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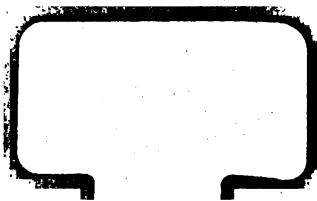
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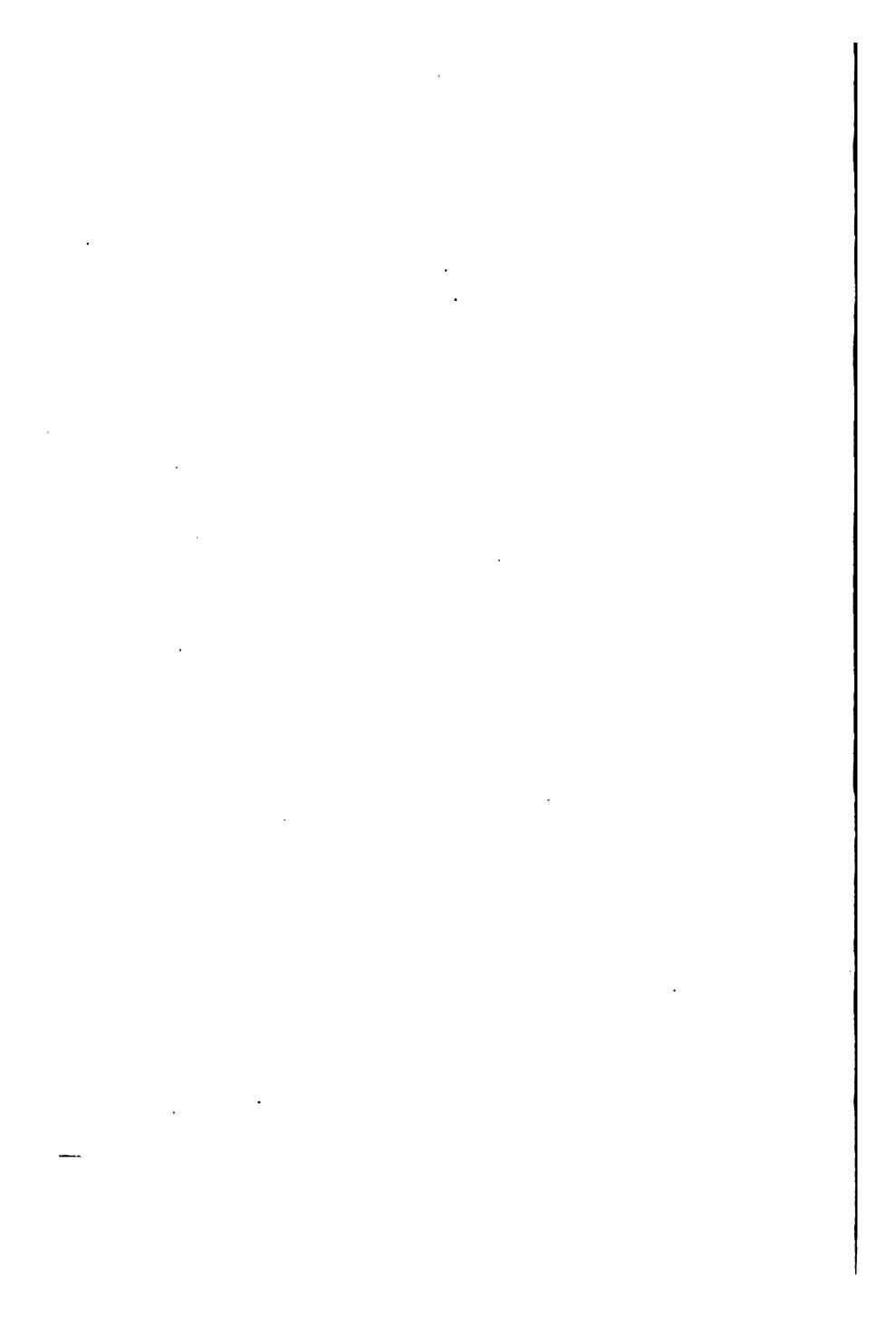
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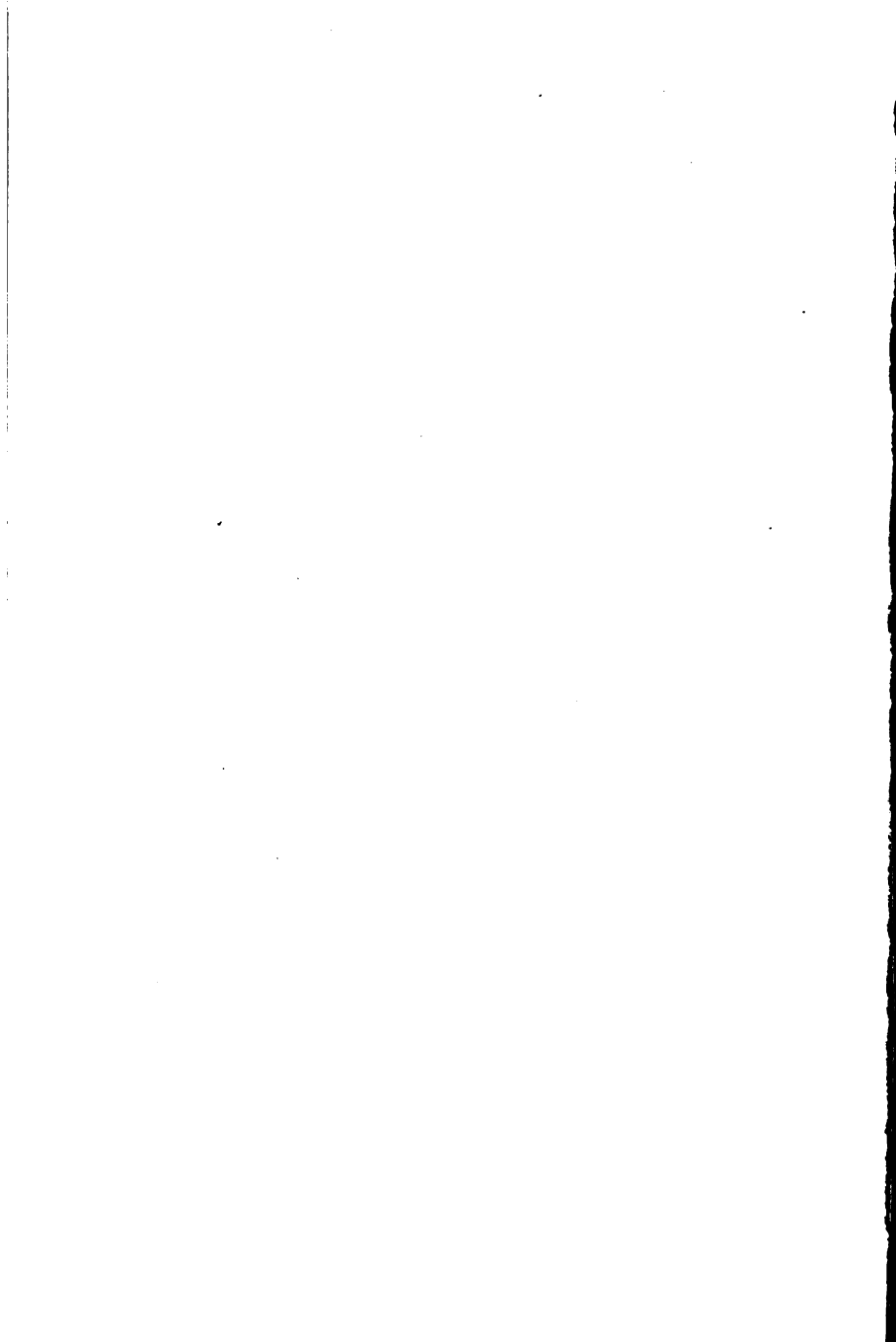








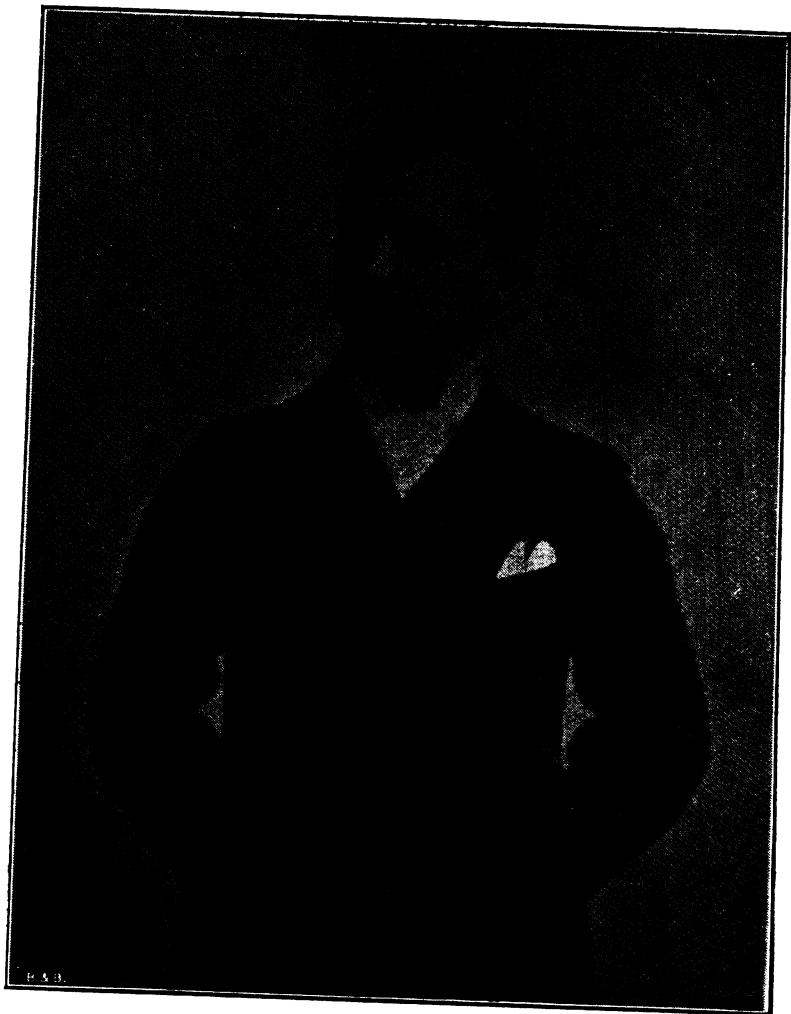
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1933

# DREAMY HOURS:

BY

FRANKLYN W. LEE.

---

"Ah, what is not a dream by day  
To him whose eyes are cast  
On things around him, with a ray  
Turned back upon the past."

—Poc.



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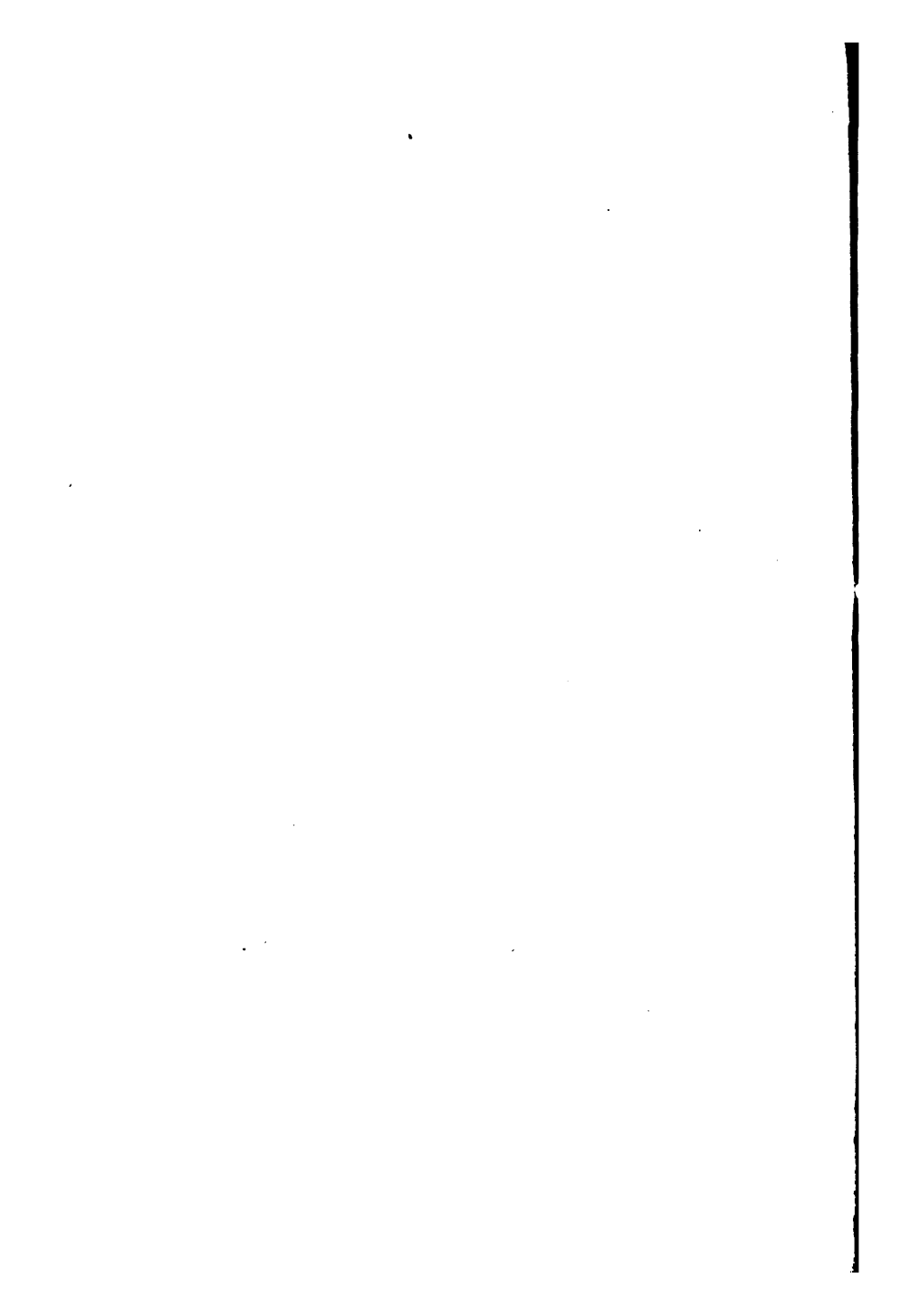
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1890  
YEAR 1890

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TO THE WIFE AND BABIES.

Scrubner Op. 10/01 40c



# DREAMY HOURS.

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## DREAMERS.

---

True, they are fools who idly dream  
Of unborn years,  
When time for each holds back some stream  
Of unshed tears.

They love to picture sunny skies  
And happy hours,—  
The earth a second paradise  
Of rarest flow'rs;

When sunshine is a transient guest,  
Joy dies in gloom  
And all the plants on Nature's breast  
Soon lose their bloom.

Their optimism makes each maid  
An angel fair,  
When angels prone to change or fade  
Are very rare.

They dream of wealth while at the gates  
Of Want's domain,  
And o'er broad, mythical estates  
Hold kingly reign.

And yet these fools, who idly dream,  
Are happier far  
Than those who judge, with pride supreme,  
Things as they are.



## BEFORE SHE CAME.

Before you came, my sweet colleen,  
    We knew not what this life was worth;  
    But lived in fancied happiness  
        In our small paradise on earth,  
    Where Love held both in sweet duress,  
Nor dreamed that greater joy had been—  
    Before you came.

Before you came—a child most fair—  
    There was no sunshine such as now  
    To light our way; nor such sweet flow'rs  
    To stud the path and it endow  
    With beauty new to eyes like ours,  
That sought these beauties everywhere—  
    Before you came.

Before you came, sweet babe of mine,  
    We dreamed of you (yet knew you not,)  
    Still wondering if, out of space,  
    Some unborn ray, by Love begot,  
    Would shine and show your cherub face  
To us—so watched we for the sign—  
    Before you came.

Before you came? Ah! was it thus?  
    Were you not always with us, dear?  
    Methinks (it may have been a dream)  
    That you were never far from here;  
    But found us out, like some star-gleam,  
In years gone by, to gladden us—  
    Before you came.

## A CYNICISM.

If you would win the world's good will,  
Conceal your thoughts, save those venerated  
With honeyed words. Or, better still,  
Think not at all; for he is feared,  
Despised and vilified who dares  
To weigh the evil of to-day,  
To separate the wheat and tares  
And draw each cunning veil away.

The wolf who roams in fleecy guise  
Denies his fangs and is believed;  
The leper, pure to blinded eyes,  
Is honored by the self-deceived;  
The moths that on the ermine feed  
Destroy the robe, with none to check,  
And fools who follow knaves who lead  
Are left to die amid the wreck.

But woe to fearless ones who speak,  
And lay the world's shortcomings bare;  
Who criticise some foolish freak  
Or warn the insects of the glare.  
Society can do no wrong,  
Save when to some good deed it bends,—  
To thoughts humane, which scarce belong  
Where man to licensed castes pretends.

## A LEGEND OF MINNETONKA.

'Tis a rare and wondrous story,  
Brought from ages dim and hoary,  
And old Homer must have sung it as he blindly  
groped his way;

'Tis a tale of love and passion,  
Showing us that 'twas the fashion  
Then, as now, for lovely woman to engage in cruel  
play

And lay jealousy's sharp lash on  
Those who bowed before her glory,  
While with swift and coy evasion she kept lovers  
all at bay.

'Twas a fair and radiant morning  
When, her couch of roses scorning,  
Venus soared through ambient ether 'neath Apollo's  
car of fire,

And a Titan—brawny giant!—  
Watched that form, so sweet and pliant,  
Till his fierce soul raged within him at the touch of  
wild desire;

But the goddess, half defiant,  
Heeded not and took no warning  
As she gaily laughed at him who dared to Beauty's  
Queen aspire.

This enraged the huge beholder,  
Who, grown confident and bolder,  
Gave pursuit and vowed to master that fair mocker  
of his love—

Love to which she was no stranger—  
E'en though dire and dreadful danger  
Might await him should she summon her immortals  
from above.

Surely passion soon would change her  
Could his arms but once enfold her!  
And that one embrace would nerve him when he  
faced the wrath of Jove.

On the goddess sped, and faster  
Came the one who fain would master.  
Then the Queen of Beauty trembled, half in anger,  
half in fear;

As the Titan, surely gaining,  
Soon would mock her proud disdain,  
For the giant's labored breathing fell upon her  
straining ear

And she felt her powers waning—  
Vainly prayed she they might last her  
Till the hunter grew weary, till some rescuer drew  
near.

But, alas! her sad repining  
And the tears of sorrow shining  
Mattered naught to her pursuer, who, with heavy,  
uncouth hand,

Sought with brutal force to grasp her,  
Hoping then to freely clasp her  
To his heaving, brawny bosom; but he merely  
clutched a strand—

Made of sapphires, gold and jasper—  
Of the girdle 'round her twining,

And it yielded to the tension, which the giant had  
not planned.

When it broke he saw too plainly  
That his massive form, ungainly,  
Could not follow Venus further through the sunlit  
realms of space;  
So he watched her as she gladly  
Left the one who loved her madly,  
Soaring on to old Olympus, swift as roebuck in the  
chase;  
And he grieved, this giant, sadly,  
That pursuit had ended vainly,  
For 'twere worth the universe itself to own that  
form and face.

But as she her fate evaded  
And in friendly distance faded,  
Down the sapphires fell, despairing, till they lay on  
Nature's breast,  
Where, with dew and sunshine blending  
And through woodland shadows wending  
They became a chain of sunlit lakes, the wonders  
of the West.  
And their beauties, all transcending,  
Have some dreamers oft persuaded  
That the Queen of Beauty seeks them when she  
longs for peace and rest.

Thus—the lakes of Minnetonka,  
Loved by Chippewa and Ponca,  
Owe their birth to matchless sapphires Venus wore  
upon her breast.

LITTLE MOCCASINED FEET.

---

Two little moccasined feet I heard —  
    Heard while I reveled in fancies quaint —  
Treading unsteadily through the room,  
Pattering soft in the twilight's gloom  
    There by the door. As the curtains stirred,  
Soft came the sound of her laughter faint —  
    Clear as the ring of the tinkling chain,  
    Sweet as the nightingale's sweetest strain.

Two little moccasined feet that brought  
    Thoughts I'd been seeking an hour or more;  
Seeking in vain, for my fickle muse,  
True to her sex, would her gifts refuse.  
    Giving the caller the smile she sought,  
Kissing her flower-lips o'er and o'er,  
    Up to my lap then I lifted her —  
    Muse who inspired without demur.

Wonderful moccasined feet were they,  
    Guiding me into Elysian fields;  
Wonderful, too, was that baby hand,  
Leading me thither to fairy land;  
    Potent as well were her eyes blue-gray,  
Casting the spell that a siren wields.  
    Where was there ever a muse like this,  
    Bringing a charm with her baby kiss?

Two little moccasined feet—ah, me!  
Where will they stray in the coming years?  
Shall it be into a time less fair,  
Marring her life with a cloud of care?  
God give her strength for what is to be,  
Robbing her sky of its rain of tears,  
Leading the trend of her simple life  
Far from the world and its vulgar strife.

**GRANT.**

---

The sad and solemn roll of muffled drums,  
The mournful dirge that softly swells,  
Will die away before the twilight comes,  
Amid the requiems of bells.

The form that held a hero's soul for years  
Will then have passed beyond our sight,  
Beyond a nation's grief and tears,  
In which both Blue and Gray unite.

Let mankind, then, deal justly with the dead.  
Not all are faultless in this day.  
For errors that unthinking clay has made  
Blame not the spirit, but the clay.

The one who loves his flag should blush with shame  
Who, when he thinks of Lincoln's days,  
Will add not to Grant's pyramid of fame  
One small rough stone of honest praise.

Memorial Day, August 8, 1885.



A WOMAN'S SMILE.

---

The happiness that man desires  
Is cheaply bought, if in his heart  
Some woman's smile a thought inspires  
Of nobler things—a higher part  
Than that which men too often play;  
As if no future held in store  
The discontent that takes away  
The charm ere their life farce is o'er.

## IN THE SHADOW BY THE GATE.

We were young and ardent and knew no guile,  
In the golden long ago,  
When we kissed and quarreled and sang the while,  
And old Time was never slow.  
How your father raved and your mother frowned!  
But we mocked grim-visaged fate—  
You were always there when I stole around  
In the shadow by the gate.

It was years ago, but it seems to me  
That it happened yesterday;  
When we lived on love and our lives were free  
And the skies were never gray.  
But the day is past and the dream has flown  
With the girl who used to wait  
For the lad who worshiped the eyes that shone  
In the shadow by the gate.

I recall each kiss and each warm embrace,  
And they bring the old time thrill;  
I can see the glow of your piquant face,  
And your smile is with me still;  
And again I hear that low, mournful sigh,  
As the fleeting hours grew late,  
When we wondered what made the moments fly  
In the shadow by the gate.

I can see the shadow your father cast  
When he came in search of you;  
While we shrank and trembled and stood aghast,  
With each face of ashen hue,

But he found us not in those days of yore  
And we fear no dreadful strait,  
For the lad and lassie are seen no more  
In the shadow by the gate.

For there came a time when we said good-by,  
And our eyes were wet with tears,  
As we pledged ourselves by the stars on high  
To be true through all the years.  
Then I left you there in your misery,  
With a burden new and great,  
And your sad, sweet features were lost to me  
In the shadow by the gate.

But the childish dream, like a fragile plant,  
Could not live in Winter's frost,  
And the lonely years served to disenchant  
Till the old-time love was lost.  
Yet I turn anon to those halcyon days,  
As I sit and meditate,  
And I stand again where the rose-vine strays  
In the shadow by the gate.

And I wonder oft as I sit and think,  
With my sweet girl on my knee,  
If your boy will ever repair the link  
That was broken—well, by me;  
If they e'er will linger, true heart to heart,  
With no haunting fear of fate,  
And conceal life's roughness with Cupid's art  
In the shadow by the gate.

THE BROWNIES OF SLEEP.

---

What have you seen in the Land of Nod,  
Colice, my own, with your sleep-laden eyes?  
Where, in your dreams, have your little feet trod—  
Into a land with more beautiful skies?  
Surely the brownies were with you at play,  
There in the fairyland found in your drowse;  
Did not the little folk bear you away,—  
You as a queen, with a crown on your brows?

Ne'er had the elves such a sweet little queen,  
Though too despotic a ruler for them;  
Yet they were loyal and loving, I ween,  
Bringing you flowers and kissing your hem.  
And, when the eerie-toned orchestra played,  
You joined the rest in their innocent sport,  
Dancing away in the sun and the shade,  
Followed by those of your quaint little court.

Oh! I can tell why you cried when your eyes  
Looked once again on this old world of ours.  
There were no fairies and no wondrous skies,  
No happy brownies to crown you with flow'rs.  
Gone was your kingdom, the throne 'neath the trees;  
Vanished the wee little courtiers you knew;  
Dead, too, the melody thrown to the breeze;  
Gone, the crown jewels of sunshine and dew.

You will not find them, I fear me, again,  
Save when you drift to the elf-land of Sleep;  
Those little brownies ne'er grow to be men;  
Fairies find human paths stony and steep.  
Drowse when you can, then, my fair little maid;  
Life will grow less of a dream with the years;  
Reign o'er your brownies in some popped glade,  
Ere they are frightened by sorrow and tears.

UNCERTAINTY.  

---

A trembling step,—and then we pause  
To contemplate, with bated breath,  
Eternity, the end, because  
We fear the mystery of Death.

The charnel brings no childish fears;  
But when we seek to lift the veil  
And look beyond this life of tears,  
We meet chaotic gloom, and quail.

The soul, uncertain, dare not leap,  
Lest it should perish by the hand  
Of Night, whose dark slaves vigil keep  
Upon the mystic border-land.

In vain man's creeds! A nameless dread,—  
The burden of Doubt's iron crown,—  
Destroys the spark that Hope has fed  
And slowly drags the spirit down.

AT MIDNIGHT.  

---

Without, sweet Silence, wooed by Night,  
Was queen of earth, and 'neath her sway  
Men found in dreams a new delight  
And mourned th' approach of noisy day;  
The zephyr turned and shunned the trees,  
Amid whose leaves it loved to sigh,  
Lest they should murmur in the breeze  
And cause the quietude to die.

The watch dog slept and gave the moon  
No greeting as it rose on high  
In splendor, and the night's pale noon  
In beauty clothed the earth and sky;  
The cricket's chirp, the insect's hum  
Were silenced by the sanctity  
Of Quiet's reign,—all things were dumb  
And lost in voiceless ecstasy.

MUTABILITY.  

---

A song is finished, and a chapter read;  
A task completed and a day  
Passed on; a heart beats quickly and is dead;  
A pleasant day-dream fades away.

The thrones upbuilded soon in ruins fall;  
The shaft of marble topples o'er;  
The waves of time tear down each mighty wall  
And strew its fragments on the shore.

We place an idol in the bosom's shrine  
And unseen powers cast it down;  
We dream, and on a regal throne recline,  
But wake to mourn a missing crown.



## A SMOKER TO HIS PIPE.

When the circling rings of azure,  
Full of fancies without measure,  
Fill the room and linger o'er me with a strangely  
potent spell,  
All my will and sense of being  
With my gloomy sorrow fleeing,  
I am lost to things around me, and with phantom  
fancies dwell.

Thou, my pipe, so brown and golden,  
With thy rude inscriptions olden,  
Art the mystic necromancer who, with old Cagli-  
ostro's skill,  
Oft hath conjured many a vision  
Of the past's domain Elysian,  
Like a modern meerschaum Merlin, who commands  
the soul at will.

There are pictures, old and faded,  
In thy mist, by dreams pervaded,  
That arrest my soul and send it on a pilgrimage of  
years,  
Back of time, and back of sorrow,  
And forebodings of the morrow,  
When bold Childhood mocked Misfortune and her  
chalice filled with tears.

On the veil my spirit traces,  
Shadow forms of phantom faces,  
And among them there's a maiden's that I loved to  
think more fair,—

In my boyish adoration,—  
Than the genius-born creation  
Of a Raphael or a Titian, in its coloring so rare.

Now thine art a view discloses  
Of the by-ways strewn with roses,  
Leading to the broader highway, where each foot-  
step found a thorn;  
Of the brooklet's sunny quiver  
And the ripple of the river,  
As they flowed to meet an ocean,—restless, vast,  
and tempest-torn.

There's a balm for disappointment,  
And for care a soothing ointment,  
In the dreaminess arising with the smoke from out  
thy bowl,  
And thy fair attendant specter  
Brings a cup of charméd nectar  
That annihilates the shadows hanging darkly o'er  
my soul.

Ah, my pipe, so brown and golden,  
With thy quaint inscriptions olden,  
There's a witchery entrancing in the azure of thy  
rings;  
For no sorrow brewed in malice  
Finds a place within thy chalice,  
And the draught no grisly demon to my quiet  
chamber brings.

## THE DREAM CHILD.

My hand broke the spell which the silence of years  
Had cast o'er the soul of the strings;  
My fingers were trembling, mine eyes filled with  
tears  
Up-welling from Memory's springs.

A melody olden, a quaint lullaby,  
Rose softly, and, filling the room,  
Stole out of the door way and floated on high,  
Far into the night's sullen gloom.

A golden haired child clambered up on my knee;  
Her hand stroked my tear stained cheek;  
And wistful her look as she gazed up at me—  
The tongue chained, the eyes must needs speak.

I read there her wish, as in days long gone by;  
Again the sweet melody rose;  
I heard the low moan and the old, tired sigh,  
And saw the pale waxen lids close.

The herb-scented night breeze that lovingly stole  
A kiss from the fast dying leaves  
Re-echoed the sadness supreme in my soul  
In moans 'neath the shadowy eaves.

She slept with her head on my breast, as of yore;  
The music had charmed pain away;  
The mute, chained tongue spoke unheard, chained  
no more,  
And talked with the angels at play.

I lowered my head to the sweet, childish face,  
To kiss the dear lips as they smiled;  
Some beautiful vision—some angel of grace—  
The lips into smiling beguiled.

But lips there were none to give pleasure to mine;  
My poor heart seemed turned into stone;  
Ah! vainly indeed might the dreamer repine—  
The child and the music had flown!

And then I returned to the dead, cheerless years  
And saw our sweet nestling once more:  
The rose-laden casket, the torrents of tears,  
The mound by the surf-beaten shore.

TWO CREEDS.

---

"I worship God in ivied cloister cell,  
Or kneel in some cathedral aisle,  
Where glaring golden sunbeams never dwell  
And priestly ban excludes a smile.

From dusty tomes I learn the better way,  
To emulate the saints of old,  
To pray, to scourge, to fast, while others stray  
Outside the wall, to pleasure sold."

"Ah! sweeter far," the other said, "to roam  
In God's great temples, where each blade  
Of grass excels in eloquence the tome—  
'Twas there the lowly Master prayed.

My task, to lift some brother from the mire  
And guide a sunbeam to his heart;  
To strip his life of all its dark attire,  
Until it seems of heav'n a part."

FOREVER.  

---

“Forever?” he asked, with his ardent glance  
To love in her dear eyes appealing.  
“Forever!” she said, with a look askance,  
A blush o'er her damask cheek stealing.

Two barks floated on with the river Time;  
Two stars chose an orbit together;  
Two songsters, aroused by the matin chime,  
In melody joined in the heather.

“Forever?” The clods as they harshly fell,  
Her bier in dull echo replying,  
Gave gloomier tone to the old church bell  
And pain to the heart o'er her sighing.

The barks floated on, but one went before,  
To enter the mists of the ocean;  
One bright star fell swiftly, its glory o'er—  
A bird missed its sweet mate's devotion.

A THANKSGIVING TOAST.  

---

Oh, the dear old absent faces,  
With their sunniness and graces—  
How we miss them when we gather in the gloomy  
after days!  
For the circle of our friendship  
Loses half its loving kinship  
In the thought that they have left us, gone for aye  
upon their ways.

*The wheels revolve and turn the glass;  
The sands of life too quickly pass;  
The pitcher breaks; the silver cord  
Is loosed, and all have their reward.*

There were some whose happy smiling  
Conquered Time with sweet beguiling;  
There were others whose soft touches made us all  
forget Life's pain;  
There were those with fancies teeming,  
Who entranced us with their dreaming,  
And the witty and the thoughtful, who will ne'er  
return again.

*The wheels revolve and turn the glass;  
The sands of life too quickly pass;  
We are but driftwood and we glide,  
Each to his channel, with the tide.*

Ah! those mute and empty places—  
All suggestive of dear faces—  
How they fill the soul with longing and the aching  
heart with woe!  
For we love those who have left us,  
Of whom destiny bereft us,  
And their spirits linger near us, wheresoe'er the clay  
may go.

*The wheels revolve and turn the glass;  
The sands of life are doomed to pass;  
True friends ne'er part, though oceans vast  
Divide the present from the past.*

So, in every hour of pleasure,  
Let each true heart beat in measure  
With the rhythmic strains which Memory can  
conjure up at will.  
Give to Death a tear of sorrow  
And for Life some sweet phase borrow,  
Ne'er forget the dead and living, who, though gone,  
are near us still.

*The wheels revolve and turn the glass;  
The sands of life soon cease to pass;  
The curse of man—unhappy lot—  
Is that he is too soon forgot.*



## THE ANSWER.

“Is marriage a failure?” Well, let me see—  
A curious question to put to *me!*  
I'll look in my sweet baby's eyes of blue  
And seek there an answer to give to you;  
And into her mother's large eyes of gray,—  
The stars of my night and my suns by day,  
Perfecting the joys of my quiet life—  
So hark to the answer of babe and wife.

The one cannot speak in a learned strain,  
But still her soft cooing to us is plain,  
And infantile Sanscrit does just as well,  
For old is the story her accents tell.  
Her dear little fingers are on my face  
And fondle my cheek with a baby grace;  
And there in her eyes is the answer true:  
“Is marriage a failure? Well, not with you.”

The little one's mother sits near the while,  
Regarding us both with a happy smile,  
And laughs at the oracle's wise reply;  
Then kisses her flower-like lips. While I  
Gaze into the depths of those eyes of gray  
That look up at me in their loving way,  
And see in their shining the answer true:  
“Is marriage a failure? Well, not with you,”

What more would you have? That is proof enough  
To me that your words are the merest stuff;  
For marriage is just what 'tis made, I hold,—  
An Eden of bliss or a dungeon cold.  
So hence with your skeptical sophistry;  
For this is a truth that I always see  
In eyes like the dawn and in eyes of blue:  
“Is marriage a failure? Well, not with you.”

LES SIRENES.  

---

Waldteufel's strains were so dreamy—Alas!  
Fitter indeed that a requiem stole  
Over the heads of the gaily-robed mass,  
Into the nook where you played with a soul.  
Waldteufel's strains were enchanting—Ah me!  
So were your eyes and the touch of your hand,  
Fettering one who had ever been free,  
Leaving him shivering, guilty, unmanned.

Was it the waltz that affected me so?  
Nay, 'twas the unholy power you had—  
Power that Phrynes and Cyprians know,  
Stealing my manhood and making me mad.  
What did it matter to you that my wife  
Watched you askance with her sorrowful eyes?  
Mutely appealing for pity, that life  
Might not be shorn of what some women prize.

You were a wife, too, and wore in your hair  
Jewels that came from a long noble line;  
Yet who suspected that *you*, lady fair,  
Cast off your honor and sought to take mine?  
Men are not always seducers and knaves;  
Women will sometimes lay traps for their prey;  
Men are too often the fools and the slaves—  
Tempted, charm-ridden, and then led astray.

You were "the Edelweiss," so someone said.  
Rather a bud from the dread upas tree,  
Blooming so fair in the poison you shed,  
Charming the dull eyes that gazed foolishly ;  
Killing a woman who asked for relief ;  
Robbing a saint, first of peace then of breath ;  
Clouding the days of a man with a grief  
Not to be lifted, not even by death.

## MARIER'S BABY.

Why, Marier—thet's my daughter—haint the gal  
she used to be,  
When her husband, proud 'n manly, kem to ask  
her hand of me;  
Fer she's lost her old-time color, 'n grown pitiful,  
'n sad.  
'N she's lost the trick o' singin', too, thet used to  
make us glad;  
'N she goes about her little hum with weery, lag-  
gin' step—  
Like ez ef she had a burden, like ez ef she hed n't  
slep'—  
While we never hear her laugh no more, ner  
hardly see her smile,  
But we often ketch her cryin' all alone down by the  
stile.

What's the matter? Well, I'll tell yer. It wuz  
nigh two year ago  
Thet a little angel kem to them—a sunbeam sent  
below  
Jest to brighten up our lives a bit,—'n my old wife  
'n me  
Thought the world moved 'round thet baby; 'n  
her father!—well, sir, he  
Could 'nt bear to leave it nohow when he went to  
do his work,  
Fer he loved to set 'n hold it, 'n a happy smile 'd  
lurk

In the sunshine of his han'some face when we'd all  
    laugh 'n say  
Thet the baby give him some excuse fer loafin'  
    through the day.

But Marier, while she loved it, did n't relish bein'  
    tied  
'N she grew to kinder weery of her happy fire side;  
Fer she longed fer other pleasures thet were seldom  
    met with there—  
Like the huskins, 'n donations, 'n the shindigs here  
    'n there.  
She wus allus sich a lively chit, 'n liked her share of  
    fun,  
'N she hed it till the parson made the gal 'n Simon  
    one.  
Then the pleasures sorter drapped away, ez allus  
    is the case  
When a sparkin couple settles down 'n trots a  
    slower pace.

But the comin' of the baby brought some greater  
    changes still;  
'N Marier felt ill-treated, 'n her road seemed all  
    up-hill;  
Ez the youngster warn 't chipper—never hed been  
    since the start—  
'N it held her all the tighter. Well, it nigh broke  
    Simon's heart  
Jest to listen to her railin' ez she sot 'n held the  
    child:

How it allus wuz contrairey; how its father hed  
it spiled;  
How she never hed no freedom from the time it  
woke et morn;  
'N I've heerd her say—God help her!—thet she  
wisht it wuz n't born.

Well, we could n't reason with her, fer Marier's  
kinder sot  
'N she flares up when ye chide her,—its a childish  
way she's got—  
So we tried to comfort Simon, but he'd look et us  
'n say:  
“What's the use of consolation when she talks 'n  
acts that way?”  
Then the baby sickened, sudden-like, 'n pined away  
n' died,  
'N a shadder kem 'n hovered 'bout thet happy  
fireside;  
But 'twuz nothin' to the shadder in Marier's empty  
life,  
Fer neglect hed killed her baby 'n made Simon hate  
his wife.

But he could n't help fergivin' when she rallied  
from the blow  
'N the fever thet hed follered, when we thought  
she, too, would go;  
Fer she warn't like herself et all, but quiet-like,  
'n white,

So he tried to cheer her up a bit, 'n make her days  
more bright.  
But she goes about her little hum with weery,  
laggin' step—  
Like ez ef she hed a burden, like ez ef she hed n't  
slep'—  
'N we never hear her laugh no more, ner seldom see  
her smile;  
But we often ketch her kneelin' at the grave down  
by the stile.



A CHILD'S KISS.

---

Have you felt the kiss of a sweet-faced child?  
God made it and smiled.  
'Tis the scented breath of a balmy day,  
The touch of a rose;  
Or a sunbeam lighting a shadowed way  
Till the path a by-way of Eden grows.

Have you felt the kiss of a sweet-faced child?  
Has none e'er beguiled  
Some consuming care from the heart domain  
With infinite skill  
When the world seemed naught but a desert plain  
And the soul in trammels grew faint and ill?

When you feel the kiss of a sweet-faced child—  
A benison mild—  
There's a newer strength in the saddened heart,  
The spirit is free,  
And the barb is torn from each venom'd dart,  
While a calm spreads over life's troubled sea.

COLICE.  

---

One night a ship with cargo fair  
Came o'er the seas, its voyage done;  
A bright star pierced the throbbing air  
And paled the glory of the sun.

A fair, sweet stranger, loth to roam,  
In passing paused to rest the while;  
An angel blessed one happy home  
And won us with her gentle smile.

A royal guest, a queen — a child! —  
So beautiful, with blue-gray eyes  
(Her mother's eyes) that swift beguiled  
The lookers-on, e'en old and wise.

A babe she was, from heaven sent  
To bind hearts tighter in the strife  
Of earth — each childish blandishment  
A sunbeam in the gloom of life.

## HER TAM O' SHANTER.

Her eyes of gray with mischief shine  
And cause my thoughts to canter,  
As they with laughing lips combine  
And look up shyly into mine  
From 'neath her Tam o' Shanter.

Her voice, so musical and rich,  
Is full of playful banter;  
Yet I am dumb and turn and twitch  
Beneath her spell, for she's a witch  
And I'm her Tam o' Shanter.

She holds me fast within that spell;  
There's naught I would not grant her;  
For priest with candle, book and bell  
Could not resist the charms which dwell  
Beneath her Tam o' Shanter.

But there's a charm that lovers wield  
With which I may enchant her,  
And when to mine her powers yield  
My witch may lead me far afield.  
A willing Tam o' Shanter.

No maid of clay in beauty's guise  
Could in my heart supplant her,  
For there no rival queen can rise  
To break the power of the eyes  
Beneath that Tam o' Shanter.

THE ABSENT WIFE.  

---

I stroll about through the town at will  
    In the gloom of a winter night,  
Or sit and dream in our chamber still  
    And in peace woo my muse and write;  
I give no heed how the ashes fall  
    From my pipe to the clean-swept floor;  
I sit in state as the king of all,  
    For the reign of the wife is o'er.  
I laugh as I have not laughed for days,  
    At the loss of domestic ties  
And lighten care in a hundred ways  
    In the freedom I dearly prize.

But ah, the town seems a narrow tomb  
    Where the sunshine forgets to dwell;  
My muse a specter that fills the room  
    With the gloom of an evil spell.  
The ashes fall on Contentment's bier  
    And I boast but a thorny crown,  
For Joy is dead save when she is here  
    And her smile mocks Misfortune's frown.  
The laugh is hollow and hurts my ears,  
    And the burden is heavier still  
Than when we mingled our joy and tears  
    Or together faced good and ill.

Away, such freedom! Return, my queen,  
    To my heart and your empty throne  
And make my days what they were, serene,  
    With a skill that is all your own.  
It is not bondage to serve a wife  
    With a soul like the stars on high,  
With heart of gold and the light of life  
    In the love that is in her eye.  
She smoothes the road to the quiet grave  
    And her kiss robs the mind of care;  
In toil or pain she is always brave  
    And her touch makes a hut seem fair.

WHILE THE FLOWER CREPT.  

---

I leaned o'er a casket, small and white,  
Where a sweet child slept;  
And I sighed and wept  
To think that the darling had felt the blight  
Of some silent angel's chilling kiss.  
For 'twas sad that doom should end life's  
bliss  
While the flower crept.

I stood near a bride in spotless white;  
And I sighed and wept  
As the music crept,  
To think that the years would bring a blight  
And her married life be all amiss,  
Till she yearned to feel the angel's kiss  
While in peace she slept.

Alas for the bride in starless night!  
Though I sighed and wept  
While the sweet child slept,  
*She* went where her days would know no blight,  
And the silent angel's chilling kiss  
Might have called the other home to bliss  
While the flower crept.

A BIT OF LACE.  

---

Mother is knitting, there by the door,  
Where sunset tints gleam in her hair;  
Plying the needle, as o'er and o'er  
She fashions the fabric so fair.  
Thoughtful her face, and her sweet blue eyes,  
That shine in the fast-fading glow,  
Glisten with tears as old dreams arise  
And, phantom-like, flit to and fro.

Time takes the needle. While on the wing  
He works on her life's snowy thread,  
Weaving a fabric—a wondrous thing!—  
That floats in the air overhead.  
Scenes of her childhood are pictured there,  
And, wrought in an intricate maze,  
Joy knit with Sorrow and Love with Care,  
The tangles of life's winding ways.

Wreaths for the living, shrouds for the dead,  
Once formed by her motherly hands,  
Quickened remembrance of dear ones fled  
To homes in the far shadow-lands;  
Days when the stitches were rudely torn  
And broken by fingers unkind;  
Days that awoke in a summer morn  
And died in the bleak winter wind;

Thoughts, hopes and visions, caught up by Time,  
Bedewed with a Niobe's tears;  
Phantoms that come from a spirit clime  
Through mists of her sorrowful years;  
Beautiful castles that fell to earth  
Before they were wholly complete;  
Dreams that were dead in an hour from birth  
And made Fancy seem but a cheat.

Time drops the needle; the work is done;  
The phantoms have vanished at last;  
Mother is watching the sinking sun  
And bids *au revoir* to the past.  
Knitting forgotten, her thoughtful eyes  
Are dreamily scanning the West,  
Looking for something beyond the skies—  
For heaven, re-union and rest.



WHAT MOCKERY!

---

What mockery! The costly lace  
That contrasts with the sombre pall;  
Those flowers near the cold, gray face;  
The idle tears that freely fall;  
The moan, and sigh, and drooping head—  
They are not noticed by the dead.

But when life's fabric, now lain down,  
Was yet in hand, how ruthlessly  
The threads were torn! How black the frown  
O'erhanging eyes which could not see  
That her life path was brown and bare  
And no sweet flowers blossomed there.

There were no tears and kisses then,  
No gentle hands with loving touch;  
And they but mock the sleeper when  
The kindness does not matter much:  
For she is deaf, and dumb and blind,  
And does not know that you are kind.

BABY JEROME.  

---

Out of the twilight came Baby Jerome—  
Baby Jerome, like a star from the blue.  
And the soft, happy wind  
Bearing him to our home  
Had the tones of a coo  
With its music combined.

Close to our hearts nestled Baby Jerome—  
Baby Jerome, like an innocent rose.  
And so fragile he seemed  
That we feared he might roam  
Back to heaven—God knows  
Of the sorrow we dreamed.

Clasping a scepter, lies Baby Jerome—  
Baby Jerome, like a king of the elves;  
Yet His Majesty's crow  
Calls no minikin gnome,  
For his subjects, ourselves,  
Full obedience know.

A MADDENING MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN.

---

Just another whirl to the airs of Strauss,  
And a walk in the silver night;  
Just another hour in her father's house,  
Where she reigned by a sovereign right;  
Just another dream in a sunlit time  
And a stroll by the crested sea,  
Or another dash o'er the moonlit rime,—  
But, alas! it can never be.

For it once befell that the music died  
And Diana was clouded o'er,  
And the house bereft of its joy and pride—  
When she reigned as its queen no more.  
Then I dreamed alone in a sunless hour  
As I walked on the shifting sands;  
And I sighed anon at the soft, white show'r  
As it fell from the frost-elves' hands.

Ah, the marriage chimings were out of tune,  
And the flowers were swift to fade;  
While the roses fled from her cheeks too soon  
And her feet to a Marah strayed.  
For the hand that roughly destroyed the bloom  
Was a pitiless one at best,  
And it thrust her into a hell of gloom,  
Where she yielded and sank to rest.

So I sit and dream, as I dry my eyes,  
Of a maddening might-have-been;  
Of the deadened hues of my Paradise  
And the woman I failed to win.  
Had she listened then—but what matters now,  
Since my castles were those of Spain?  
For the fates are cruel and men must bow  
To decrees they avoid in vain.

Yet the thought will come, as it ever must,  
That the fates might have been more kind  
And withheld the apple that turned to dust  
On my lips. Had she been less blind  
She would living be in an Eden fair,  
As a queen with a loving slave,  
And my lips would utter no empty prayer,  
Nor appeal to a silent grave.

LET US GIVE THANKS.  

---

Let us give thanks ; for where is he  
Upon whose path no ray benign  
Has often shone ; who cannot see  
In each fair day some smile divine ;  
Who boasts that he created all  
The happiness which was his lot—  
In brief, who owns himself no thrall  
Of One who frequents every spot ?

Let us give thanks, I say ; for none  
Are there who do not always owe  
Some joy that came 'twixt sun and sun,  
Some rose that lingered 'neath the snow,  
Some heart-throb in a happy hour,  
Some smile that cleared away a mist,  
Some sweet that mingled with the sour,  
Some patch of sky by sunbeams kissed.

Let us give thanks—to whom you will ;  
Save that it be the God we see  
In every flow'r that studs the hill,  
In every blade that decks the lea ;  
For God is Nature, after all,  
And Nature God. He lights the way  
Which Nature forms, lest we should fall—  
He errs who would this truth gainsay.

Let us give thanks. It is but right,  
Since dogs lack not a gratitude  
For kindnesses. And where's the wight  
Who'd care to have it understood  
That he was lower than a brute—  
A thing beneath the human grade,—  
In that his stubborn lips were mute  
While others murmured thanks and  
prayed.

## MARILLA.

No, she haint got all the larnin' of a literary set,  
'N she don't waste time a-dawdlin' with a pesky  
cigarette;  
But M'rilly's got a suthin' in the dawnlight of her  
eyes  
That'd allus make a feller think his hum a paradise.

I'll allow she don't know nothin' of Bee-thoven 'n  
the rest,  
'Ner about the blamed sky-rockets some calls music;  
but I'm blest  
Ef them tony gals kin tech her when she sets 'n  
plays 'n sings,  
Fer her old guitar seems happy when her fingers  
wake the strings.

She hez never wrote a poem, 'n the language that  
she speaks  
Hez a smack of old Nerbrasky thet is seldom larned  
in weeks;  
But her eyes air noble poems sich ez poets never  
made,  
'N a furrin eddication would hev spiled her, I'm  
afraid.

'N she don't wear low-necked dresses, don't M'rilly,  
though she might,  
Fer her form is jest ez perfect ez a statcher's, 'n ez  
white;

'N I never seed her drinkin', ner kerousin with the  
boys—  
Though they seemed to like her, even when she kem  
to share my joys.

Why, there's nary feller livin' ez kin say she broke  
his heart  
Jest fer fun, ez she would never stoop to play so  
mean a part;  
'N the wimmin don't abuse her, fer no womern ever  
heard  
My M'rilly utter slander 'ginst another—not a  
word.

She's old fashioned—haint she, stranger?—but I  
love her all the more,  
'N my heart begins a thumpin' when I see her at  
the door  
With the baby, smilin' brightly ez she ketches sight  
of me,  
While the youngster crows a welcome, 'n jumps up  
'n down in glee.

So I wouldn't hev her diff'rent—like the ones I read  
about.  
They hev lost the art of livin', 'n their lamps 'll soon  
burn out;  
While the eyes of sweet M'rilly, ez they look up into  
mine,  
Will be bright enough to hold me while the Lord'll  
let 'em shine.



THE WIFE.

---

I loved her in the sunlit time of youth;  
I loved her with a stripling's fire and truth;  
She won me with the soul-light in her eyes—  
Those orbs which poet should immortalize—  
And gave me love for love, laid bare a heart  
In purity the snowflake's counterpart.

I found her what my fancy painted her;  
The unschooled boy, in choosing, did not err;  
For marriage did not spoil the old time dream,  
But made the woman, wife and mother seem  
So far above the girlish chrysalis  
That oft I wondered at my boyhood's bliss.

And when the silver lingers on her hair,  
'Twill be a well-earned crown of honor there;  
When Time, with stylus keen, begins to trace  
His record, 'twill not mar her gentle face;  
For I shall love her more than e'er before,  
Nor cease to love her when this life is o'er.

## A REPORTER'S VALENTINE.

I've a pretty valentine,  
Fairer yet than any made—  
Sent to charm this heart of mine,  
Sent to banish Sorrow's shade;  
Sent to make the skies benign  
With the sunshine of her face  
And with baby hands design  
Brighter thoughts with childish grace.  
Two years old—with eyes that shine  
Like a blue-gray, sun-kissed lake—  
Is my little valentine,  
Who was sent for Love's sweet sake;  
And, like some emblossomed vine,  
She has crept about my heart,  
Wielding power I can't define  
With a baby's perfect art.  
So I keep her in a shrine—  
In a holy shrine called Home—  
Guarded there by love divine  
From whatever ills may come.  
And should she, years hence, incline  
Toward a love-shrine of her own,  
I shall miss my valentine—  
Little girls are too soon grown.

DEAD DREAMS.

---

In the song you sing there's a minor strain—  
Tell me, are old dreams dead?  
A sob is drowned in your listless mirth,  
Your smile is cold as the frozen earth,  
And your eyes' bright glow has begun to wane;  
Tell me, are old dreams dead?

On this scented page there's a half-told tale,  
Telling how old dreams died.  
The lines mean naught, but they serve to screen  
The bitter truths that are found between,  
And the phrase, "We loved!" is a hopeless wail,  
Telling how old dreams died.

If a child had crept to your barren breast,  
Tell me, would it be so?  
A fair young babe, whose uncertain hand  
Could lead you out of your shadow-land,  
Whose emollient kiss would have oft caressed—  
Tell me, would it be so?

But the child came not and the idol fell.  
Thus do the old dreams die!  
The altar-mate is a thing of clay,  
(He seemed a god only yesterday).  
And a life with him is a living hell—  
Thus do the old dreams die!

So there come new dreams of the long ago—  
Oft will these new dreams rise.  
Your thoughts drift back to the halcyon days,  
Your boy-knight comes from the peopled haze  
And you cry: "We loved!" Will he ever know  
How oft these new dreams rise?

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REMEMBRANCE.

---

They say man forgets, while a woman will treasure  
The dreams given birth when love brightened  
her eyes,  
And still thrill her heart with a touch of the pleasure  
The girl felt on seeing cloud-shapes in her skies.  
But what would you say  
If told of the vision I see in the azure  
That rises tonight from my witch-bowl of clay?

I own myself naught but a crusty old fellow,  
And there sits my wife, singing someone to sleep,  
While Time bears me on to the sere and the yellow.  
But boyhood's fair memories ever will keep;  
And locked in my breast  
Are some like old wine that the years have made  
mellow,  
Of which I partake with a connoisseur's zest.

Two loves has each man in the course of his drifting:  
The first like the breath of an exquisite rose;  
The second more beautiful, hardy, uplifting—  
A rose-vine that circles the heart as it grows;  
And one is so frail  
That life's weary winds, in their merciless shifting,  
Blow on till the petals are lost in the gale.

But, though it be fragile, the first is essential,  
Since through it the manlier passion gains sway,  
Expands 'neath the light of remembrance potential

And finds newer strength in the other's decay.  
The first is soon dead;  
Yet had it not lived, by decree providential,  
The passion now prized were a poor thing  
instead.

And so, when I see, in the smoke drifting 'round me,  
The sweet, childish face of my "maid o' the mist,"  
Who came when the best years of life had not  
found me,  
I'm grateful to her, since love's pleasures exist.  
For had she not flown  
To loosen the trammels in which childhood bound  
me,  
The love I feel now I might never have known.

The wife understands, if she pauses to reason,  
The love of the boy for the girl in the past—  
The passion that came in youth's wonderful season,  
When love's rosy flame burned too fiercely to last;  
And she will confess,  
With womanly trust, that she deems it not treason  
If one gives a thought to the old happiness.

And I, while my heart feels the old thrill I treasure,  
Look into the dark eyes that mirrored my love  
When she whom I see in the circles of azure  
Seemed one of the angels from regions above,  
And throw her a kiss,  
And thank her for sowing the seed of the pleasure  
I reap in the Eden of marital bliss.

A CHILDLESS HEARTH.

---

Tell me, my cynical, child-hating friend,  
Where is the dungeon so drear as the home  
Robbed of the sunlight a baby's eyes lend,  
Lacking the tune of her feet as they roam?

What gives the charm which her prattle would bring,  
Filling the house with a melody rare?  
What like her smile gives the moments such wing,  
What like the glint of the sun in her hair?

Ask the fond mother who sings her to rest  
What life would be if her darling were dead;  
Question the stricken whose brightest and best  
Lies where the flowers are nodding o'er head.

Go to the ones who, in childless estate,  
Live in the gloom of their imperfect days;  
Find, if you can, in their homes desolate,  
That which I gain from my child's pretty ways.

Ah, when I bask in the light of her eyes  
Joy at its highest is mocked by a sigh;  
Life would not be such a well-guarded prize  
Were our sweet flower to wither and die.

POST-NUPTIAL ICONOCLASM.  

---

If he was e'er an idol in your eyes,  
And you still love him, is it safe or wise  
To lift the critic's chisel to the form  
You fashioned when Love's dawning light  
grew warm?  
Each criticism from your velvet lip  
Unkindly strikes away a jagged chip  
Which leaves a scar to mar the symmetry  
You looked upon and deemed divinity;  
And scars, once made, forever must remain—  
The perfect figure ne'er returns again;  
And you, who heedlessly destroyed your all,  
Will mourn the demi-god who was your thrall.



THE FIELD OF ARDATH.  

---

I would that I might find that sterile plain  
Whereon the tear-drops of the weary soul  
Would fall and vitalize the soil again  
And make each mound of sand a grassy knoll,  
Wherefrom, upspringing 'neath the moon's fair rays,  
Sweet flow'rs would rise, till seas of asphodel  
Spread out before my tired and hungry gaze  
And lulled me on their gentle, perfumed swell.

Ardath, 'tis called, and on its breast I'd lie,  
Securely guarded there by unseen hands—  
By Esdris' hands—till dream time had gone by,  
And wake, perchance, in other, stranger lands.  
In some Al-Kyris of the missing past,  
My sandaled feet might wander till they brought  
Me face to face and heart to heart at last,  
With one for whom I long have sought.

My old, dead self!—my ancient self!—perhaps  
My soul would find it as I slumb'ring lay  
On Ardath's wondrous field, and span the lapse  
Of centuries that lead to some fair day  
Wherein some present loved one had a part  
And schooled me for another, later stage  
Of which I knew not, since my unschooled heart  
Recked not of any future, modern age.

Sometimes a vague and shadowy thought is mine—  
As of some life in which I ran my race;  
A light, whose meanings mind will not define,  
Breaks o'er me often when I see a face.  
And Reason has a theory evolved  
With which my soul has labored long in vain—  
My dead self's mystery will ne'er be solved  
Until I lie on Ardath's charmed plain.

## AN ECHO OF "FAUST."

"Faust" was the theme of the singers that night;  
 Fair was the singer who played Marguerite;  
 Darkly magnetic and richly bedight  
 He who had toyed with the blossom so sweet;  
 But there was one—  
 Dazzlingly fair in the nebulous light—  
 Deaf to the music, and ere the strain died  
 She had gone,  
 Gone from the box where rare jewels had shone  
 On a millionaire's bride.

Back to a home like an antarctic plain,  
 Drawn by the peers of a Lorillard's stud;  
 Back to Senility's touches again,  
 Giving for riches Youth's warm, leaping blood;—  
 Homeward she sped,  
 Striving to tear out the nettles of pain  
 Growing at will in the wastes of her heart,  
 While her head  
 Drooped at the rising of Love from the dead  
 And with shame for her part.

"She did not love him," she said, with a sneer,  
 Holding communion with self in her room.  
 "She did not love him," she sighed, and a tear  
 Fell to be caught in a rose's warm bloom.  
 "Had I been she

I would have held Faust's affection most dear,  
 E'en though his soul had been black to the core;  
     I could see  
 Naught but the mantle of love that he wore  
     Were he faithful to me.

“What do these Marguerites know about love?  
 Do they find weakness in passion divine?  
 Is it a thing to be worn like a glove?  
     How would they bear such a burden as mine?—  
     Bought like a slave;  
 Caged in a palace, like some restless dove  
     Torn from her mate ere the love-time had come;  
     In a grave;  
 Forced to be passionless, taught to be dumb  
     When another would rave.

“Had I but known what the future would bring—  
     Dreamed what a future would be without *him*—  
 I would have suffered my pride to take wing  
     Ere I invited the curse of a whim.  
     Had I but known!  
 God! why is woman so heedless a thing?  
     Would I have tortured and spurned him that  
     night  
     Had I known—  
 Known that to love and Love's messenger smite  
     Is to suffer alone?”

BOHEMIA — UTOPIA.  

---

Oh, the land of Bohemia's fair —  
Much fairer than any, save one —  
And the joys that exist for you there  
By some are ranked second to none;  
For the wine and the women and wit,  
And *soupcou* of devilry, too,  
Tend to soften Society's bit,  
Pulled hard on such fellows as you.

I remember Bohemia's wine,  
The charm of the fair women's eyes;  
The bouquet of the first was so fine,  
The second was Love in disguise.  
And the wine took the sting out of life,  
Till Time seemed a rosy-checked boy,  
While the eyes blinded ours to the strife,  
To all save a possible joy.

But I live in a much fairer land —  
Utopia, so it is called,  
Where a woman's dear eyes hold command —  
A land from the outer world walled.  
And Bohemia holds not the bliss  
Like that in Utopia found,  
Where the wine is distilled from a kiss  
And lips are too loving to wound.

'Tis a land where the wife reigns supreme.  
    'Tis Home, by a babe made complete.  
'Tis the land of which some ever dream  
    And often, alas! find a cheat.  
So, I miss not Bohemia's wine,  
    Nor long for its fair women's smiles;  
For this wife and these children of mine  
    Have charmed me with more potent wiles.

BILL NYE.

---

He battles with Time in a curious war  
And dulls the keen scythe with his wizard pen;  
While Time ages men till the smile comes no more,  
His art brings them youth and its mirth again.

A monk in the cloister of some ancient pile  
Would throw down his beads, Bill's humor to  
quaff;  
The erudite scholar who nods o'er Carlyle  
Reads Nye and banishes sleep with a laugh.

Oh, where lies the charm of the weak platitudes  
That burden the modern philosopher's page?  
We welcome the jester in sorrowful moods  
And Mirth girds his brow with the crown of  
the sage.

GOLDEN BEADS.  

---

If my heart's best drops could be petrified,  
'Twere rubies I'd give to you—  
My beloved bride, ever tender-eyed,  
The truest of good wives true.

If the skies I wish for to light your days  
Were changed by a wizard's skill,  
Then the azure rays of the sapphire's glaze  
Would please you—had I my will.

If the purest thoughts that have filled my mind  
Were made into pearls, I ween  
I'd a necklace find of the rarest kind  
And give it to you, my queen.

But instead I bring you these beads of gold—  
Love's rosary!—take them, dear.  
"Till the stars grow old, till the sun grows cold"  
My love will be deep, sincere.



CIGARETTES AND ROSES.

---

A withered rose and a cigarette  
I found to-day in a pigeon-hole,  
And gazed at them till my eyes were wet  
With tears, as memory backward stole.

A girl's sweet lips and a girl's soft hand  
Were mine alone in the dear, dead years,  
And drew me on to the Beulah-land  
Where lovers dwell in their hopes and fears.

The velvet lips were bedewed with wine  
That filled my blood with a new-found life;  
The touch I felt when the hand met mine  
My senses stirred into greater strife.

She kissed the rose ere she gave it me—  
The rose I find with my treasures yet—  
And led me, thrall'd, but from sorrow free,  
Through azure mists from her cigarette.

We drifted on till the world was lost  
And gave no thought to its stony ways;  
But, heart to heart and on smoke-waves tossed,  
We sailed in bliss through the dreamy haze.

And once I took from her fair, white hand  
This paper roll, by her lips made sweet,  
To keep for love of the fairy-land  
She lured me to in those moments fleet.

She looked at me with her half-closed eyes,  
And, laughing, said: "You will soon forget  
When naught remains of the days we prize  
But withered leaves and a cigarette."

And then—but ere I recall my speech,  
My wife exclaims, and she seems provoked,  
"Come, get these things out of Baby's reach,  
And don't tell *her* that I ever smoked!"

'TIS BETTER TO DIE.

---

'Tis better to die, leaving some one behind,  
Than to live when the loved one is dead;  
For Memory's mission to such human-kind  
Is to plant thorns in Love's crape-hung bed.

The one has no thought in death's mystical  
trance  
Of the leaden-winged moments of grief;  
For Time, to the sleeper, is but a star's glance,  
Just a stalk from Eternity's sheaf.

But Time to the other Eternity seems;  
'Tis an age ere the summons is sent  
That brings soul to soul as in brief, empty  
dreams  
Which were bliss with dumb agony blent.

A DREAM OF KARMA.

---

One night, beneath the fitful glare  
Of some street lamp, I idly stood  
And watched the crowd, which drew its share  
Of venom from my morbid mood;  
For I was lonely then and knew  
Not one in all that dreary place  
Whom I called friend. What could I do  
But pick and tear and scorn my race?  
But on my sight there dawned at last  
A winsome face, with sparkling eyes  
That scanned me archly as they passed;  
And, had I not known otherwise,  
I could have sworn that, years before,  
We two had met and loved, and known  
Another day that lived no more  
Save in this thought, now stronger grown.

One night a kindly angel came  
And guided me to where you stood,  
While someone, smiling, spoke your name  
And mine. But I, a thing of wood  
Or stone or senseless clay, was dumb.  
The gas-lights danced, the room turned  
'round;  
So quickly had the answer come  
To all my prayers—the lost was found!  
For I had lonely been—I knew  
Not one in all that dreary place

Whom I called friend. What could I do  
But think and dream of your fair face?  
And from that night, dear heart, I wooed  
As tigers woo their jungle mates—  
At times most gentle, oft times rude;  
For mine were either loves or hates.

One night I took you in my arms  
And held you fast while swift I told  
The burning tale. No vague alarms  
Bestirred you, but from hot to cold  
And then to hot you passed, and hung  
Your pretty head; then gently drew  
My face to yours, unchained your tongue  
And bade me wait and hear you through.  
A wondrous theme! How, when alone  
That night we met, it seemed that we  
Had met before and loved, and known  
A day that long since ceased to be;  
That you had dreamed and seen my face  
Long ere it came, and longed to greet  
The one whose passionate embrace  
Had made that ancient love-time sweet.

TO A FEZ.  

---

Oh, here's to my fez!—such a wonderful cap  
Ne'er was worn by old Merlin the wise;  
There's magic galore in its tassel and nap  
And it banishes mists from my eyes.  
Its red lends a rose-tint to visions it brings,  
And the Arabic letters inside  
An *abracadabra* seem, one of those things  
Which the conjurers cherish with pride.

But greater the potency gained from the fact  
That it oft crowns a woman's dark hair,  
And heightens the beauties that daily distract  
The proud lover who places it there.  
The color becomes her, brings out the rich tints  
Of her face Oriental and sweet—  
She looks like the daughter of some Eastern prince,  
With a tow-headed bard at her feet.

The baby—God bless her!—has worn it at play,  
And the tassel has mixed with the gold  
Of tresses like sunshine, her eyes of mist-gray  
Quick disarming me ere I could scold.  
For no one could take it away from her then,  
Such a quaint little picture she makes,  
As, scampering from me, she steals back again  
And with half-suppressed merriment shakes.

So, here's to my fez—'tis a wonderful thing!  
In the sad, lonely hours of the night,  
When Fancy is dull and my muse will not sing,  
I no stimulants seek in my plight;  
But go to the bookcase that stands in the room  
And appeal to my charm-laden fez.  
And lo! as I don it I'm free from my gloom  
And I revel 'mid fair images.

## VILLANELLE

She wore a gown of heliotrope,—  
A gown designed to deck a queen,—  
And I did not presume, I hope.

I wondered if my horoscope  
Disclosed her face, so fair, serene,—  
She wore a gown of heliotrope.

I wondered if my love could cope  
With anger, should it mar her mein,  
And I did not presume, I hope.

I wondered if my words could ope  
Her woman's heart, and comfort glean—  
She wore a gown of heliotrope.

Through Doubt's dim maze I sought to grope  
And clutched the future's heavy screen,—  
And I did not presume, I hope.

But when I spoke she bade me "slope"—  
An answer I had not forseen.  
She wore a gown of heliotrope  
And I did not presume, I hope

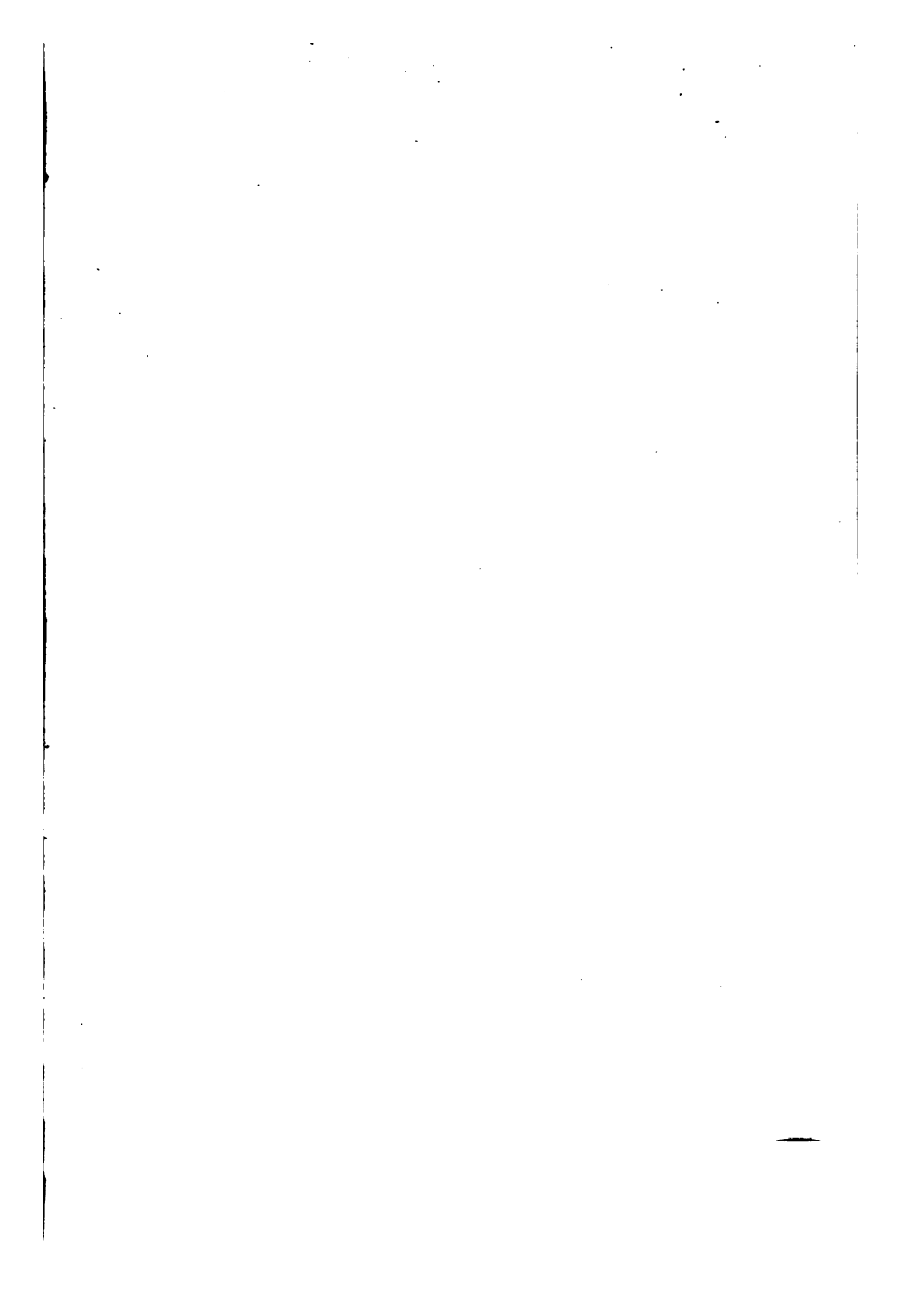


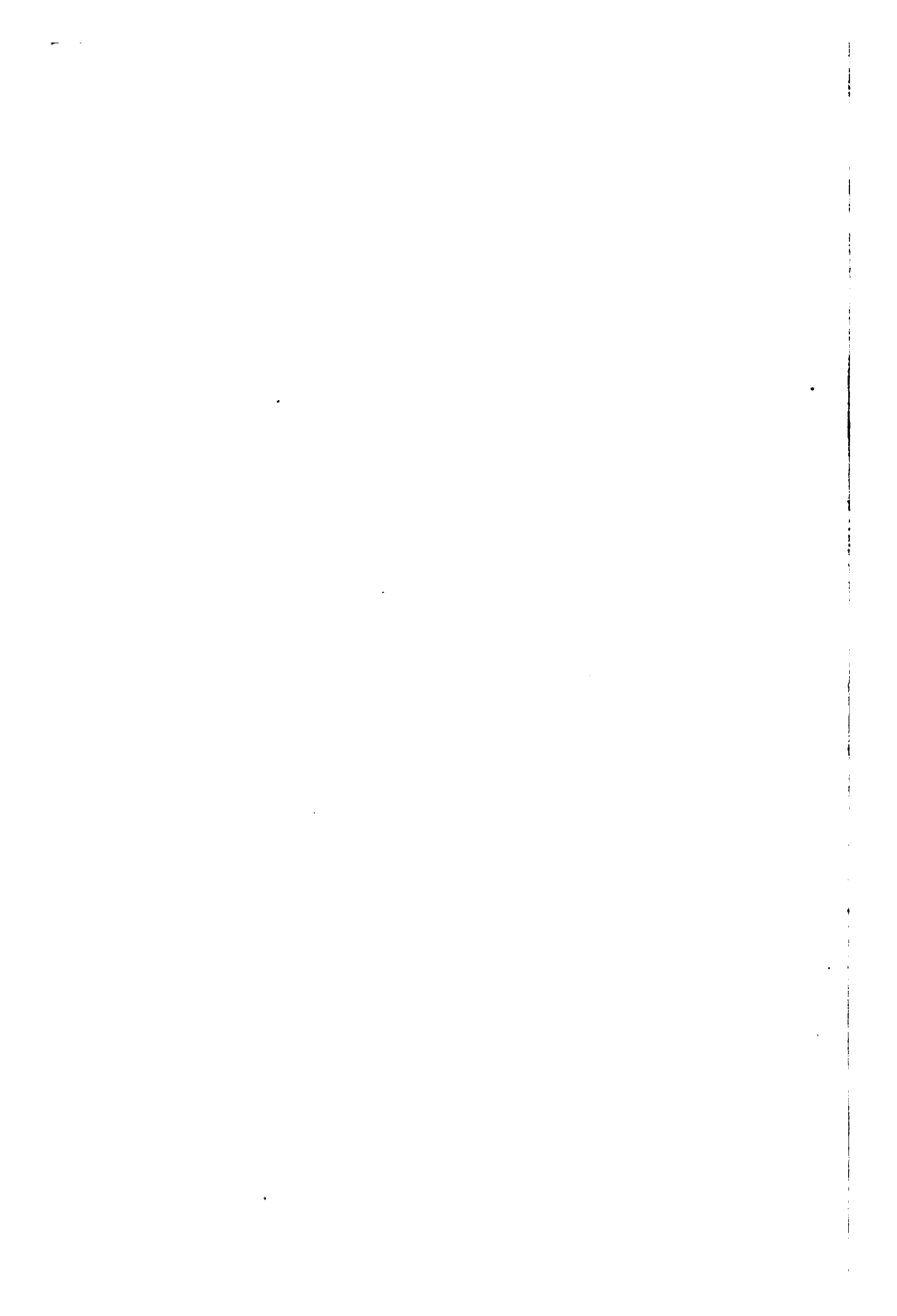
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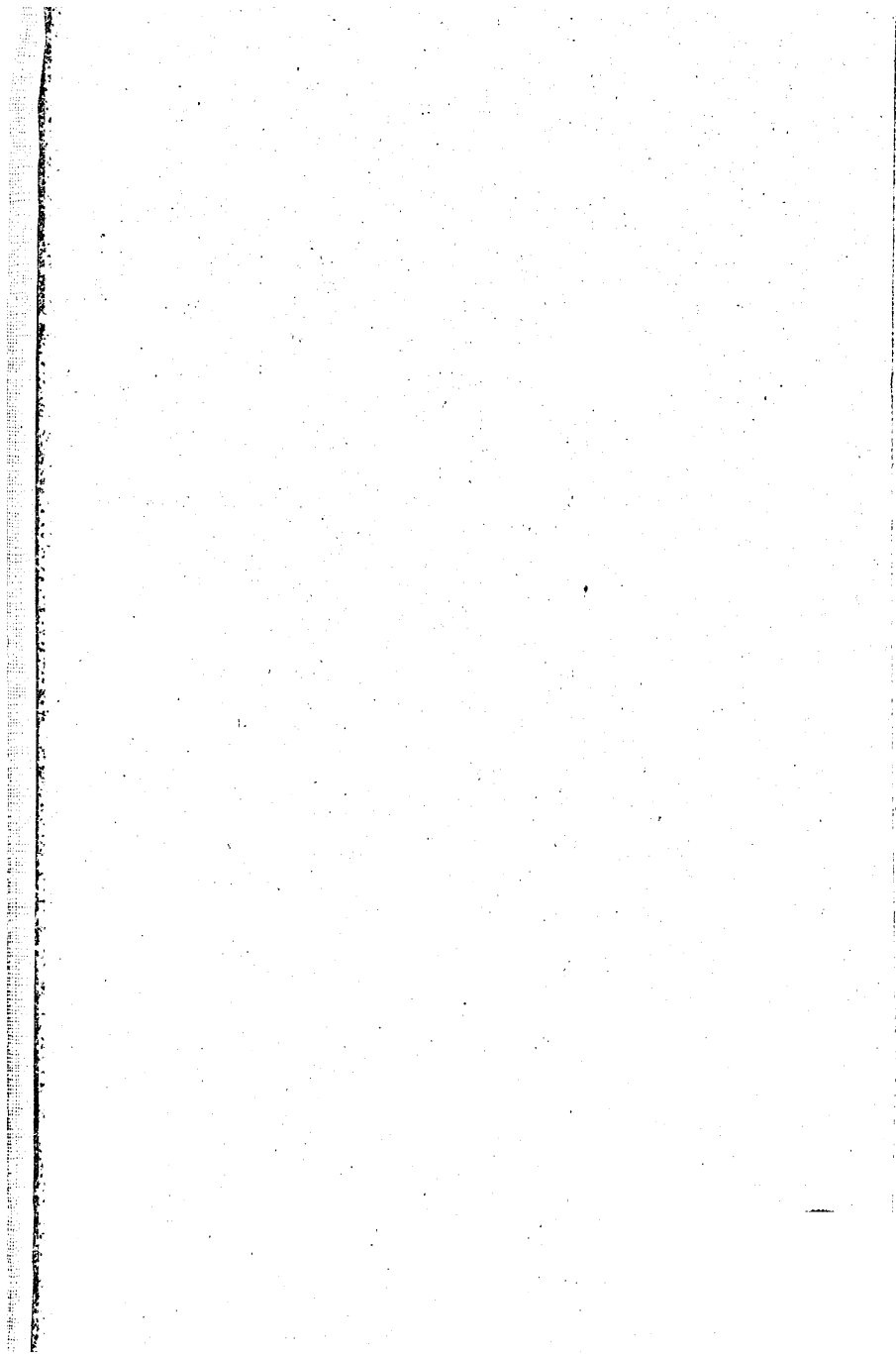
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