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A Tennyson Exhibition

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sociates — but for exhibition on this centennial occasion the Library has arranged to borrow the copies of “the real thing” now in the collection of Carroll A. Wilson (LL.D., Colby 1940).

Brief though the career of *The Pioneer* was, it was brilliant. In addition to the contributions by Edgar Allan Poe, it carried Hawthorne’s “The Hall of Fantasy” (in February 1843) and “The Birth-Mark” (in March), Whittier’s “Lines Written in the Book of a Friend,” and Elizabeth Barrett’s “The Maiden’s Death.” The February number announced, among “the most important new works recently published in Great Britain,” *Bells and Pomegranates* by Robert Browning, and reviewed Henry W. Longfellow’s *Poems of Slavery*. Lowell himself made a contribution to each issue, in January an essay on “The Plays of Thomas Middleton,” in February one on “Song Writing,” and in March a sonnet entitled “The Street.”

The editors of this twentieth-century venture hope that it will have a longer run than Lowell’s *Pioneer*, and if any modern Poe is moved to send in his contribution (has any Colby graduate a “Tell-Tale Heart” to offer?), he may confidently rely upon editorial agreement with Lowell’s distaste for “thrice-diluted trash.”



A TENNYSON EXHIBITION

TENNYSON died at Aldworth on October 6, 1892. On the fiftieth anniversary of this date the Colby library exhibited, in one of its glass cases, a score of Tennyson books published during his life-time. Many of these were first editions, and the others were either first American editions or volumes of special association interest. Even more worthy of commemoration than the poet’s death was the fact that it was just one hundred years since the publication of his first great success. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

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(14th ed., XXI, 939) remarks:

“In 1842 the two-volume edition of his *Poems* broke the ten years’ silence which Tennyson had enforced himself to keep. Here . . . were now first issued . . . ‘Locksley Hall,’ ‘Ulysses,’ and ‘Sir Galahad’ . . . It is from 1842 that Tennyson took his place as the leading poet of his age in England.”

The Colby exhibition accordingly gave to the 1842 edition the central place; the book was opened to “Locksley Hall,” to show the one line that everybody knows — even those who do not admire Tennyson’s poetry: “In the spring a young man’s fancy . . .,” etc. Following is a list of the exhibited books, all owned by Colby College:

- 1842 *Poems*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1849 *Poems*, Boston. “New Edition,” enlarged.
- 1850 *In Memoriam*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1855 *Maud*, London. First edition.
- 1860 *Idyls of the King*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1864 *Enoch Arden*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1865 *Enoch Arden*, Boston.
- 1866 *Poetical Works*, Boston, 2 vols.
- 1868 *Poetical Works*, Boston, 1 vol.
- 1870 *The Holy Grail*, London. First edition.
- 1870 *The Holy Grail*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1874 *Idylls of the King*, London. Thomas Hardy’s copy.
- 1875 *Queen Mary*, London. First edition.
- 1875 *Queen Mary*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1877 *Harold*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1879 *The Lover’s Tale*, London. First edition (composed in 1830).
- 1880 *Ballads and Other Poems*, Boston. First American edition.
- 1884 *The Cup and The Falcon*, London.
- 1886 *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, London. First edition.
- 1889 *Demeter*, London. First edition.

In addition to these books the exhibition included an undated letter written by Tennyson to “Tom,” soliciting his support of a friend of the poet who wanted to be elected to the Garrick Club. Also exhibited was a long holograph manuscript by Frederic Harrison on “Tennyson,” a manuscript recently acquired by the Colby Library. Back in 1899

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Harrison wrote an essay on Tennyson, published in *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill, and Other Literary Estimates* (1900). Ten years later, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of Tennyson's birth, Harrison wrote another critical essay, "The Tennyson Centenary," published in the *Nineteenth Century* (66: 226-233), August 1909, in which he remarked:

"Ten years have passed since I made bold to claim for Tennyson a special rank of his own among our English poets. . . . Again I make bold to insist that Tennyson still reigns in our hearts as alone the peer of Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth. No others since Wordsworth's death in 1850 . . . can pretend to stand beside these four in the first half of the nineteenth century; and, in the second half of the century, Tennyson alone is of their rank."

The manuscript now in the Colby Library seems to be a further critical examination of Tennyson by Harrison — one which, as far as is now known, has remained unpublished.



BEN AMES WILLIAMS, Litt.D. (Colby 1942)

BY KENNETH ROBERTS, Litt.D. (Colby 1935)

BEN Ames Williams is a Mississippian by birth; by adoption, however, he is a State of Mainer, and casts a trout fly and stops the most swiftly moving partridge as adeptly as the most skilful product of the Great North Woods.

My first glimpse of Ben Ames Williams was in a court room in Cambridge, Massachusetts. My view was obstructed by an extremely large young man who not only sat high in his chair but bulged widely on either side. Consequently I was prepared to dislike him; but when I got to know him as Ben Williams, I liked him as well as everyone must.

State of Mainers, as a rule, control themselves admirably when reading about themselves; but they seem to feel dif-