

**SONGS OF DEVON,
AND MISCELLANEOUS
POEMS**

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Songs of Devon, and Miscellaneous Poems by Josias Homely & John Bradford

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JOSIAS HOMELY & JOHN BRADFORD

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AND MISCELLANEOUS
POEMS**

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AND
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS,

OF
JOSIAS HOMELY,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "REGINALD ARNOLF," "TOM
STIRLINGTON," &c.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & Co.
CREWS, NEWTON-ABBOT.

MDCCLXIII.

1863

DR. BOWRING, M. P.

Sir,

That it was the circumstance of your having read the "TALES OF THE MOOR" with kind commendation, which encouraged me to request permission to place this book under the protection of your name, is a fact so gratifying to me, that I can scarcely be expected to withhold a knowledge of it from the public, or ever to forget it myself. Yet, why I trouble you with the patronage of a production, so trivial, perhaps to some objectionable, and certainly so imperfect as this little thing of "shreds and patches" may be found to be, remains to be explained—

By a remarkable combination of mental powers you have been enabled to give to the English public the popular poetry of foreign lands, which lay hidden from us in languages little known in this country. As translations they are allowed to be faithful; as presenting new and peculiar views of human intellect, and of national character, they are of great interest; but even in rendering to us the thoughts of others, you have left upon your pages the impress of a lofty genius and a true poet. This, in my opinion, you have peculiarly shown, by the fact, that where you have discerned a beauty you have not contemptuously flung it aside, because it was united to a defect. No one unpossessed of a mind thus happily constituted, could have given to us the translations from the

Dobell 10 Feb 1944

Servian popular poetry, &c., &c. There are in the original conceptions sometimes puerilities and defects—they are the effect of circumstances which had cast their clouds over the genius of a people!

In the hope that the mercy which you have shown to the ancient bards of a foreign soil, you will not withhold from a son of our own green isle, whose writings may be supposed to reflect in some measure the popular feelings of your own native county in your own times, this book is respectfully submitted to your considerate and indulgent attention, with every feeling of the sincerest admiration of your genius as a poet—your conduct as a patriot, and your worth as a man.

Still it is my duty to release you from all responsibility as to whatever may be herein contained, by stating, that it is your acquaintance with my former production *alone* that has induced you to show me this kindness, and that previous to publication you were entirely unacquainted with the contents of this volume. I offer it as the only tribute I have in my power to offer to the character and genius of my distinguished countryman, who has treated me with kindness, without the most distant expectation that you are to agree with, or approve every thing contained in it.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obliged and humble servant,

JOHN BRADFORD.

Pavillon Place, Newton-Abbot. Devon.

P R E F A C E.

To publish a book without a preface is like going into a lady's boudoir without taking off one's hat.—When a man goes into company better than that he is accustomed to keep, his great anxiety is that they may not think him polite enough.—Ergo, it appears to me most logically proved that I must write a "PREFACE," although I have nothing to say in it, except that being aware of the many errors and deficiencies of this volume, I have resolved to recover my character another time. All I can say to friend or foe is that I have not done with them, for however deficient I may be in every other good quality I have the fool-hardy one of perseverance.

I would not, however, have the accidental reader of this volume to suppose that it is the production of an "Unknown," either great or little. For men of considerable weight, (being the heaviest writers of the age) under the impression, no doubt, that virtue was its own reward, have undertaken the task of abusing me. Although it turned out to be like planting a park of artillery against a "wreath of morning mist," they ought to have full credit for the goodness of their intentions.

Others, again, have thought to do the "state some service" by laughing at me, but that proves to be a more

unfortunate speculation than the other. They inflict on me a punishment to which I have been so long accustomed, that for many years past I have derived a vast deal of innocent amusement by joining the laugh against myself. Almost every boy in the county, who first begins to write for a newspaper, commences his literary labour by a "squib," or "an anecdote of Josias Homely;" Sir Walter Scott was once deceived into a notion that a poor simpleton, who lived in his neighbourhood, was perfectly contented and happy. "So Jamie" said he, "you have nought in life to hurt and vex you?" "Hae I nought to hurt and vex me?" replied the idiot in a rage, "O Laird, Laird! there is a great *turkey cock* goes lubber, lubber, about after me, go where I will!" "Such is life," said the philosopher of Abbotsford, "every man has his turkey cock."—I have had mine, and am delighted to think that the more they *lubber*, the more famed I must become; besides should it not produce a sublime exultation in me, who am no man of wit myself, to be the cause of so much wit in others?

Yet some grave good people say, does this babbling mean to laugh at our beards? He flings about his poetry, and our daughters copy it into their albums. Some of the best musical talent in the county has been engaged to set his songs to music—our boys are learning them; and his ideas, mangled and crippled as they are, are thus being breathed, as it were, into the national character. What is it to us that some of them were

written at the age of fifteen? Did he not ought to have waited until he had had more experience to have enabled him to judge of their tendency, before he gave his passionate exciting nonsense to the public? Mighty fine, truly! I once knew a delightful old lady who had an only son, who being in ill health was advised to bathe in the sea; but the old lady hearing that bathing in the sea was dangerous to those who could not swim, wrote to her son's tutor, most earnestly requesting that her boy might not be permitted *to go into the water until he had become an experienced swimmer!* And so these tender dry-nurses of my reputation would have me become a popular author first, and then begin to write! May heaven guide them in safety to that paradise of fools which, according to my faith, is in reserve for innocent blockheadism.

Well, I for once will gratify them. I will allow *these* trifles to find their way to increased popularity—to condemnation—to derision, or neglect, whichever may suit the caprice and whim of a foolish generation. I will gain to myself immortality by recording a *true history!* Heaven pity the poor fellows who had for their heroes Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, or Washington. Even in the Elysian fields they shall be ready to devour their hearts with envy when they see the hero I shall bring forward—for I will record the history of "Snaily Dabbs," alias, "Cornelius Belgrave Dabbs, Esq." of Crazycot, in this County of Devon: and if his veritable history does not astonish the world, the world is a vast deal more stupid than I ever yet thought it to be.

A ring at the door!—a row in the passage—and—enter printer's devil in a cold sweat. Well, sir, said I, what is your pleasure? No pleasure at all, said the demon sulkily, we are waiting for the *preface* to *finish* the book.

Then thou must have it said I, though I certainly do regret that it has been so hastily written, for I have just been struck with the idea that all the world have an eye upon thee and upon me.

The features of the devil expanded into a melancholy smile—Yes sir, said he, but do you know what all the world says of *you*?

Not exactly, said I, blushing with gratified vanity—

Why then rejoined Asmodeus, the world says that your head is entirely full of all kinds of foolish fancies—Very well, I replied, and when they are informed of the additional fact that thine is quite empty, they will be sufficiently prepared to extend both to thee and to me all the charity which we stand so much in need of; so I beg to subscribe myself thine and the world's obedient servant, and wish you both a brief good night.

JOHN BRADFORD.