

+ Tennyson. +

✱ LORD ALFRED TENNYSON, England's laureate poet, is a man who scarcely ever appears in the fashionable drawing-rooms or even the streets of the great metropolis. His life is spent, almost entirely, either at his residence in Haslemere or in the pleasant homestead on the Isle of Wight, which has long since become famous. He made a trial of London life a few years ago. He rented a house in a fashionable quarter, entertained and allowed himself to be entertained, and was the center of an admiring group. But he would not change his costume—always appearing in the picturesque, wide-awake and poetic cloak, with his hair flowing over his shoulders. Soon tiring of the giddy whirl of society, he forsook it for his country home, so much better suited to his tastes; and he declared that London would never be visited by him again unless it was unavoidable.

In his den at Haslemere, at the top of the house, he sits wrapt in meditation or indulging in poetical fancies, but, what slightly mars the effects of these musings, he must always have a pipe in his mouth and a huge tobacco jar by his side. In appearance he is tall, slightly bent by the more than threescore winters which have passed over his head, leaving their frost also on his hair and beard. Carlyle describes him at forty as "one of the finest looking men in the world, a great shock of rusty dark hair, bright laughing hazel eyes, massive aquiline face—most massive yet most delicate of fallow-brown complexion, almost Indian looking." He cares nought what the world says regarding his personal appearance. His every day dress is a suit of badly fitting gray clothes, loose turned down collar and a cravat carelessly tied.

His friendships are few and he is not anxious to make new acquaintances. His manners seem almost rude to a stranger, but by his most intimate friends this brusqueness is not noticed. He does not think as Pope did, that "The proper

study of mankind is man," for his secluded life has made him particularly sensitive to the criticisms of the world. His sorrow at the death of his bosom friend, Arthur Hallam, which occurred when Tennyson was quite a young man, was deep and lasting. To turn his attention from his recent bereavement he began to compose verses in memory of his dead companion, and at last brought forth that wonderful production "In Memoriam,"

Thackeray's daughter says of his reading the poem "Maud:" "One can hardly describe it—it is a sort of mystical incantation, a chant in which every note rises and falls, and reverberates again. A few years ago, while cruising with Mr. Gladstone in Sir Donald Currie's steamer, he was requested by the Princess of Wales and her sister, the Empress of Russia, who had boarded the ship at Copenhagen, to read to them "Enoch Arden." Complying with pleasure to their wish, he was heartily thanked and the next day received a letter expressing their pleasure and admiration.

Though cold and indifferent to the world in general, to his wife and children he is tenderly devoted. His wife has been an invalid for many years, so cannot, as she used to long ago, accompany him in his morning walks or sit by his side while he studies or writes. It is said that it was on his eldest son's account that he accepted the title of Lord Tennyson. It may be the means of his receiving more attention from the world than he would as plain Mr. Tennyson, for his talents can never raise him to his father's position.

The poet's productions of the last ten years have been very much inferior to his earlier poems. The "Jubilee Ode," written during the last year, is a composition not to be compared even to the Ode on the "Death of the Duke of Wellington;" and this ranks far beneath his "Locksley Hall," and the "Princess." But we must not expect too much from him who for half a century has been pouring forth rare gems of song, which will, no doubt, delight the future generation.

On the whole, Tennyson's life has been happy and prosperous; his old age calm