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T E N N Y S O N .

TENNYSON is dead! He had been with us so long—his work to the very last had been so strong, so fresh, that we could not think of him as an old man that could not long be with us. Three score and ten years, and by reason of strength four score, which must be labour and sorrow—such is the limit of human life. But the four score years of our great poet hardly seemed to impair his strength or even to diminish his elasticity of thought and feeling. Intellectually and artistically, “his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.” His last published drama was as fresh and breezy as the work of a boy.

Yet he has been called from us; and he has so enriched us and the world that we cannot grudge him his well-earned rest. Although a thrill has passed through the whole English world at the sad news of our loss, we can hardly say we are the poorer for his going, he has left us such rich possessions, such glorious creations behind him. And yet how we grieve. When Schiller was taken away at the age of forty-six, even Goethe, the self-sufficient, the calm and imperturbable, was moved to the depths of

his nature. “Schiller is ill!” they feared to tell him more. But he guessed. In the night they heard him weeping. Goethe weeping! the man who seemed raised so high above ordinary human cares. In the morning he said to a friend: “Schiller was very ill yesterday, was he not?” She could only sob, but not answer. “He is dead!” said Goethe. “You have said it.” “He is dead,” he repeated, and covered his eyes with his hands. Schiller was only forty-six, and Tennyson was nearly twice his age when he died; yet we, too, hardly believing, are broken-hearted as we say, “He is dead.”

When Alfred Tennyson was eleven years of age he received intelligence of the death of Lord Byron, and was deeply moved. “Byron is dead,” he kept repeating. Like all young men of that period, he had been powerfully affected by the passionate genius of the ill-fated poet. But Byron’s influence in English literature is small compared with that of Tennyson.

It is perhaps too early to estimate confidently the place of Lord Tennyson in English literature, even as many parts of his uneventful history are still matters of uncertainty; but