

# **POETICAL ADDRESSES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649266685

Poetical Addresses by Geo. Alfred Townsend

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**GEO. ALFRED TOWNSEND**

**POETICAL  
ADDRESSES**



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1920

OF

GEO. ALFRED TOWNSEND.



PUBLISHED BY  
E. F. BONAVENTURE & CO.,  
N6. 2 BARCLAY STREET, ASTOR HOUSE.

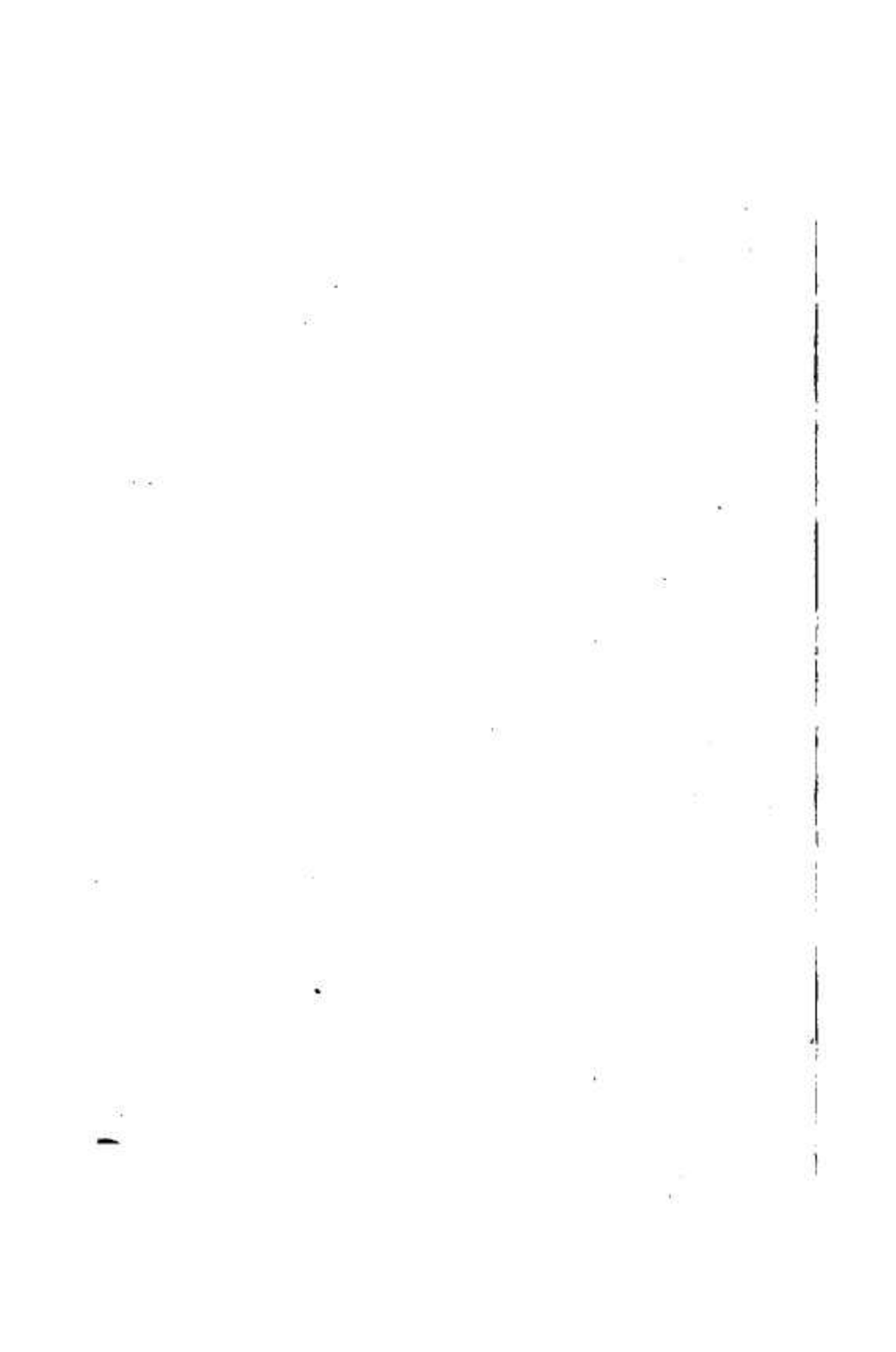
NEW YORK.  
1881.

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## POEM

READ BEFORE THE LITERARY SOCIETIES OF DICKINSON  
COLLEGE, CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA,

*June 28, 1881.*

A Quaker's son without a "thee" or "thou;"  
A farmer never following a plough;  
A patriot who his vote would not record;  
A soldier never flourishing the sword;  
No college man, who yet a college won:  
Here is the riddle of John Dickinson!

Out of the marshes where the rushes sing, (1)  
He rose like Moses and reproved the king;  
With silent fears saw Pharaoh's power drown,  
And for the ransomed wove a better crown:  
Three States, embellished by his birth or rule,  
He drew together in a Christian school,  
Gave it his substance and his name to own,  
And midst the Quakers lies without a stone.

Of tougher faith and bred of Cromwell's stock,  
For Independence rooted like a rock,  
The ardent Rush, by Scottish doctors bred,  
Forth to the new world his preceptors led:  
To Dickinson Charles Nisbet was his boon;  
To Princeton, Knox's bantling, Witherspoon.

A hundred years less four, have drained the sand  
From yonder mountains to the Cumberland,  
Since Nisbet crossed the bridgeless river's ford,  
And saw the call he answered from his Lord:  
In blue battalions stretched against the sky

The rival mountains, thirsty in July;  
 The life was screaming in the Indian corn,  
 And whiskey flowed on Independence morn;  
 Crude German boors had left their panther traps,  
 And Irish hunters in their squirrel caps  
 Came to the square, beside the old stockade,  
 And some were fighting, some were driving trade.  
 A limekiln yawned before the greystone kirk,  
 Le Tort's clear streamlet set a mill to work,  
 The Hessian barracks peeped above the woods,  
 The Dunker beauties blushed beneath their hoods,  
 And shrinking from the awful master's brain  
 The little college had run up a lane. (2)  
 A hut of brick, a population rude!  
 Poor Nisbet swooned with sun and solitude.

His heart recoiled across the cooling seas  
 To Doctor Johnson in the Hebrides,  
 To David Hume, the friend of pleasant days,  
 And Robby Burns reciting o'er his lays,  
 With Watt of Greenock rambling by the frith,  
 And "Wealth of Nations" talked by Adam Smith:  
 "God's will be done," he said, "in my exile!"  
 And preached his printed sermon in Carlisle.

Slow the result for seventeen years of toil,—  
 The buildings burnt, the country in a broil;  
 Indians, distillers raising new alarms,  
 And Washington and Hamilton in arms; (3)  
 Europe in flames, and beaten kings and laws,  
 And our Republic held to be the cause;  
 John Adams down and Jefferson in power,  
 The Doctor sighed, "it is the devil's hour!"

His good wife's Scotch no boy could understand,  
 Nor she and he the language of the land,—  
 The Conestoga and the Conewago,  
 The Conewingo and the Winnebago,

Conedoguinnett, little and the big,  
Convoluting with Conecocheague;  
Kiskeminitas, Rorus Torkillus, (4)  
Kittatinny, Tunicum, Kishicoquillas,  
Sinnemahoning, Skunk, Loyalsock,  
Lehigh, Licking, Schuylkill and Yock:  
Of these the Madame mortified to speak;  
The Doctor murmured: "Praise the Lord for Greek!"

And so he breathed his life into our land,  
And in our borough waits the last command,  
Sown like good seed or ere the ground was old,  
And bringing forth perennial thousand fold.

Bright as a mirror Susquehanna's breast,  
A mile of water twixt the East and West;  
No bridge the farmer found to cross his load,  
And south to Baltimore the market road.  
All Maryland without a college lay, (5)  
And to Carlisle her pupils picked their way:  
There came one day upon a farmer's wain,  
A long-chinned boy with eyes of pensive pain,  
His sandy hair on ample temples rose,  
Hollow his cheeks and lean his pallid nose.  
From far Patuxent, where the shad were packed,  
And dived the wild duck, blue or canvass-backed,  
The pilgrim jogged, two weeks upon the way—  
(We do it now in less than half a day.)  
With silver coin his trunks had solid weight,  
So worthless were the dollars of the State,  
And round Carlisle the secret travelled quick—  
The new arrival was a Catholic:  
Bred at the mass, by shaven priests confess'd,  
And Popish relics hidden on his breast!  
The little boys stood round him still and pale,  
And wondered where he kept his horns and tail!  
Yet for his vote both college guilds did call,—  
Belles Lettres boys or Philosophical,—