POEMS

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Poems by William Ernest Henley

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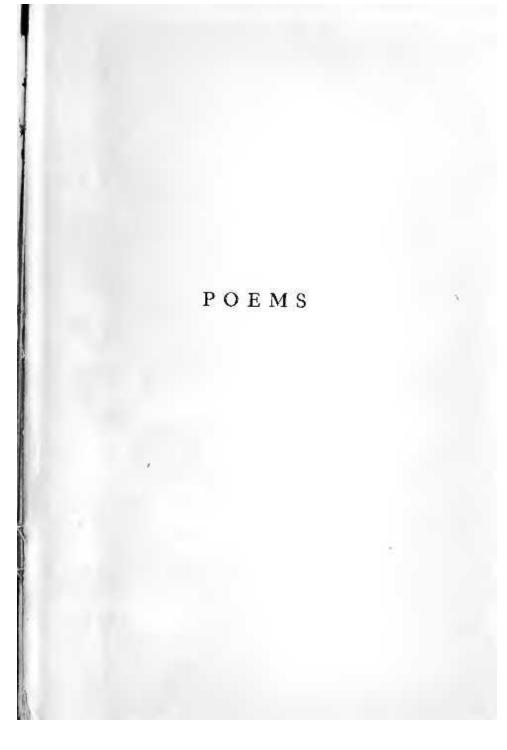
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WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

POEMS







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By

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

The summer's flower is to the summer rewest, Though to itself it only live and die.

SHAKESPRAIR

Eighth Impression

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TO MY WIFE

Take, dear, my little sleaf of songs, For, old or new, All that is good in them belongs Only to you;

And, singing as when all was young, They will recall Those others, lived but left unsung— The best of all,

W. E. H

APRIL 1888 September 1897.

ADVERTISEMENT

My friend and publisher, Mr. Alfred Nutt, asks me to introduce this re-issue of old work in a new shape. At his request, then, I have to say that nearly all the numbers contained in the present volume are reprinted from "A Book of Verses" (1888) and London Voluntaries" (1892-3). From the first of these I have removed some copies of verse which seemed to me scarce worth keeping; and I have recovered for it certain others from those publications which had made room for them. I have corrected where I could, added such dates as I might, and, by re-arrangement and revision, done my best to give my book, such as it is, its final form. If any be displeased by the result, I can but submit that my verses are my own, and that this is how I would have them read.

The work of revision has reminded me that, small as is this book of mine, it is all in the matter of werse that I have to show for the years between 1872 and 1897. A principal reason is that, after spending the better part of my life in the pursuit of poetry, I found myself (about 1877) so utterly unmarketable that I had to own myself beaten in art, and to addict myself to journalism for the next ten years. Came the production by my old friend, Mr. H. B. Donkin, in his little collection of Voluntaries' (1888), compiled for that East-End Hospital to which he has devoted so much time and energy and skill, of those unrhyming rhythms in which I had tried to quintessentialize, as (I believe) one scarce can do in rhyme, my impressions of the Old Edinburgh Infirmary. They had long