

REVIEWS OF NEW BOOKS



TENNYSON'S FRIENDSHIPS*

Reviewed for THE LITERARY DIGEST by
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Now and again there appears in literary history a writer of distinction whose background lacks distinction and whose genius, for that reason, needs explanation. Keats was such a poet. Tennyson, on the other hand, was nobly staged, so to speak; no artistic career in modern times has had a more harmonious framing. Gladstone was not only a statesman of the first rank, but looked the part and drest it. The Laureateship, largely because Wordsworth and Tennyson held it in succession, has associations of great dignity; it is the one public place among the English-speaking races in which genius and official recognition meet. Tennyson's background seemed to predict the Laureateship, and the place had no requirement which he did not meet.

The family in the Somersby rectory had neither rank nor wealth; but it had the note of distinction in personal beauty and bearing, in a certain loftiness of soul, in an inborn chivalry of spirit, in the penetration of the earliest years by the best traditions of thought and literature. And Tennyson's friends of later years would have given him distinction if he had not won it for himself. He was a member of a great fellowship of men of genius who had in rare degree the gift for friendship. "What passions our friendships were!" wrote Thackeray years afterward. Mrs. Brookfield has taken us into the circle in her delightful "Apostles"; the present Lord Tennyson has brought the circle to us in his "Tennyson and His Friends."

The golden fortune of the Laureate began at Cambridge, where his contemporaries were Fitzgerald, Thackeray, Lushington, Spedding, Monekton Milnes, Brookfield, Trench, A. H. Hallam:

*Tennyson and His Friends. Edited by Hallam, Lord Tennyson. London and New York: The Macmillan Company. \$3.

"Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land."

The quality of this group of men was described in the words which Tennyson wrote after Fitzgerald's death: "I had no truer friend; he was one of the kindest of men, and I have never known one of so fine and delicate a wit." If "laughter and a friend" are the best things life offers, Tennyson was marvelously fortunate from the time of his childhood association with his two gifted brothers, Charles and Frederick. After the years in Cambridge, Carlyle, Maurice, Jowett, Lear, Palgrave, Browning, Bradley, Clough, Simeon joined the circle. They were friends in the Emersonian sense of the word; they were not sayers of smooth things; they were truth-speakers, and neither the impressive personality of the Laureate nor his dazzling fame dulled the edge of their friendly criticisms. "Dear old Fitz" mourned over the falling off of the Laureate's early power, and Carlyle was grieved by the "Idylls of

the King." When Tennyson was asked what he thought of Browning, whom he greatly esteemed, he promptly answered: "A great genius, lacking in art." He used to say, humorously, that "old Fitz" became critical after he ceased to submit his verse to him for revision. There was good, stiff discussion in the circle, and the talk between Tennyson and Carlyle was notable for an Anglo-Saxon plainness of speech very different from the exquisitely sensitive diction of "In Memoriam." When Carlyle was launched on some magnificent, extravagant monologue, Lady Tennyson could always bring him back to earth by her quiet "Mr. Carlyle, that is not sane." The curiosity-hunters who expect the poet to whom they are casually presented to immediately talk about his soul must have been sorely tried by the resolute habit these rare persons had of keeping their feet on the ground. Lady Ritchie reports that on one occasion her father found Tennyson sitting in a chair with his leg up, evidently ill and out of spirits.

"I am very sorry to find you laid up," said Thackeray.

"They insisted upon my seeing the doctor for my leg," said Alfred, "and he prescribed cold-water dressing."

"Yes," said Thackeray, "there's nothing like it; I have tried it myself."

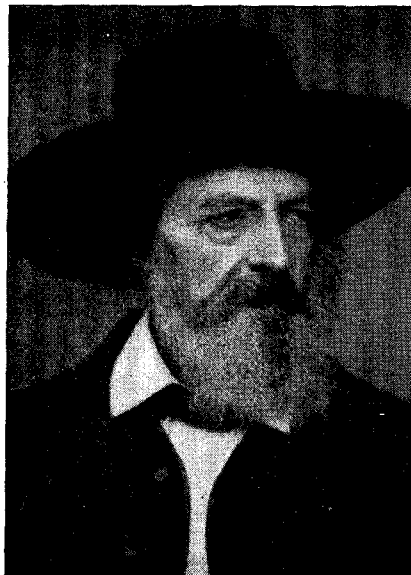
And so ended the interview between the greatest English poet and the greatest novelist of the time.

But great talk is reported in these pages, as far as great talk can be reported. Tennyson had a natural sense of the bigness of things; and was deeply interested in astronomy to the very end of his long life. Sir Oliver Lodge remembers that "one night when the moon's terminator swept across the broken ground round Tycho, he said, 'What a splendid Hell that would make!'" And after looking at the clusters in Hercules and Perseus, he remarked gravely: "I can not think much of the county families after that."

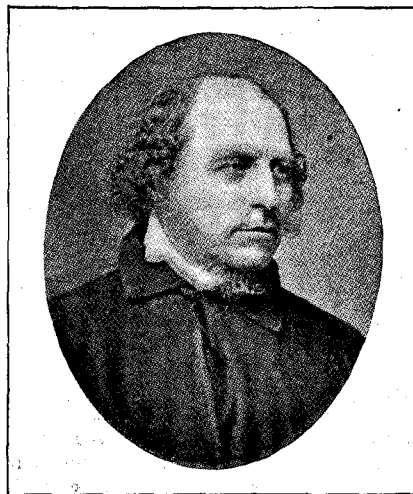
Such a volume as "Tennyson and His



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON, AND HIS TWO SONS,
HALLAM AND LIONEL.



From "Tennyson and His Friends."
ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON, IN HIS EIGHTIETH
YEAR.



CHARLES TENNYSON,
Who added the name Turner to his own, and
published several volumes of verse.
THE THREE TENNYSON POET-BROTHERS.



FREDERICK TENNYSON,
Of whose poems Alfred said, "They are organ-
tones echoing among the mountains."

Friends"—a collection of reminiscences and impressions by personal friends—is fragmentary; but this volume is really supplementary to the biography of the poet by his son. It presents the reflection of Tennyson as it lay in a score of minds, and gives the reader glimpses of him from as many points of view. It brings out impressively the range of the Laureate's interests, and renews the impression of the extraordinary intellectual force which made his poetry a record of the spiritual life of his time no less than a lasting contribution to English literature.

FICTION OF THE SEASON

De Morgan, William. *A Likely Story.* Pp. 358. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1911.

Whatever else may be said about Mr. De Morgan, he is never trite. The reader may be reasonably sure of finding originality of theme and treatment. In his conversations, he follows the working of individual minds and skips from one thought to another in the same inconsequent way found in actual experience. The real heroine of "A Likely Story" is a portrait maiden, the subject of an unsigned Italian picture, whose story, fancied and real, becomes strangely interwoven with the lives of several different families. First, that of the purchaser of the picture, an English baronet, whose daughter Madeleine finds her prototype romantically and dramatically in the history of the Italian beauty; then there is the story of the domestic troubles of the artist who takes the picture to restore, while under all is the influence of the "picture that talks," made plausible by the theory of mental suggestion, thought transference, and unconscious cerebration. The maturity of the author lends weight to his judgments and his cleverness makes it doubtful when he is laughing *at* and when *with* us.

"She was deferring to the wide-spread idea that man understands science, and can tell woman all about it. He doesn't, and can't."

"If we had to answer an examination-question, 'When is man at his loneliest?' we should reply—'When he is striving, companionless, to get some sort of order into things.'"

The Psychomorphic Society and ultra-transcendental movements come in for a little good-natured satire; but, in the main, the book is interesting and amusing, but never bitter or invidious.

Huntington, Helen. *The Moon Lady.* Pp. 301. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1911. \$1.25 net.

When Mr. Wylde died he confided his wife to their only son, Humphrey, and tried to make him understand that her very genius would make her an especial care.

"She is a creature of fire and fancy, infinitely strong and infinitely weak, forever changing—like the moon—I have called her my Moon Lady." The volume deals with Humphrey's struggle to carry out his father's wishes, to save his mother from a hideous fate, and to win the girl he loves. Mrs. Wylde, "Dioneme," the writer of novels, and Linda Arnold are great friends, but the older woman is blind to her son's infatuation for Linda, and the younger woman is ignorant of the insidious habit which Humphrey is fighting with every force at his command, and so there arises a misunderstanding which nearly brings them all to grief, but the author is clever

enough to rescue her characters by a rather startling dénouement and order is finally brought out of chaos and happiness reigns. The book is of rather a conventional type, but well constructed and interesting.

Parrish, Randall. *My Lady of Doubt.* Pp. 381. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Company. \$1.35 net.

This is a romance of the Revolutionary period by an author who has written successful stories about other wars. It is full of adventure, mysterious and baffling experiences, secret staircases, thrilling encounters in midnight storms, and a vivid love story that keeps the reader in interesting suspense. Major Allen Lawrence, sent by General Washington into the enemy's camp at Philadelphia, meets there Claire Mortimer, a beautiful and enigmatic maiden whose twin brother is fighting on the American side, and proceeds to fall desperately in love, as well as into several scrapes, from which he extricates himself with difficulty. Of course there is a deep-dyed villain who claims the heroine's love, and the action is fast and furious as it follows the development of plot and counterplot, introducing some surprising situations, and finally reaching a perfectly satisfactory ending in which the villain is punished and virtue and love are rewarded.

Rolland, Romain. *Jean Christophe in Paris.* Pp. 473. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1911. \$1.50.

It is hardly fair to make any extended criticism of Mr. Rolland's ten-volume work until it is finished. This completes the seventh volume, and in a way each section is a complete story with an uncompleted plot. Of these three—"The Market Place," "Antoinette," and "The House"—the second has the most vivid story and makes the most human appeal. It is an exquisite account of a sister's devotion to her only brother, and has more than usual pathos and power. Jean Christophe himself dominates almost every page. A German musician of rugged but brusque character, he finds in every episode and every social gathering some opportunity to express his opinions even in the face of opposition. There are pages of subjective and analytical criticism on art, music, and even national characteristics. In order to give expression to his ironic and sarcastic estimate of the different society circles in Paris, the author allows himself to become too verbose and too diffuse, but the patient reader will find many thoughtful judgments and psychological discussions on vital subjects. The book is too involved for the ordinary reader, but has some originality.

Stuart, Ruth McEnery. *The Haunted Photograph.* Pp. 168. New York: The Century Company. 1911. \$1.

The only fault one can find with this collection of short stories by Ruth McEnery Stuart is that there are not enough of them. Each is alive with that spirit of tenderness that always characterizes her work. They deal with both white and colored folk, but it is in the two that describe negro life that she excels. Mrs. Stuart has such a perfect comprehension of the negro personality, such a realization of negro humor and pathos, whimsical irresponsibility, and childlike naïveté that her narrative touches just the right chord with delicacy and sympathy. The stories that deal with the white folk show an undercurrent of thoughtful philosophy,

and "Afterglow" might almost be called a romance of omissions in the form of a soliloquy which reveals the heart of a woman no longer young, but eager with suppressed emotions. The book is adequately illustrated, but Mrs. Stuart's pen is so graphic she could charm by her word pictures alone.

Williams, H. Noel. *A Princess of Adventure.* Pp. 376. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1911.

Almost any French princess of the nineteenth century might be designated "a Princess of Adventure," but none would offer a personality so interestingly feminine combined with a character strong enough to face misfortune and live so bravely a life of strange vicissitudes as Marie Caroline, Duchess de Berry. A descendant of the Bourbons of Sicily, she passed through more dramatic incidents than usually fall to the lot of one life. At the age of eighteen, she married Charles Ferdinand, Duc de Berry, a match arranged by King Louis XVIII. with no opposition. In spite of the Duc's twenty years' seniority, they were well suited in character and ambition. Both were sunny in disposition, both were devoted to art and literature, and both liked to live a life free from conventionalities. As a result their married life was almost ideal, and when, at the tragic death of the Duke, she was left a widow, she had become the idol of the Court from King Louis to the lowliest servitor. The intrepid courage with which the Princess endured the few months before her son's birth has never been surpassed. From the coronation of Charles X. to the fall of the Monarchy, "Madame" enjoyed her greatest social triumphs. As the mother of the Duc de Bordeaux, the possible king of France, she became a great personage and began to mix in the political plots and intrigues of the Court. She made a brave fight for her son's sake, but Louis Philippe was too strong and wily for the poor little Princess, and, after being scathed by scandal unmerited, our author asserts, her public career terminated when, on her release from the citadel of Blaye, she left France and retired to private life as the wife of Carlo Ettore, Conte Lucchesi Palli di Campo-Franco.

BOOKS OF TRAVEL

Dingle, Edwin J. *Through China on Foot.* Pp. 446. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1911.

If conditions in China, as Mr. Dingle describes them, were as attractive as the pictures with which his narrative is profusely illustrated, there would be a steady stream of tourists tramping through China. The pictures represent beautiful mountains and valleys, but pictures would be poor compensation for the indescribable filth which is said to characterize all hotel or other available accommodation in inland China. Why the author, who "worships China" and "is living there indefinitely," should have undertaken such a trip with absolutely no knowledge of the language, or why, for the sake of the title—"On Foot"—he should prefer to lead a pony rather than ride it, is a problem that may occur to the reader; but that he made a wonderful trip into many corners where no Englishman had ever been no one will question. Mr. Dingle is a journalist, and during this holiday trip of 1,600 miles through the heart of the country from Shanghai to Burma, he learned to know its

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