

**A SONG OF
LABOUR, AND
OTHER POEMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649213344

A song of labour, and other poems by Alexander Anderson

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ALEXANDER ANDERSON

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BY

ALEXANDER ANDERSON,

(RAILWAY SURFACE-MAN.)

KIRKCONNEL, VIA SANQUHAR, DUMFRIESSHIRE.

DUNDEE :

PRINTED AT THE ADVERTISER OFFICE, BANK STREET.

1873.

P R E F A C E.

SOME time ago a wish was kindly expressed by several of my friends, and others who had read my verses as they appeared in print, that I should publish them in a collected form. The idea of having a book of my own, I admit, was not easily got rid of, so, after a little deliberation and reflection, I determined to venture into the realms of authorship. Such an undertaking is, in these times, rather hazardous for an unknown author to engage in; but still I had the hope, in common with other warblers, that there might be room enough left to pipe what little song there was in me. In this hope the present adventure is made; and the result, for better or worse, is now beyond the control of the Author and in the hands of the Public, whose verdict I now submissively await.

The Poems in this collection have, for the most part, already appeared in the pages of the *People's Friend*, under the *nom-de-plume* "Surface-man;" and I think it but just to myself to state that this title truly designates the nature of my calling—I being but a humble son of toil, working with pick and shovel on the railway. Other Poems, which appeared in several of the London Magazines, are, by the kind permission of the Publishers, inserted in the volume; and these, with a considerable number of others which have never appeared in print before, constitute the collection which I now offer to the Public, in the hope that, as I have had great delight in the writing of them, the reader may have—though in a less degree—a pleasure in their perusal.

I leave the Poems, then, to those who, like myself, have to toil for their daily bread; and if my verses influence them in the slightest degree towards a higher reverence for the "nobility of labour, the long pedigree of toil," I shall tear the account which, more or less, stands between the author and his readers, and, like the gnome in the German story, fling it in their faces with these two words written upon it—"Fully paid."

I cannot conclude without touching upon a duty which is heavier than I at first had imagined—I mean the tendering of my thanks to all my friends, far and near, who generously came forward to aid me in the launch of my little book. I have no set words in which to couch my gratitude to them. I can only request them to fancy what, in my inability to express, I have left unsaid.

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