

Mrs. Brookfield, one of Tennyson's most intimate friends, gives us a charming picture of the first occasion on which the poem was read: "In the year 1855, just before the publication of *Maud*, I was with my husband and children on a visit to Lord and Lady Ashburton at the Grange, in Hampshire. There was a large party staying in the house, when, to our great joy, Alfred Tennyson also arrived, and, I think, only the next day, the first copy of his latest poem, *Maud*, was forwarded to him. We were, all of us, of course eager to hear his new poem read aloud by himself, and he most kindly agreed to gratify us. But there were difficulties to be got over. Carlyle and his wife were amongst the guests, and it was well known that he could not endure to listen to any one reading aloud — not even to Alfred Tennyson. Carlyle was accustomed to take an early walk daily, and to be accompanied by an appreciative companion. What was to be done? All the visitors in the house were presumably anxious to listen to Tennyson's delightful reading. Lord and Lady Ashburton were kept waiting, chairs had been arranged in a quiet sitting-room; the visitors were taking their places. Alfred was ready. So was Carlyle. — in the hall, waiting for a companion in his walk, — and evidently he would not stir without one. It was quite an anxious moment. We each probably wondered which of us would volunteer to leap into the gulf, as it were, like Quintus Curtius of old. At length, to our great relief, Mr. Goldwin Smith generously stepped forward and joined the philosopher, whilst we remained to listen with enthralled attention to the new words of the poet."

Another memorable picture is given us by Mrs. Browning in one of her letters: "One of the pleasantest things which has happened to us here is the coming