

Tennyson and Leigh Hunt : The publication circumstances of *Poems* (1842)

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In 1842, Alfred Tennyson published *Poems* in two volumes after a ten-year lacuna. However, these were not totally new books. According to Leigh Hunt, Tennyson's sympathetic critic, the first volume contained a selection of previously written poems, which in addition to being old, were revised unnecessarily. Hunt also criticized the new poems that appeared in the second volume, such as "Godiva". This study presents two reasons why Tennyson decided to publish this edition.

Firstly, Tennyson was regarded as belonging to the "Cockney School of Poetry", a label used to mock certain poets along classist and political lines. This form of criticism was originally started in 1817 by John Gibson Lockhart, a strong Tory Party supporter, and used against Hunt, John Keats, and P. B. Shelley. However, it was later revived by Arthur Henry Hallam, a Whig Party supporter and Tennyson's best friend. Hallam introduced Tennyson to the literary world as a successor of Keats and Shelley, as did Hunt. Therefore, by publishing "Godiva", Tennyson attempted to show that he was different from his predecessors.

The second reason is that Tennyson lost interest in reform around the 1840s. At this time, Hunt continued to promote universal suffrage through the posthumous publication of Shelley's poem, "The Mask of Anarchy". However, Tennyson's renunciation of the subject was represented in his deletion of the word "anarchy" in "The Poet," and his removal of the last stanza of "Godiva", a stanza that echoed Hunt's political interpretation of the legend. The trial of Tennyson's publisher brought about by a Chartist, Henry Hetherington, and the recurrence of the "Cockney School" criticism in 1844, likely encouraged Tennyson to depart from Hunt's influence and reform activities.