

**POEMS UPON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS**

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Poems upon Various Subjects by J. R. Withers

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J. R. WITHERS

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P O E M S

UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS:

BY

J. R. WITHERS,

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DEDICATION.

TO MRS. ROBERT DILLAMORE FYSON,
THROUGH WHOSE UNBOUNDED KINDNESS AND GENEROUS EFFORTS
THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN ENABLED TO
PUBLISH HIS POEMS,
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY HER MOST OBLIGED AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,
J. R. WITHERS.

PREFACE.

It is the genius of the British constitution to recognize talent, and to promote its development in whatever grade of society it may be found to exist. This position is fully exemplified by the numerous instances in which individuals have emerged from obscurity, run a career of the utmost brilliancy, and realized the highest distinctions in reputation and glory, solely by the force of that inherent talent which throbb'd within their breasts. The noble example thus exhibited by our constitution exercises a beneficial influence upon society at large; and, like a prodigious fountain, impels the generous principle throughout all the ramifications of our chequered humanity. In obedience to the principle thus enunciated, the Author of these poems has been raised from the deepest obscurity, and elevated to a certain position from which his future efforts may be exerted with greater promise of success. The sneer of the critic must not blight the humble aspirations of the child of nature: the eagle from its eyrie selects a victim worthy of its attack, and the ruthless hand of the spoiler must not be laid upon the productions of one whom unremitting toil and

chill penury have hitherto claimed as their own. Yet the true spirit of poetry breathes throughout the poems; and the candid reader will, by their perusal, be rewarded by an introduction to the scenes of nature, the description of which, by their simplicity and the absence of art, will command admiration.

That there are errors, we do not deny: but if a Milton and a Shakespeare can take the highest rank amongst the Poets of our country, and the intermediate space is occupied by a host of noble competitors, perhaps some humble niche in the temple of fame may be accorded even to Withers, the Poet of Fordham.

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

The Author of these Poems, an humble individual, born of poor but honest parents at the village of Weston Colville, Cambridgeshire, is entirely self-taught; having never received any education beyond the teaching of his mother, from whom he learned to read and write when a child. He left his home at twelve years of age, to reside at Fordham, where he was placed by his father with a market-gardener, from whom he received no mental improvement. His father was a shoemaker when his boy was an infant; but from adverse circumstances was obliged to give up his little trade and home, to a person who had been his apprentice. After a few years, his mother had a small sum of money bequeathed to her; and she, being anxious to better the condition of her son, her only son, appropriated a share of it towards instructing him in the craft of shoemaking; but so small was the sum at her disposal, that for one year only could he be placed with his father's successor; consequently he made no great progress in the art of making shoes, and has since gained a living chiefly by mending. The chains of poverty have galled him so deeply that he has been driven with his wife and three children into the Union, refusing credit which was offered, as his fears overcame his hopes of being able to repay the debt. A small piece written whilst there will show his powers of composition under circumstances so unfavourable for composing or cultivating genius; yet he has managed to write the Book of Poems now presented to the public, relying on their kind indulgence, conscious of many errors, still trusting some merit will be discovered, to compensate the reader for the perusal.

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