. I thought everything was over and finished for everyone—that nothing else mattered. I remember I walked out alone, and carved 'Byron is dead' into the sandstone.

There are few things more remarkable in literature than the humility and conscientiousness displayed by Tennyson in dealing with his own early productions and in amending his faults of style and treatment. At his first appearance he was recognized as a true poetic genius by some few sympathetic and unprejudiced souls. But, like other poets—like Wordsworth, like Byron—he was vehemently assailed by the professional critics. John Wilson told him to get rid of his cockney admirers and reform his style. This was on the volume of 1830. The volume of 1833 was assailed by Lockhart in the *Quarterly* with bitter sarcasm, and this was the volume in which first appeared "Æneïde," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," the "May Queen" and the "Lotos Eaters." It is truly terrible to think what those critics might have done.

Tennyson published no more for nine years when the volume of 1842 appeared, containing the "Morte d'Arthur," a poem which Tennyson has never surpassed, "Dora," "Ulysses," "Locksley Hall," "Break, Break, Break." In this volume Tennyson showed that he could profit by the criticisms, even when exaggerated and unjust, of his reviewers. Unlike Byron, who responded in his wrath by "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," unlike Wordsworth, who exaggerated the weaknesses of his style, and insisted on his admirers accepting his weakest work as though it were