

POEMS

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Poems by Edward Capern

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EDWARD CAPERN

POEMS

~~1872~~

POEMS

BY EDWARD CAPERN,

Rural Postman of Bideford, Devon,

AUTHOR OF "BALLADS AND SONGS."

" A humble Poet,
Whose songs gush'd from his heart
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start,

"Who through long days of labour,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard to his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

"Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like a benediction
That follows after prayer."

LONGFELLOW.

THIRD EDITION.

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1859

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.



TO THE SUBSCRIBERS.

MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM entrusted with the delightful privilege of introducing a man of genius to the world,—EDWARD CAPERN, a Poet.

On taking possession of the necessary papers I consulted some literary friends, and it was of course soon decided that no alterations should be made except by Mr. Capern; nor, indeed, were many needed; for, except a few slips of the pen—mere verbal inaccuracies, scarcely worth alluding to—the whole of these beautiful poems appear as they were first produced by him.

I reserved to myself, however, the absolute right of rejection, and this was frequently a rather painful duty. In a walk together of thirteen miles,

during which some of my decisions were communicated, the Poet would sometimes contend in the very accents of despair,—“What! exclude my ‘Morning,’ and the ‘Apostrophe to the Sun!’ Why, Sir, I wrote those pieces when I had but four shillings a-week to live upon, which gave but frugal meals.” Firmness was, however, necessary; and “Morning” still stands excluded as “beautiful, but too diffuse for this publication.”

It is not my intention even to touch upon the trying incidents of Mr. Capern’s early life. He is a rural letter-carrier from Bideford to Buckland Brewer and its neighbourhood, distributing the Mail through a discursive walk of thirteen miles daily, including Sundays; for which his salary is ten shillings and sixpence per week. He has a real Poet’s Wife; his JANE, a charming brunette, is intelligent, prudent, and good. He has two children, Charles, a boy of seven,* and Milly, a girl just three years

* What a delightful opportunity for some really charitable Governor of Christ’s Hospital, who has a “presentation” at his disposal!

of age; and he tells me that he is happy—happy where thousands would be discontented; rich, where many would be in want; blessing Providence for its bounties, instead of repining for that which has been denied.

Mr. Capern's features have a striking resemblance to those of Oliver Goldsmith; he has also the Doctor's sturdy build, though not his personal height. Nor is this the only point of resemblance to our dear Goldy,—Mr. Capern has an ear for music, he plays touchingly on the flute, and sings his own songs to his own tunes with striking energy or tenderness.

Mr. Capern has, however, a defect in his vision which seems to increase with age; and he has, under the advice of his friends, consented to this mode of raising a little sum to assist in the education of his rising family, and to commence a provision for the future. Is it too much to hope that these charming emanations of his mind may induce the wealthy and well-disposed to assist in this lovely work? A man who has written these beautiful

lyrics amid trials and privations, without neglecting one social duty, has, it is respectfully suggested, some claim on public approbation, and will, it is hoped, secure sufficient notice to prevent the latter part of his life from bringing anything less pleasing than competence and ease.

W. F. ROCK.

P.S.—I have the pleasure to announce that the first edition, of one thousand copies, was sold within three months of publication, and is expected to leave a profit to Mr. Capern of £150, which he has consented shall be applied to the purchase of an Annuity on the joint lives of himself and Mrs. Capern. In addition to this success, the Post Office authorities have increased his salary to thirteen shillings per week, and (what is even more appreciated by Mr. Capern) relieved him from his Sunday duties.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND AND THIRD EDITIONS.



IN bringing out another Edition of this book, I beg to thank the public most sincerely for the kind encouragement which they have given me. It does not become me to speak of my own merits; my poems, such as they are, speak for themselves; and of the value of them, others can judge better than the Author. I have only to say, that I have found more favour than I anticipated.

EDWARD CAPERN.