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Poems
by
George Crabbe

In Three Volumes

Cambridge University Press

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GEORGE CRABBE

Born, 1754

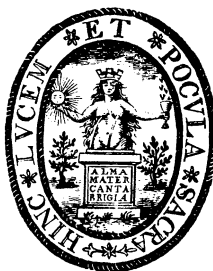
Died, 1832

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GEORGE CRABBE

POEMS

EDITED BY
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Volume I

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Frontmatter
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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE.

IN the present edition of Crabbe's Poems the general arrangement adopted is that of the chronological order of publication. The poem entitled *Midnight* has been inserted at a conjectural date as belonging to the period of the Juvenile Poems (1772–1780); but all other poems contained in this edition which have hitherto remained unpublished will be printed after the published poems, in the sequence of their production so far as this is ascertainable. With the poems hitherto unpublished I have also been fortunate enough to obtain permission to include in a later volume, among other posthumously printed pieces, the *Two Poetical Epistles* by Crabbe, first published, from a manuscript in the collection of Mr Buxton Forman, in Vol. II of *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century* edited by W. Robertson Nicoll and Thomas J. Wise (London, 1896). From the second of these *Epistles* were taken, but not in their original order, the ten lines reproduced in the present volume from George Crabbe the younger's 1834 edition of his father's Poems.

The earliest of the Juvenile Poems here printed are taken from *The Lady's Magazine, or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, appropriated solely to their Use and Amusement*, for the year 1772, printed at London for Robinson and Roberts, 25 Paternoster Row. The

v

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-43267-3 - George Crabbe: Poems: Volume I
 Edited by Adolphus William Ward
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE

first volume of this Magazine seems to have been that for the year 1770, and to have comprised the numbers from August to December inclusive ; but the earlier portion of this volume had been previously published in the same year 1770 under the same title by J. Wheble at 20 Paternoster Row, ‘by whom letters to the Editor are requested and received.’ This then must be the ‘Wheble’s Magazine for 1772,’ of which George Crabbe the younger in the Life prefixed to the 1834 edition of his father’s Poems (p. 22) states that he had after long search discovered a copy. The Magazine seems itself to have been a revival of an earlier *Lady’s Magazine*, of which portions of the volumes for 1760 and 1761 are extant, and which, according to the title-page of the volume for 1761, was printed for J. Wilkie at the Bible in St Paul’s Churchyard.

But the younger Crabbe’s account of his father’s verses in ‘Wheble’s Magazine for 1772’ does not tally with the actual contents of the volume for 1772 of *The Lady’s Magazine* which has been used for the present edition. It is possible, of course, though there is no evidence to support the supposition, that *The Lady’s Magazine* published by Wheble was continued at all events till 1772, parallel to *The Lady’s Magazine* published by Robinson and Roberts, with which in 1770 it had been in some measure blended. It is equally possible that the younger Crabbe made some mistake or mistakes. In any case, his statement is, that Wheble’s Magazine for 1772 ‘contains besides the prize poem on Hope,’ from which he proceeds to quote the concluding six lines, ‘four other pieces, signed “G. C., Woodbridge, Suffolk,” “To Mira,” “The Atheist reclaimed,” “The Bee,” and “An Allegorical Fable.”’ The volume published by Robinson and Roberts contains no pieces corresponding to these, except that in
 vi

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-43267-3 - George Crabbe: Poems: Volume I

Edited by Adolphus William Ward

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE

its October number there is printed an *Essay on Hope*, in which the lines cited by the younger Crabbe and reprinted, on his authority, in the present edition, do not appear, but of which the concluding lines seem to imply that it was a copy of verses written in competition for a prize. It cannot however be by Crabbe. For it is signed 'C. C., Rotherhithe, 1772'; and the July number of the same volume contains a piece of verse of some length entitled *The Rotherhithe Beauties* and signed 'C. C., Rotherhithe, July 15,' which is certainly not by Crabbe; and later in the volume follows another piece entitled *Night*, signed 'C. C., Rotherhithe, November 19, 1772,' which likewise cannot be attributed to Crabbe.

On the other hand the 1772 volume of *The Lady's Magazine* contains certain pieces of verse which may without hesitation be assigned to him, and which are accordingly reprinted in the present edition. These are, in the September number, *Solitude* and *A Song*, which bear as a signature the quasi-anagram 'G. EBBARE'; in the October number, the lines *To Emma*, with the quasi-anagram 'G. EBBAAC' and the date 'Suffolk'; and, in the November number, *Despair*, *Cupid*, and a *Song*, signed with the earlier form 'G. EBBARE.' This *Song* is followed by some lines in blank verse *On the Wonders of Creation*, and, further on, by some stanzas *To Friendship*, likewise signed 'C. C.'; but manifestly neither blank verse nor stanzas are by Crabbe.

Finally, it should be noted that in the October number in the same volume the following occurs among the notices *To our Correspondents*: 'The birth of a Maccaroni, by Ebbare, in the style of the Scriptures, seems to be taking too great a liberty with things sacred; and it is our maxim, as far as possible, to abstain from every appearance of evil.' The *Lady's*

Cambridge University Press
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 Edited by Adolphus William Ward
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE

Magazine continued to be published by Robinson and Roberts for many subsequent years; and it is a curious coincidence that No. 5 of Vol. XLVII (for May, 1816) contains some stanzas entitled *Myra's Wedding-Day*.

The remaining *Juvenilia* printed in the present edition are partly reproduced from the *Fragments of Verse, from Mr Crabbe's early Note-Books* in Vol. II of the 1834 edition, partly from the *Life* in Vol. I of the same. The lines On the Death of William Springall Levett are quoted in the latter from Green's *History of Framlingham*, which has been compared.

Of the poems which follow in the present volume, *Inebriety* is here printed from a copy of the quarto of 1775, which lacks a title-page and which bears on p. 1 the following deprecation in Crabbe's handwriting: 'NB.—pray let not this be seen at [cipher] there is very little of it that I'm not heartily asham'd of.' The imprint of the title-page here given is taken from the *Life* (1834, p. 28).

Midnight, a Poem, is now first printed from the original manuscript which formed part of Dawson Turner's collection, in which it was numbered 121 at the sale of Dawson Turner's manuscripts in June, 1859. Its handwriting, as Professor Dowden points out, is identical with that of a *facsimile* in a passage from the *Two Epistles* mentioned above, given in the *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*.

The Candidate is printed from the edition of 1834 (Vol. II, Appendix). This poem is not included in the edition of 1823, and after a long quest it has proved impossible to obtain a copy of the original edition of 1780 (published in quarto by H. Payne, opposite Marlborough House, Pall Mall). This edition is not in the British Museum. It was only possible to compare the forty-six lines of the poem quoted in *The Monthly*
 viii

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-43267-3 - George Crabbe: Poems: Volume I
 Edited by Adolphus William Ward
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE

Review for September, 1780; but no variants have been found in these.

The subsequent poems contained in the present volume are all printed from the edition of 1823, the last edition published in England in the poet's lifetime. The *Variants* enumerated at the close of this volume are in each case the readings of the first editions of the several poems, viz., *The Library*, 1781, *The Village*, 1783, *The Newspaper*, 1785, *The Parish Register* &c, 1807, and *The Borough*, 1810. The address *To the Reader* prefixed to *The Newspaper*, which does not appear in the edition of 1823, has been restored from that of 1785, as it appears in the younger Crabbe's edition of 1834.

The list of *Errata* includes all the misprints, slips of the pen, and unintentional mistakes of spelling or quotation, which have been found in the texts which have been reprinted in this volume. The reading substituted here is in each case enclosed in square brackets. The list is a long one, for Crabbe was a careless writer; and in the matter of quotations (as the concluding sentence of the *Preface* to *The Borough* indicates) was not given to over-conscientiousness. It has seemed permissible, where this could be done, to supplement the poet's statements as to the sources of his quotations; but there are instances in which these statements themselves remain more or less doubtful. Crabbe's interpunctuation is so arbitrary, and, though no doubt largely determined by what might be described as the movement of the writer's mind, so frequently at variance even with the practice (it can hardly be called system) which he more usually follows, that it has been thought right to use as much freedom on this head as seemed consistent with a due respect for the author's intention. No alteration has been made in the matter of interpunctuation which was not

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE

warranted either by the poet's ordinary practice, or by the primary necessity of making his meaning clear.

As complete as possible a bibliography of Crabbe's Poems will, it is hoped, be published in the concluding volume of this edition.

There remains the pleasant duty of thanking those whose kindness has been of assistance in the preparation of this volume. The relatives of my dear friend the late Canon AINGER have allowed me to retain for this purpose the first editions of *Inebriety* (with Crabbe's autograph), *The Village* and *The Newspaper* which he had lent me not long before his death. The Vice-Master of Trinity, Mr W. ALDIS WRIGHT, besides enabling me to borrow from Trinity Library the first edition of *The Library*, kindly lent his own copy of the *Poems* published in 1807. I am indebted to Professor EDWARD DOWDEN, LL.D., of Trinity College, Dublin, for various services generously rendered by him to this edition of Crabbe, which will benefit from them in its concluding as it has in its opening volume. He has readily allowed me to print the whole of the interesting blank verse poem of *Midnight*, which, in his own words, 'unless it be a transcript by Crabbe from some other eighteenth-century poet, of which there is no evidence, may be assumed to be of his authorship.'

To the same kind friend, and to the special courtesy of Mr J. W. LYSTER, Librarian of the National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin, I owe the opportunity of tracing *fide oculata*, so far as it seems possible to make sure of it, the elusive volume of *The Lady's Magazine* containing the earliest of Crabbe's printed verse.

Mr A. R. WALLER, of Peterhouse, Assistant Secretary to the Syndics of the University Press, has in many ways facilitated the preparation of this volume.

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE

And without the unstinting and unflagging cooperation of another member of my College, Mr A. T. BARTHOLOMEW, of the University Library, who has compiled the list of variants, besides giving me much other assistance, I could not, amidst other engagements, have carried so far the execution of a delightful task.

A. W. WARD.

PETERHOUSE LODGE, CAMBRIDGE.
July 24th, 1905.

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CORRIGENDA.

- p. 5, *for* Ovid *read* Ovid [?].
p. 48, l. 41, *for* Meonides *read* [Maeonides].
p. 55, l. 297, *for* [threat'ned] *read* [threaten'd].
p. 232, l. 319, *for* Rubens *read* [Rubens].
p. 252, l. 5, *for* dolor *read* [labor].
p. 256, l. 4, *for* deplorant *read* [deplangunt].
p. 329, l. 11, *for* and worship me *read* [and worship me].
ib. l. 12, *for* Part I *read* Part II.
p. 364, l. 12, *for* [erat] *read* erant.

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| JUVENILIA | I |
| Solitude | I |
| A Song | 3 |
| Concluding Lines of Prize Poem on Hope | 4 |
| To Emma | 4 |
| Despair | 5 |
| Cupid | 7 |
| Song. | 8 |
| [On the Death of William Springall Levett] | 8 |
| Parody on [Byrom's] "My Time, Oh ye Muses" | 9 |
| The Wish | 10 |
| INEBRIETY | 11 |
| JUVENILIA | 37 |
| [The Learning of Love] | 37 |
| Ye Gentle Gales | 37 |
| Mira | 38 |
| Hymn | 39 |
| The Wish | 40 |
| The Comparison | 40 |
| Goldsmith to the Author. | 41 |
| Fragment | 41 |
| The Resurrection | 42 |
| My Birth-day | 43 |
| To Eliza | 43 |
| Life | 44 |
| The Sacrament. | 44 |
| Night | 45 |
| Fragment, written at Midnight | 45 |

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-43267-3 - George Crabbe: Poems: Volume I
Edited by Adolphus William Ward
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| MIDNIGHT | 47 |
| JUVENILIA | 61 |
| [A Farewell] | 61 |
| Time. | 62 |
| The Choice | 63 |
| [A Humble Invocation] | 65 |
| [From an Epistle to Mira] | 66 |
| [Concluding Lines of an Epistle to Prince William Henry, afterwards King William IV] | 66 |
| [Drifting] | 68 |
| To the Right Honourable the Earl of Shelburne | 69 |
| An Epistle to a Friend | 70 |
| THE CANDIDATE | 73 |
| THE LIBRARY | 100 |
| THE VILLAGE | 119 |
| THE NEWSPAPER | 137 |
| THE PARISH REGISTER. | 158 |
| THE BIRTH OF FLATTERY | 223 |
| REFLECTIONS | 234 |
| SIR EUSTACE GREY | 238 |
| THE HALL OF JUSTICE | 252 |
| WOMAN! | 261 |
| THE BOROUGH | 263 |