WILLIAM WEEKS (… as only he can.)

In the April 2017 edition of *The Diary* was an article about the village hall which quoted an account of the opening of the first hall in 1928. In it was the statement "*Mr. Weeks got on to the platform and entertained us splendidly as only he can.*" This sparked my interest in finding out about this Mr Weeks, and I think I've identified the fellow: (I could be wrong, as I often am)

William Weeks was the eldest son of Robert Weeks, a gardener who came from Iddesleigh and lived for several years at Ham Farm, where at least 3 of his children were born.

William was educated at Dolton under the head teacher at the time, John Edwin Evans. Clearly, he did well and became a "pupil teacher" for a while before moving to Exeter where he became a teacher at a college. Describing himself in one census as "Professor of English Literature."

But it was the discovery of his 1926 book "Devonshire Yarns" that gives us some insight into the kind of entertainment he provided at Dolton back in 1928. Here is one of the shorter pieces from the book…

THE BETTER PLAN

Research Editor (P.S. Since writing this I have also got hold of "Bits O' Broad Devon" by W. Weeks, and may feature some pieces in future articles)

Young Tom, the farmer's man, one night
Was going down the lane,
Candle and lantern in his hand,
To Meet his Mary Jane.
--
Now, as it happen'd, farmer Giles
Was coming *up* the lane,
And meeting Tom with lantern asked:
"Why, Tom, where be 'ee gwain ? "
--
Tom, looking sheepish, answered, "Zur,
Sure you knaw where I'm gwain—
'Tis courtin' night an' I'm jist off
To meet my Mary Jane."
--
"But take a lantern courtin', Tom!
You be a quare young spark!
I always thort that soort o' thing
Was better een the dark."
--
"Wull, maister," I 'ave always yerd
'Tis var the safest plan
To thraw some light 'pon anything
That you may take in 'an'.
--
"Fudge! I'd no light to court my wive
When 'er was Nancy Ridd."
Sez Tom: "To jidge by the looks o' 'er, zur,
shouldn' think you did!