

Eighteen Maxims
OF
NEATNESS AND ORDER.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
AN INTRODUCTION.

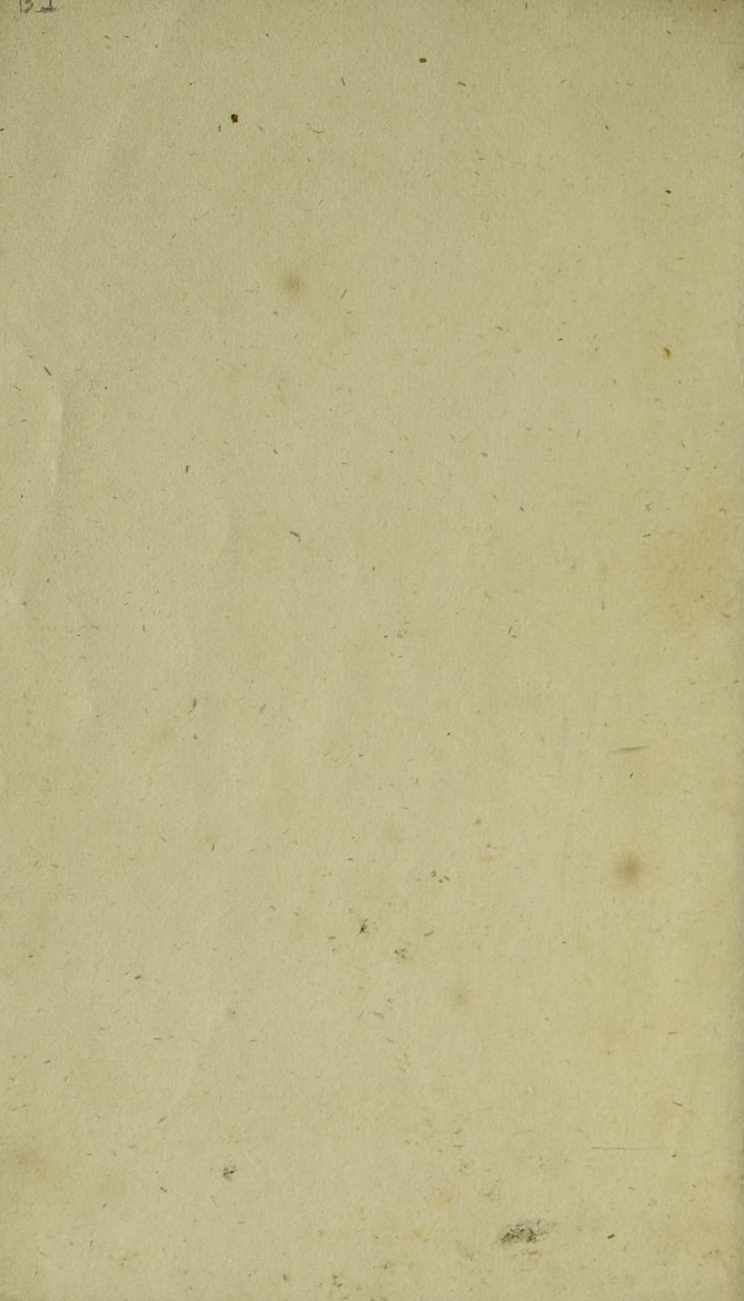
BY
THERESA TIDY.

“ For want of a nail the shoe was lost,
“ For want of a shoe the horse was lost,
“ For want of a horse the rider was lost,
“ (Being overtaken and slain by the enemy,)
“ And all for want of care about a horse-shoe nail.”
Poor Richard.

THE SIXTEENTH EDITION.
With some Additions.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD AND SON,
187, OPPOSITE ALBANY, PICCADILLY.
1823.

Price 9d.



*A Field
Sketch*

EIGHTEEN MAXIMS
OF
NEATNESS AND ORDER.

Printed by S. Gaskell, White Lion Street, London.

EIGHTEEN MAKING
OF
NEATNESS AND ORDER

Printed by S. Gosnell, Little Queen Street, London.

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INTRODUCTION.



“ OH, Mamma, what can be so tiresome
“ as a lecture upon neatness, which that
“ Mrs. Tidy talked of giving us some
“ rainy morning ! I am sure we are
“ always employed, and never idle ;
“ and when we have so little time to
“ prepare for our masters, it is quite im-
“ possible to give up any of it in putting
“ our things in their places, and keeping
“ them all in prim order.”

Such was part of a conversation which
passed a few days ago at the breakfast-

table of Lady —— and her daughters, after one of them had been lamenting the loss of a French exercise, which she had been preparing for her master; while her sister was begging the loan of a pencil to finish her tambour pattern for a gown which was to be worn in the evening; and a cold dish of tea was standing for a third, who had not yet made her appearance in the family group.

Alas! Order is an ill-fated topic of eloquence with the class for whom it is designed, for it is impossible to fill their minds with a due sense of its dignity and importance. From the days of Mrs. Teachum, who related the tragical fate of the Miss Watkins's (those victims of

delay and untidiness), to that in which Mrs. Barbauld introduced to the world her elegant little allegory of the two fairies, Order and Disorder*, the subject remained in hopeless neglect and disgrace; and even since that benevolent attempt, matters have not much mended. What then can be expected from the effort of an individual, whose name is unknown in the annals of literature? Be it, however, remembered, that the exertions of a mouse once delivered a lion from his toils; that the cackling of geese saved the Capitol; and let the following hints, which may appear

* Vide Evenings at Home.

minute and trifling, be received with candour, as laying the foundation of those feelings and habits which are to form part of the female character. If begun at the age of eight, they will have reached a happy maturity by that of eighteen. Nor let the brothers of the misses in question, shake their heads at the old lady's preciseness; for it is no less worthy the attention of these future lords of the creation. Order and regularity are qualifications essential to the character of even a hero, and may be called the life and soul of military discipline. The manual exercise is comprised in a certain set of motions; and the following rules are intended to

establish a mechanical habit of exactness in the daily labours and duties of life. By the fashionable and affluent description of readers, this system, which embraces also the cause of economy, may perhaps be disdained, since money may be supposed to supersede the necessity of all trouble of this kind. Let these then be reminded, that liberality, domestic comfort, and even elegance, are the happy fruits of it; for the money spared from waste may add to the stock destined for charity; the time rescued may be employed in a thousand ways to their own improvement; and the invisible attention of the mistress can alone ensure the regularity of the servants, and the real

enjoyment of the most luxurious establishment. If time is the stuff that life is made of (as Poor Richard says), it may be added, that order and symmetry are the stuff that *beauty* is made of: and if independence is one of the chief ingredients of human comfort, no fine lady need despise the task of employing her hands as well as eyes in arranging the *ménage* which is the scene of it. By these means, she will be better prepared to enter a cottage, should the changes of human life demand it from her; and many a cottage has more true elegance than an ill-arranged villa. A young woman brought up in the lap of luxury, is sometimes destined to marry

a man of small fortune, which quickly changes her ideas, and reconciles her to a different scene ; but without some previous exertion in this instance, she will be dismally wanting in one of the qualifications necessary to make her fireside comfortable.

Allow me, gentle reader, before I conclude my apology, to advert to the revolution which has taken place, since the period when our grandmothers presided over the apartments we now inhabit. Then, were bare to the very quick the walls and floors which now are covered and loaded with excrescences ; then, were a sofa and a set of stuffed-back chairs, ranged in a semicircle round the

fire in winter, and the window in summer. The Pembroke table never forsook the wall, except to receive the tea-equipage (where the young mistress presided), nor did the pier table step forth from its station, except to open its verdant lap for cards. Face-screens and footstools were luxuries unknown ; a large square screen of tent-stitch stood in one corner, " Where you might see the shepherd and his lass,
Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak ;"
but a range of books would have been thought contrary to the dignity of a drawing-room. In the present day, the apartment is absolutely so stuffed with furni-

ture as to require a degree of coachmanship to avoid overturning it. Chairs and sofas of all shapes and sizes ; tables of all descriptions, filled with boxes and baskets for every purpose that can be devised ; flower-stands, book-shelves, cabinets, china, musical instruments, desks, and ottomans, fill up every corner ; not to mention a profusion of books, pamphlets, and portfolios, which are scattered in all directions. Now, amidst such a variety of objects, some care is necessary to keep within the title of fashionable embellishment and elegant accommodation, what would otherwise be degraded into a mass of lumber : to

prevent this, and other enormities, is the humble attempt (in the following Maxims) of

THERESA TIDY.

EIGHTEEN MAXIMS

OF

NEATNESS AND ORDER.



I.

LET it be remembered, that litter is a hydra which it requires constant care to overcome. In a thousand shapes it haunts every room, drawer, shelf, table, sofa, and even chair; and, being left to itself, will sometimes swallow up articles of the greatest value. If the judgment of the housemaid be trusted to, all is lost: she has not patience to separate the chaff from the wheat, and often piles up the former with care, while

she throws away the latter. Many a philosopher has lost the result of some hours' calculation; many an artist has bewailed the faded and dying marks of his happiest efforts; many a giddy nymph has deplored the absence of a receipt to detect the twice offered and already paid bill; and many a pleasant invitation has been thrown into the fire, while its empty cover was left, to the disturbance of human intercourse and the beginning of jealous coldness.

II.

Never keep a professed receptacle for litter, which often degenerates into absolute rubbish, and never trust to a day of setting to rights: what is kept in its proper place never needs that trouble.

Take, as an instance, the embarrassment too often occasioned by the want of care in the lodgment of those *keys* which are not in constant use. They are, perhaps, not forthcoming when wanted, or, being laid by without a label, come in the way uncalled, to puzzle our recollection. Nay, we are sometimes almost tempted to throw away, as useless, these rusty implements which, in a moment of distress, may prove invaluable.

III.

Do not imagine that neatness and care demand any unnecessary sacrifice of time, for no time is so completely lost as in hunting for lost things; but that is so much saved which has been employed in

providing a place for every article, and by that means enabled you to find it readily even in the dark. The necessity of a neat arrangement of letters, papers, and accounts, to ensure our safety as well as to spare trouble, need not be insisted upon *.

* When adverting to the arrangement of letters, a hint ought not to be omitted concerning the comfort and advantage of *punctuality* in observing promises to absent friends. Upon arriving at the place of our destination, one of the first questions is, At what time does the post go out? If this happen to give us more latitude than we expected, how common is it to defer to the last moment the task of writing, and either disappoint our friend by silence, or despatch a hurried and unsatisfactory letter! It may also be remarked, that a striking emblem of celerity, as well as punctuality, is afforded by that conveyance of letters in this favoured country, which pursues its ceaseless progress by night and by day for the comfort and happiness of the community.

IV.

Remember that a young lady's chest of drawers is sometimes taken as a prophetic criterion of her future ménage, and may be considered as no unapt representation of the arrangement in her memory of the acquirements she has made in learning. What can be more pitiable than a heterogeneous mass of litter in the attic story, either of the human frame or the dwelling in which it resides? and what more appalling to the faculties, than to open a drawer filled with things new and old, gloves dirty and clean, paired and unpaired, skeins of silk and cotton tangled in a mass, scattered beads, bits of silk and muslin, soiled or faded ribbons, tattered notes of

business, and letters of affection cut into squares by the creases worn in them?

V.

Acquire a habit of folding or rolling up. Many a fine print or drawing has been ruined, many a cloak crumpled, and many a shawl trailed on the floor, for want of this timely neatness in a fine lady, who, even if she can afford to buy new ones, when they are spoiled, must carry a contribution of dust upon her delicate shoulders.

VI.

Be aware that dust is one of the enemies of human comfort and purity. We discover it upon a black hat, and we for-

get that the very same quantity adheres invisibly to a white one. Expose not, therefore, to its insidious attacks, any article of value either in dress, furniture, books, or pictures. If the piano-forte be left open, the desk elevated, and the music exposed all night, a frightful accumulation of dust will have taken place before the next morning, which will cling to the fingers of the performer, as well as spoil the articles in question.

VII.

Commit not to a chair the office of a table, by laying upon it books, papers, or work, still less a desk, or any thing heavy, to fall upon the toes of the first person that moves it; neither degrade

the chimney-piece by throwing implements of use upon a place destined for ornament, and dashing down or endangering the china, bronzes, or flower-glasses which dwell upon that station.

VIII.

Never sally forth from your own room in the morning without that old-fashioned article of dress, a pocket: discard for ever that modern invention called a ridicule (properly *reticule*), and remember that a pocket-handkerchief is the most disgusting and unladylike article of litter that can be exposed to view, which must often occur where there is no pocket*. It is also

* In olden time it was thought characteristic of an unbred person to come into a room, or sit

expedient to carry about you a purse, a thimble, a pincushion, a pencil, a knife, and a pair of scissars, which will not only be an inexpressible source of comfort and independence, by removing the necessity of borrowing, but will secure the privilege of not lending these indispensable articles. The establishment of needles and thread is to be kept not only ready for service, but bright in action.

down, with a pocket handkerchief in her hand. Not only is this custom introduced, but it is now too common an enormity for a young lady, when she is sitting down to her writing-desk or piano-forte, to place it by her side. This appendage, being forgotten when she has finished her occupation and goes out of the room, is often left, an unfortunate memorial of its owner and a disgrace to the apartment. Perhaps a sumptuary law might be wholesome, to prevent this article from being admitted upon the list of embellishments, by a worked or lace border, an expedient by which it has been known to usurp the empire of the fan. Vide *Spectator*, vol. ii. No. 102.

Nothing is to remain unsewed or undarned for want of a maid to perform it *. Alas ! it is a dismal thing to be a slave to that article of luxury, of which the most helpless and indolent of us may be deprived by frequent accidents. Always have a piece of work to take up at a spare minute, and particularly for evenings at home, when reading is going forward.

IX.

When you have finished your morning studies, and go out to take a walk or

* Neatness in dress is so universally allowed to be an essential qualification in a gentlewoman, that it has been thought unnecessary to enter upon the discussion of it here; but a young person who is really neat and gentlewomanlike in her personal appearance, is sometimes very deficient in attention to the circumstances above described.

dress for dinner, look round the room, that you may put in its place every thing belonging to you ; and if the chairs have been put in motion by departed guests, and “ look as if they had been dancing country dances and were out*,” either set them in their places, or take care that it be done by some one else, that, if any company come in during your absence, the room may not wear an appearance of desolation, and give an unfavourable impression of the young people who have been sitting there.

X.

Disdain not an acquaintance with common things ; and among these, the geography of the roads or streets you

* Vide Gray's Letters.

are to traverse in your morning expeditions, that you be not compelled to measure back your steps between one place and another, to the loss of time and labour. Some young people have professed entire ignorance upon this head, and trusted to the servant attending them, who would be shocked if they were suspected of being at a loss to find their way on the continent of Europe from one capital to another in a pair of seven league boots. Receive also with scrupulous care the commissions you may be intrusted to execute in your progress. A bad memory is an involuntary fault, but a wandering eye, or a divided attention (while your friend is giving you directions), is a hopeless one, since it cuts off all chance of the accomplishment of her wishes.

XI.

When you come in from a walk or ride in winter, never fly to the hearth-rug, and lounge over the fire till your shawl or pelisse is pulled off. It will make yourself chilly, as well as disturb the quiet employment of those who are sitting by the fire, and encourage indolent habits. Nor is it allowable at any time to toss your bonnet, shawl, and gloves upon half a dozen chairs or tables. Either carry them up to your own room, or fold them neatly, to remain till you dress for dinner; but never put your gloves or other articles into the crown of your bonnet, by way of basket. A whip or a cane should never be laid on a table, since, when touched at one end, it

will dash down at the other whatever comes in its way ; and remember never to throw those feet on the sofa which are just come out of the garden.

XII.

Never remain engaged in a favourite employment longer than the duties of the day will allow ; and recollect that there is often more true diligence in leaving off than in beginning. Refrain, too, from taking up a book, or even a newspaper, merely because it happens to lie before you, though unattended by any circumstance to render it interesting, as it induces a desultory style of reading, and enervates the mind. The only moment of toleration for this practice is, when we are confined to the spot by

some accidental engagement which does not allow time to provide ourselves with the immediate object of our pursuit.

XIII.

Take care to be dressed in time for dinner, by beginning to dress too soon, and let the spare minutes take care of themselves; for this does not oblige you to spend in it more time than is necessary. Many young people are so alarmed lest they be dressed one moment too soon, that by accidental, but very probable, delays, they are sometimes half an hour too late. Then the case is hopeless; the company waits in the drawing-room, or the carriage waits at the door; or else, the former sits down at table, and the latter drives away without waiting for the frightened fair-one,

who looks like a *poule mouillée*, and no one pities her *. If a friend is to call for her, the mischief is still more compli-

* Having brought my young reader to the hour of dinner, it is necessary to remind her, that to attain a degree of skill and neatness in *carving*, is an object by no means unworthy the attention of a gentlewoman. When the time arrives, in which she is placed at the head of her own table, it will be found an indispensable acquirement, though fashion has made it necessary for her next neighbour to offer his assistance, whether capable or otherwise; and when stationed at the side of the table, it is often her fate to attack a fowl, which is placed before her, and which, for want of a little practice, may chance to suffer a clumsy dismemberment. In some large families, it has been the custom for the daughters to take their turn at the head of the table, in order to relieve the mother, and to provide against their own future destination; but for the sons to be exercised in the same way is still more necessary, since they are supposed to be able to assist at the table of their friends, as well as support the cause of elegance and comfort in doing the honours of their own.

cated, as a person is involved who is unwilling to inflict this necessary penalty, and is perhaps called to account for the fault of another. One source of this misery may be discovered in the desire of appearing in a new dress, when there is not time to finish it; then are all hands at work to get it ready; the whole house is in confusion; and when put on, it is not, perhaps, half so becoming as an old one, for that has had time to adjust itself to the figure, and ease is far more advantageous to the appearance than either splendour or variety.

XIV.

When you take up a flat candlestick, wait till the candle is properly lighted, and snuff it before you take it out of the room, lest the sparks fall upon the floor

or on your dress. Always carry it upright, and permit it not to flare. To snuff a candle properly, requires the greatest skill and patience, as most people snuff it too short, which not only makes it run down, but renders it difficult to be lighted again. Remember too, never to lay down a pen without wiping it from the ink. The neglect of this custom is the cause of the distorted pens portrayed in the "Miseries of Human Life," and is enough to dismay the next person that takes up the unfortunate implement crippled with dry ink.

XV.

The delightful sciences of music and painting degenerate into nuisances by the litter they occasion, unless the greatest care be taken. The piano-forte be-

comes a mass of confusion, and the drawing apparatus an Augean stable *. Oils indeed demand a separate apartment for study ; and even water-colours bring upon the stage a long train of saucers, tumblers, plates, crumbs of bread, and fragments of rag, which require daily revision and correction, or they will look like a chemist's shop.

XVI.

Remember that the eye of a lady has a wholesome and never-failing effect

* To keep an extensive stock of music in order is a difficult, though very necessary thing, and requires some contrivance. A large piano-forte was once quaintly compared to a fat friend, who is always welcome at your table, though he take up more room than others : but if his pockets be unreasonably filled, and he should sit down with his hat and stick in his hand, you would naturally request him to divest himself of these incumbrances.

upon the neatness of the servants. If she will ring the bell to have the table wiped from any accidental drop of ink, or even water, which has left its mark upon it, or refrain from scratching it by carelessly dragging over it her boxes and implements of work, the servant will be encouraged in his labours to keep the mahogany bright by rubbing, which has always an air of comfort, not to say elegance.

XVII.

Every one who is fond of reading will naturally be careful of books, or at least be answerable that no volumes be wanting to a set; but they require constant attention, not only to be forthcoming, but guarded from injury, both

external and internal*. Books which are in daily duty, and particularly borrowed ones, should be watched over with a jealous eye, and a daily roll-call be instituted. Prints too, and drawings, are a source of constant amusement when neatly kept; but it is a melancholy truth, that not one person in a hundred is qualified to turn over a valuable portfolio. Try the first guest that comes in your way; place the folio or quarto on a table before him, and you will observe his right hand lying on his knee, the left alone is put in action, and turns over the leaves close to the hinge of the binding, to the constant danger of chipping and tearing the edges of the stiff

* Turning down the corner of a leaf, or placing an open book with its face upon the table, when suddenly called away from your studies, are customs too unlike a gentlewoman to require notice.

paper. Were books printed in the Arabian fashion, from right to left, and read backwards, the left hand would be the proper officer to employ ; but according to our method of arranging words and figures, the right hand can alone be deputed to execute the trust with safety ; and this must be placed ready to turn over the leaves at the top right hand, or north-east corner of the page.

XVIII.

If you are to go a journey, think in due time of all the articles necessary for your comfort, without being superfluous ; and let them be neatly packed up, so as to avoid loading the carriage with ill-contrived bundles, bags, or boxes. Nothing is so disagreeable as a

carriage filled with loose parcels, and the very utmost that a young person can be allowed in the inside of it, is a writing portfolio, a work box or bag, a book in her hand, and a parasol. As we are now arrived at the article of packing up, it will, perhaps, be expected that Theresa too should take her leave, a ceremony she is by no means unwilling to perform, being aware that a short visit is more likely to be acceptable than a long one; and should any jealous critic suggest articles proper for discussion, which have here escaped observation, she will gladly leave the subject in his hands, hoping, that when the right spirit is awakened in the minds of her young friends, they will remember and apply in every possible instance, these hints of their most anxious well-wisher,

THERESA TIDY.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE SIXTEENTH EDITION.



THERESA Tidy cannot permit a Sixteenth Edition of the Eighteen Maxims to make its appearance, without repeating her expressions of obligation for the candid reception which that little manual has met with from her young friends, as well as her hope, that the subject has become less irksome to them, than as represented to have been by the breakfast party of her acquaintance, mentioned in the Introduction, and that they have already culled a larger portion of leisure and comfort, than they could have thought possible, from the sole interposition of order and

arrangement. In addition to the Maxims already given, Theresa ventures to add only two or three hints.

After the first duties of the day have been performed, consider what are the circumstances and occupations which particularly demand your attention, and not only prepare to fulfil your own part, but make your appointments, and give orders to others, with precision. This is a rule never omitted by the wise mistress of a family; and till her children have learned the same lesson, they will imagine that the dinner will appear upon the table, the horses come to the door, the farm furnish its supplies, the garden its luxuries, and the bills be paid, by the touch of a fairy's wand.

And here it may be remarked, that it is no uncommon error for diligent and active-minded persons to undertake more

in a given space of time, than it can possibly allow them to accomplish; but experience will discover that this practice tends to the loss rather than the saving of that valuable article. When one thing treads upon the heels of another, nothing will be done well: the last upon the list will fare the worst, and the race must be run over again, to the fatigue of the weary traveller in his daily round of duty.

But to conclude. After all our attempts at arrangement, seasons will sometimes occur in which we must unavoidably feel overwhelmed by a multiplicity of concerns. Lose, then, no time in beginning, because you know not what to begin with; even the most trifling article upon the list will help to wind up the mind by degrees, and when the task is fairly entered upon, it will

not fail to advance prosperously; for an old saying may be applied upon the present occasion—"Take care of small things, and great things will take care of themselves." Those who are aware of the value of moments, will never be found insensible to that of hours.

THE END.

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AND NOTES OF ILLUSTRATION.

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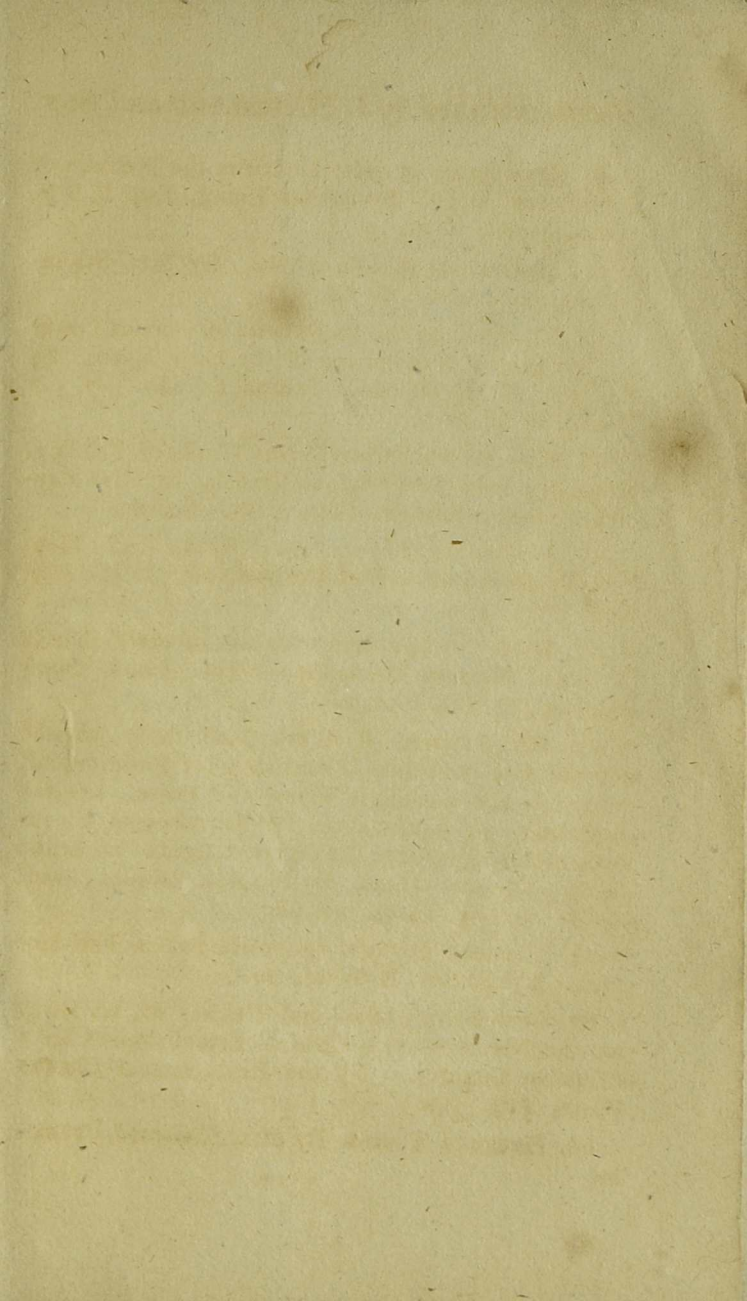
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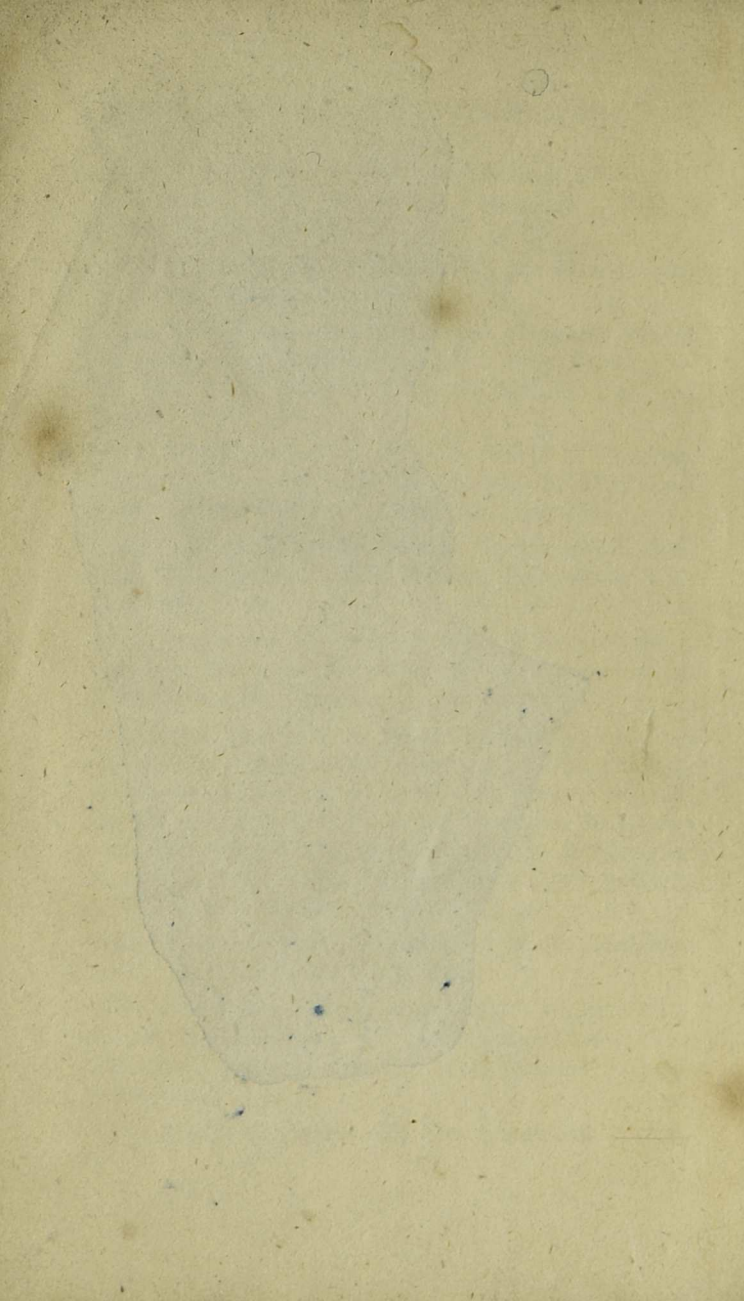
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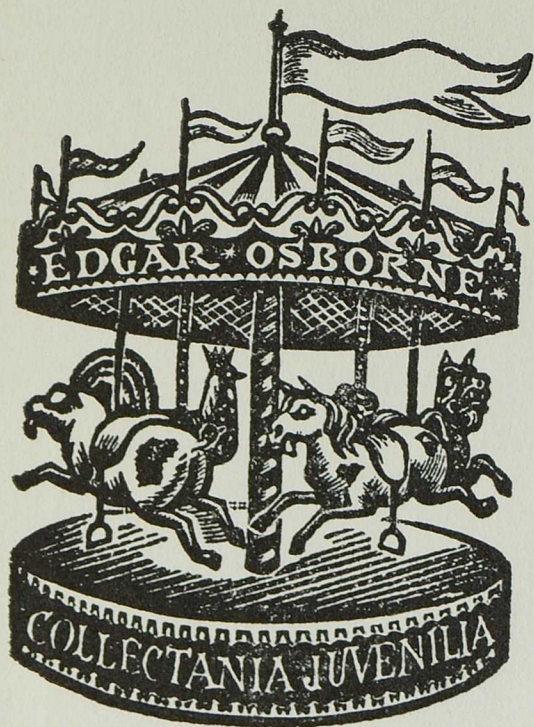
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