POEMS

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Poems by Meredith Nicholson

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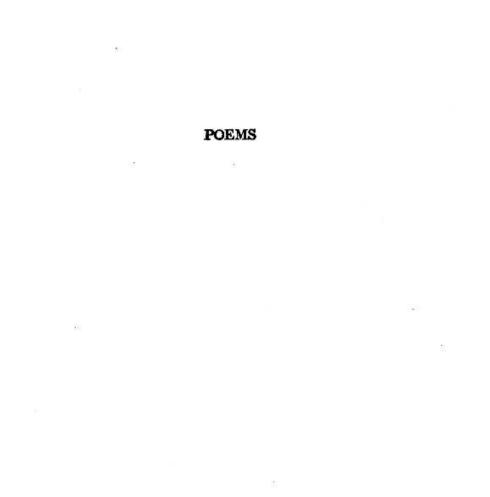
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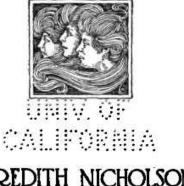
MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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MEREDITH NICHOLSON

INDIANAPOLIS THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY **PUBLISHERS**

TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

You came when song itself was tame,
Though many strove with idle aim
Like moths about the sacred flame
On ignorant wing;
You scorned, in beaten trails of fame,
To walk and sing.

You borrowed not Apollo's sign,
Affixed to many a lifeless line;
You sought not the dim shadowy Nine
Obscure, remote:
You wove the human and divine

In one clear note!

You would not strive with them that deign

To seek on chaff-strewn floors for grain,

And even for trampled husks are fain,

But, in the field,

You strove with infinite care to gain

Life's golden yield.

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You sought no high and strenuous key
To mark your new blithe minstrelsy,
Invoked no shrine on bended knee,
In Greece or Rome,
But, all ungyved, your spirit free
Sang most of home!

In the lone farm-house you laid bare
The drama of its toil and care,
But making love triumphant there
Rise strong and sweet,
Like herbs that scent the summer air,
Bruised 'neath our feet.

'Twas your voice sang the yet unsung

Faith of a people brave and young

To whose rude speech a wild tang clung,

Of clean earth born,—

The variant Saxon of our tongue

You did not scorn!

You heard, in dewy haunts of spring,
The treble note of childhood ring,—
The homing stroke you taught its wing
That you, again,
Might woo that vagrant note and sing
Once more its strain.

Not mine the right to sing your praise

Nor twine for you the deathless bays,

But mine to walk in lighted ways

Lured by your rhyme,

Glad for the faith through faithless days

You shield from Time.

And you still hold, as at the start,

That which God set for you apart—

Faith, Love and Trust, that in your heart

Keep its song pure,

And the magician gift of art,

And these endure!