

**FATHER KEMP AND HIS OLD
FOLKS: A HISTORY OF THE OLD
FOLKS' CONCERTS, COMPRISING
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE
AUTHOR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649153633

Father Kemp and his old folks: A history of the old folks' concerts, comprising autobiography of the author by Father Kemp

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FATHER KEMP

**FATHER KEMP AND HIS OLD
FOLKS: A HISTORY OF THE OLD
FOLKS' CONCERTS, COMPRISING
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF THE AUTHOR**



FATHER KEMP.

"ALL PLEASE SOUND!"

Father Kemp and his Old Folks.



A HISTORY

OF THE

OLD FOLKS' CONCERTS,

COMPRISING AN

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR,

AND SKETCHES OF MANY HUMOROUS SCENES AND INCIDENTS, WHICH
HAVE TRANSPIRED IN A CONCERT-GIVING EXPERIENCE OF
TWELVE YEARS IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND.



BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
1868.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868, by

ROBERT KEMP,

In the Clerk's office of the District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

ROCKWELL & ROLLINS, PRINTERS,

122 Washington Street, Boston.

ML
422
K32 f

P R E F A C E .



It is a great undertaking to write even a small book. Every one has an object in placing himself before the public in print. What my object is, will gradually develop itself as I proceed with my story. I was always ambitious. Not an office within the gift of the American people has been at times above my aspirations. My tastes have varied, — sometimes with the weather, sometimes with my business successes and reverses, — but, generally speaking, had I been nominated, for any political position, I should have thrown aside every consideration of personal reputation, and blindly accepted — for the good of the Republic. But I must say it was never one of my early ambitions to make a book.

The reader will, of course, desire to know when the mortal coil which contains such an ardent and self-sacrificing nature was first flung from the ship of time, and where it dropped. It landed on Cape Cod — the home of brave, sturdy hearts, and sand — perhaps a hundred years ago — perhaps less; at least, long enough ago to enable me to become acquainted with the manners, customs, and personal appearance of those but a generation removed from the Mayflower's precious cargo. I hope the reader will consider the question of time an unimportant one; the period of my birth has always been kept a matter of profound secrecy, and only those who have attended the "Old Folks' Concerts"

have an approximate idea of my venerable appearance and precise age.

In political matters I have held many different opinions. Living through so many years, with changes frequently occurring in the aspects of the country's institutions, I of course changed with the times; but I venture to say that within the past hundred years of my life I have not done more, in that respect, than many, whom the people have preferred before me, have accomplished in ten years. I wish now that my political opinions had undergone more frequent revolutions. I think, if they had, I should by this time be at least a Member of Congress.

My lot has been a different one from what my early, and even later, aspirations marked out. However unromantic it may seem, reader, I am a shoe-dealer. "Everybody suited at No. 261 Hanover Street," is my motto. This, however, is not mentioned as an advertisement. I would scorn to harbor such an intention in a publication which, I hope, will be purely of a literary, and not a business, character. But, at the same time, should the reader see fit to drop in at No. 261, he will at all seasons find a good stock, and a determination on my part to sell.

My experience as the conductor of more than six thousand Old Folks' Concerts, given in many parts of America, and in England, has enabled me to collect some facts, and to witness many ludicrous incidents, all of which cannot, of course, be mentioned in this volume; but I will endeavor to write down a few, in my own way, giving a history of an enterprise which, I take just pride in saying, was originated by me. I do not ask you to "pity the sorrows of a poor old man" because there have been many weak imitations of the "Old Folks' Concerts." The imitators got the worst of it, — at least, so everybody said. The entertainments could not be copyrighted, any more than the report of a cannon could

be; consequently, numerous "original Father Kemps" have imposed themselves upon the credulous public, many of whom, as I hear, have excelled in drinking whiskey, cheating landlords, and showing that they were "fathers" of mischief and dishonesty as well as conductors of choirs which sung religious music. Such evils are, in my case, not the penalties of greatness, but the results of success. Therefore, when I am introduced to a person who invites me to join him in a drink, declaring he shouldn't have known me *again*, I had so changed since we last met in private, I conclude, after refusing his invitation, that some of my venerable imitators have "smiled" with him, after the Concert given by the "original Father Kemp and his troupe of Old Folks." One of my objects in giving this volume to the public is to let them know that *the* original F. K. is at No. 261 Hanover Street, and that he neither drinks with the acquaintances of his hoary-headed namesakes, nor satisfies the demands of their creditors.

This book will contain a history of the "Old Folks' Concerts" which originated in the vicinity of Boston, and in the course of twelve years obtained a world-wide reputation. Some of the incidents narrated may seem silly, as they doubtlessly are; and if the reader wishes to find fault because they are in print, let him console himself that I know of hundreds of others, far more silly, which happened in my experience.

I am under great obligations to the Pilgrim Fathers for landing so near Cape Cod. I thank them heartily. Had they gone farther South, their descendants would have dressed differently, sung different psalm-tunes, I might have been somebody else, and, consequently, "Father Kemp" would never have had a chance in the world. Everything has happened just right for me, and it is hoped the Pilgrims will not suffer from anything that has occurred. In thus

speaking of the Plymouth Pilgrims, no slight is intended to the Puritans of the Massachusetts colony, many of whose descendants were members of my choir.

After so many years of active contact with the world, it is a grateful privilege to have a place where rest and quiet can be found, and where one can meet his friends, and feel, in his old age, that he may repay them for years of kindness, if they do as he desires. Such are my thoughts, when I contemplate the cheap rates at which my goods are held; and friends, I am confident, appreciate my motives in laboring so assiduously for their advantage. Notwithstanding the publication of this book, they will still, as heretofore, find me at No. 261 Hanover Street.

FATHER KEMP.

Boston, March, 1868.