

**WAYSIDE
WARBLES**

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Wayside Warbles by Edward Capern

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EDWARD CAPERN

**WAYSIDE
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WAYSIDE WARBLERS.



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BY EDWARD CAPERN.

RURAL POSTMAN OF BIDEFORD, DEVON.

AUTHOR OF "POEMS," "BALLADS AND SONGS," AND THE
"DEVONSHIRE MELODIST."

"How often have I paused on every charm,—
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill.
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made."
GOLDSMITH.



LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND MARSTON,
MILTON HOUSE, LUDGATE HILL.

1865.

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280. j. 43.





PREFACE.

IN sending forth a third volume of his lyrics to the world, the author is desirous of saying a few words in prose, which may prove acceptable to some of his friends.

First of all these poems are what their title indicates them to be, genuine *Wayside Warbles*, the major part of them having been thought out and written by him in the open air, while doing duty as a rural postman. It may also be of interest to give some little idea of the manner in which they have been worked up. Some object or incident, or a conversation with a rustic by the roadside, has often suggested matter for a short song, which the author has frequently thrown off at the moment in the presence of a fair inspirer, or a more brawny

companion. Having sung his ditty as he composed it—as in the case of “Bonnie Maggie Ilton,” “Merry Labour,” “A Song in Sunshine,” and others,—his next care has been to rescue such as he has deemed worthy from oblivion. Hence the rude bar of a Devonshire stile or field-gate has often served him for a writing-desk. Or seated on the side of some friendly hedge, his post-bag resting on his knees, he has pencilled out his thoughts in the rough, to be polished up in the little cottage when he arrives at the end of his outward journey.

Whether what little genius for singing he is said to possess is essentially lyrical or not, he cannot say; certain it is, circumstances have made it so: his occupation having broken his time up into fragments, thereby compelling him to be content with penning a short piece when he might otherwise have attempted a longer poem. It is very pleasant, however, for him to think that his songs, short and simple as they are, have found favour in the eyes of those whose praise is honour, if not fame, and to know that that favour is daily increasing; as a proof of which he would mention that during the last two

or three years he has been repeatedly solicited by all classes of his countrymen to publish another volume. To that call he has responded by making a selection from his unpublished jottings; and his earnest hope is that the same originality, freshness, and simplicity, which marked his former works may be found in the present one, with some little certain sign of poetic growth.

One word touching that portion of the volume entitled "Willow Leaves." To those who have passed through a great sorrow like the writer no word of excuse is at all necessary; to those who have not, the only apology he would make must be in the words of our own beloved Coleridge:—"The communicativeness of our nature leads us to describe our own sorrows; in the endeavour to describe them, intellectual activity is exerted; and from intellectual activity there results a pleasure, which is gradually associated, and mingles as a corrective, with the painful subject of the description. 'True!' it may be answered, 'but how is the public interested in your sorrows or your descriptions?' What is 'the public' but a term for a number of scattered individuals? of whom as

many will be interested in these sorrows, as have experienced the same or similar :

' Holy be the lay,
Which, mourning, soothes the mourner on his way.'"

And now, in taking leave of his readers, he would ask them kindly to bear in mind, that those of his lyrics illustrating some phase of human experience, were written under the influence of their corresponding moods of mirth and sadness, joy and sorrow ; the pen oftentimes doing the bidding of the heart more than the fancy, while the author has ever aimed to be natural rather than fine, always bearing in mind a critique on one of his poems which an old village dame once pronounced: "'Tis as natural as life, and if it isn't true, it ought to be."

E. C.

Marine Gardens, Bideford,
July 8th, 1865.