

POEMS

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Poems by Egbert Willard Fowler

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EGBERT WILLARD FOWLER

POEMS



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POEMS

Egbert Willard Fowler



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The Gorham Press 1905*

5.5.11

PREFACE

A POSTHUMOUS book requires some word of comment, especially if the author is unknown. The poems offered in this volume embrace the three years of his life which Egbert Willard Fowler, after abandoning the dramatic profession, devoted to literary work: 1897-1900. They are poems of temperament, mood and experience, collected and arranged for publication by him, while fighting the disease which carried him off a year later. They were not intended for one volume, but the author's untimely death justifies the editor's deviation from the original plan. The three groups collectively are more likely to give a glimpse of the personality of Egbert Willard Fowler, than any one of them separately. The first bears evidence of tentative experiments with form, and with few exceptions contains his earlier efforts. The "Mood Pageant" is an interlude, the pose of an artist, reveling in a newly found medium of expression. The last group explains itself; the author had found his way back to the native soil, to nature.

It is needless to say, he was self-taught: a type of Young America, whose artistic temperament instinctively seeks and trains itself on what is best in the world's art and literature, though lacking the discipline of academic education. But readers to whom

a strong individual note is apt to appeal, will readily detect it between the lines of these poems. Egbert Willard Fowler in his life and in his work stood apart from the average poet type.

Although Mr. William Struthers' acquaintance with the author was confined to the specimens of his verse published in the "Conservator," his "Threnody: to Egbert Willard Fowler" in the same magazine contains a passage singularly appropriate:

For in you throbbed
The pulse of homely joys,
And tenderly your heart
Earth's big heart answered,
Beat for beat!
The violet fragrant lane,
The field, brook-signatured,
Where cows found food and drink
And farmlads came to fish;
The woodland concert hall,
Where, on your back,
With eyes upturned,
You harked a new bird song—
These gave you true delight!
Yet Life was hard and tense
And offered no warm hand
Of Fellowship,
For all your thought of her!

Why wonder that you turned
To Life's pale sister, Death,
To seek, not chill and fear,
But cool, sweet draughts of sleep
For fevered, famished lips!

For the few readers who knew Egbert Willard Fowler intimately the volume has the value of a human document.

Grateful acknowledgment is due to Mr. George Schumm, a friend of the author and the editor, for suggestions offered and kind assistance in preparing the book for the press.

A. von Ende.

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