
Rhymes of a radical

Dyer W Lincoln

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RHYMES OF A RADICAL

BY

W. LINC. DYER

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Ask, what is a poet?
And thus th' Muses answer:
Sensation's miracle,
A weird music master.



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DEDICATION

TO HIS
NUMEROUS BRETHERN
THE
"POOR-DEVILS,"
IN THE
FEAR OF GOD AND HOPE OF BETTER TIMES,
THIS
BOOK OF POEMS
IS
FRATERNALLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

“There is among us a set of critics who seem to hold that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would, therefore, charitably derive every rill they behold flowing for a perforation made in some other man’s tank.”

SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

WHATEVER may be said of other kinds of art, it is clear that poetry as a form of literary expression is not in process of extinction. Undoubtedly the poetic Muse has passed through a serious ordeal in our United States. She has been obliged to make the acquaintance of strangers, to leave her haunts in the wildwood, to journey from city to city, to sit on great cubes of block-coal in iron mills, and to have her golden hair sprinkled with sawdust in a thousand factories. She has been compelled to travel on steamboats and in crowded railway trains, being elbowed much by the rude and profane folk who seek through such thoroughfares to enter Paradise Regained.

What effect all this has produced upon the temper and spirits of the American Muse it were hard to say; but we may still believe in her divinity, accept her work as the embroidery of a virgin's hands, and do as much as we may to lead her back from the strange places where she has been sojourning, into the primitive thickets of pawpaw and wild grape, into the woodland orchards and gardens where the June apples still grow and the old-fashioned roses are still a-blooming.

We may well be surprised at the extent and variety of the poetical compositions which our time and con-

dition are producing. We have all manner of songs. Here is our young friend, Mr. Dyer, with his RHYMES OF A RADICAL, telling us of the things which he has seen and heard and imagined in a country village of Indiana. The book is one of many—the work of a beginner, whose mind, without the discipline of learning, seeks expression for its moods and emotions and hopes in the form of verse. It is our privilege to encourage the initial flight. The success of the song-writer, as the success of all manner of human beings, depends for the most part upon himself—upon the breadth of his vision and his strength of wing. Meanwhile I take pleasure in contributing this Introductory Note to the trial effort of Mr. Dyer in the publication of his untutored songs.

JOHN CLARK RIDPATH.

Greencastle, Nov. 26, 1890.