

**LYRA BICYCLICA:
FORTY POETS
ON THE WHEEL**

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Lyra Bicyclica: Forty Poets on the Wheel by J. G. Dalton

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BY

J. G. DALTON.



ERIPUIT MUSE IGNEM, CARMENQUE CANENTI.

53 Union Park

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1880.

280.0.772.

*Bicyclan bards who sung
Wheely ideas below,
Which always find us young,
Or always make us so.*

PREFATORY.

THE unprecedented peculiarities of most of the verses herein contained seem to be warrant enough for their collection into a volume. Doubtless a new *Ars poetica*, with a wholly novel subject (though narrow), should float a book, if it be not otherwise insufferably heavy.

The author-compiler is one of the very first Bostonians who, in the latter part of the year 1877, began to ride and write into notice the bicycle in this country. A few words also seem needful here in explanation of his entering upon the manufacture of this "machine poetry,"—such in a fuller sense of the term than it ever had before.

Under the early exhilarating effect of the wiry transit, in a sportive communication to a city paper (the *Globe* of Jan. 9, '78) he called upon our native poets, naming some in particular, to favor us with a song or two for the new move, declaring that its

peculiar charms and potencies deserved and awaited an adequate celebration. Strange to say, no response to this invitation was forthcoming, excepting a brief trifle signed O. W. H. (now on p. 20 of this volume) in the same paper a short time after. Thanks for small favors; but, in the opinion of the present writer, sustained bursts of panegyrical song were needed to meet the demands of the occasion! How to get them? Having little confidence in his own capacity for poetry, he sought aid through the old proverb about "birds that can sing and won't sing," and soon hit upon the surprising discovery that the meaning of poems can be extracted, and a new one substituted, without injuring the form. So the Chinese will vacuate an egg or an orange of its original contents, fill it with strange confections, and leave no discernible break. In our case the diligent artificer sometimes sees opportunities of improving the exterior also. From trying this process upon the two distinguished poets who had neglected his modest request, the writer has developed the Bi-lyrical Method, and extended his scheme of confiscation over the whole domain of available song.— "Insatiate Bicycler, would not two suffice?" says the

gentle reader. Not a bit of it: refused a little, he will ravage much. There are, however, quite a number of pieces radically his own, which the proficient reader will easily distinguish. Nearly all have appeared in papers of this city, or in England, and are now revised and improved.

Mindful of the fate of Marsyas, and that of the dilated frog in the fable, he presents them to the reading public, who should kindly make due allowance for the spirit of youth and the Wheel; and he dedicates them to the gathering army of bicyclers on this continent, with the motto, —

Nota non furor brevis est.

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