

[1887, February 13]

[From: Lord Alfred Tennyson]

[To: Roden Noel]¹

Feb 13/87

²My dear Roden Noel

I congratulate you on your new volume,³ & trust that it will fight the good fight against Metricalism⁴ successfully.

Yours very truly

A. Tennyson

¹ Roden Berkeley Wriothsesley Noel (1834-1894) was a poet and essayist best known for his 1881 volume *A Little Child's Monument*, commemorating his son Eric who died in 1877 at the age of five (see the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [ODNB]).

² This note is written on off-white paper, folded in quarters, which has been glued to a backing.

³ In 1887, Noel published an edition titled *The Poems of Edmund Spenser*, in which he included a biographical and critical essay on the early modern poet. Tennyson is likely congratulating Noel on that volume, though this letter was written early enough in the year that he may be referring to Noel's 1886 *Essays on Poetry and Poets*, in which he wrote on Thomas Chatterton, Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats, Victor Hugo, Tennyson, and Walt Whitman.

⁴ "Metricalism" probably refers to the poetic movement that was dedicated to meter at the cost of musicality—that held that "form is all, and the substance nothing" (Noel, *Essays on Poets*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 186, 256). Noel's opinion on this movement is evident in his *Essays on Poetry and Poets*, where he writes that this idea of poetry is "fathered by men themselves impotent in respect of thought" who are dedicated to "a metre-mongering school equally sterile" (256).