

PREFACE—Continued

first exam. fourteen failed with mistakes from one to twenty. The two remaining contestants stood a searching test. Ten times they stood before the examiner, who failed to decide the winner of the prize, so the first and second prize was divided between Jessie Jack and the author, each received eighteen shillings and ninepence. A week later the author got a volume of Fox's book of Martyrs with the request to write a poem on Protestantism.

Moreover the author acknowledges the poems have no pretensions whatever to be ranked among the mysterious effusions of the ethereal or spasmodic school of poetry, as they only aim at expressing the joys and griefs, hopes and fears, the love and imaginings of ordinary men and women in a language that all may understand. Consequently they run the risk of being thought tame and commonplace. Yet the author's hope for them is that they may be found to be permeated with a few grains of mother wit combined with a sprinkling of sound common sense, and haply lit up here and there with a spark of nature's fire, as their composition has served to make pleasant many a homely hour and relieve the tedium of a monotonous existence, and should they be the means of kindling a smile of happiness and enjoyment in the ingle neuck of the humble sons of toil, the author will consider his labors amply rewarded, and leaves them entirely to the verdict of a discerning and impartial public, quoting the words of the old Satyrist Nash:

"His style was truthful, tho he had some gall,
Something he might have mended, so may all."