

**TENNYSON'S
SUPPRESSED POEMS,
NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME**

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Tennyson's suppressed poems, now for the first time by J. C. Thomson

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J. C. THOMSON

**TENNYSON'S
SUPPRESSED POEMS,
NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME**

Tennyson's Suppressed Poems

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME COLLECTED

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY

J. C. THOMSON

EDITOR OF

"THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES DICKENS"

"THE AVON BOOKLET" ETC.



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Foreword

TENNYSON'S long life of eighty-four years almost equalled in its duration the combined lives of Keats, Shelley, and Byron. Unlike these impassioned boys, who passed their lives at issue with their generation, Tennyson was born into a happier time, eagerly expecting its great poet and anxious with welcome. He was protected all his days from criticism and annoyance by a phalanx of friendly admirers, who preached him in every direction and encouraged him with their applause. No "wood notes wild" came from him; the gems in his poetry are pretty or beautiful or now and again perfect—but all owing such perfection as they possess more to art than to nature. In his earlier days he had determined to be a

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poet—as one might determine to be a soldier or another a priest. That he succeeded is but stating a platitude; but his success involved much groping and stumbling in the poetic journey, of which when fame came to him he was too sensitively conscious.

“Why do they treasure the rubbish I shot from my full full-finish'd cantos?” he once querulously asked his son, irritated by the attempts of the late Mr. Herne Shepherd to reprint some of his suppressed youthful poems. This rather overstrained anxiety for his reputation led to the suppression of no less than fifty-three poems by Tennyson—some originally published in his volumes of 1830 and 1832 and others contributed to various annuals and periodicals from time to time. Of these contributions to what is commonly called ephemeral literature, the first was published when Tennyson was twenty-two and the last when he was seventy-six. In the *Life* of his father by Hallam Lord Tennyson, many of these are mentioned, some are reprinted in full, usu-

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ally greatly altered, and several are entirely ignored. To the student of Tennyson the *Collected Works* afford quite insufficient material for the study of his poetic development, and the poems as given for the first time in the *Life* are so far untrustworthy in that we have the best reasons for assuming they that are not now as originally written. In plain language, they are not what they profess to be, the first uncertain exercises of a poet unacquainted with the greatness of his gift. They have been altered from their first form as originally written, and from being the hesitating efforts of youth become but the experiments of complacent maturity.

It has, therefore, seemed to me that a volume containing all these suppressed poems of Tennyson, reprinted as originally published, would possess a value much beyond that of a mere collection of literary curiosities. Tennyson's place in the literary hierarchy is as yet indefinite: he has yet to stand his trial at the bar of posterity,