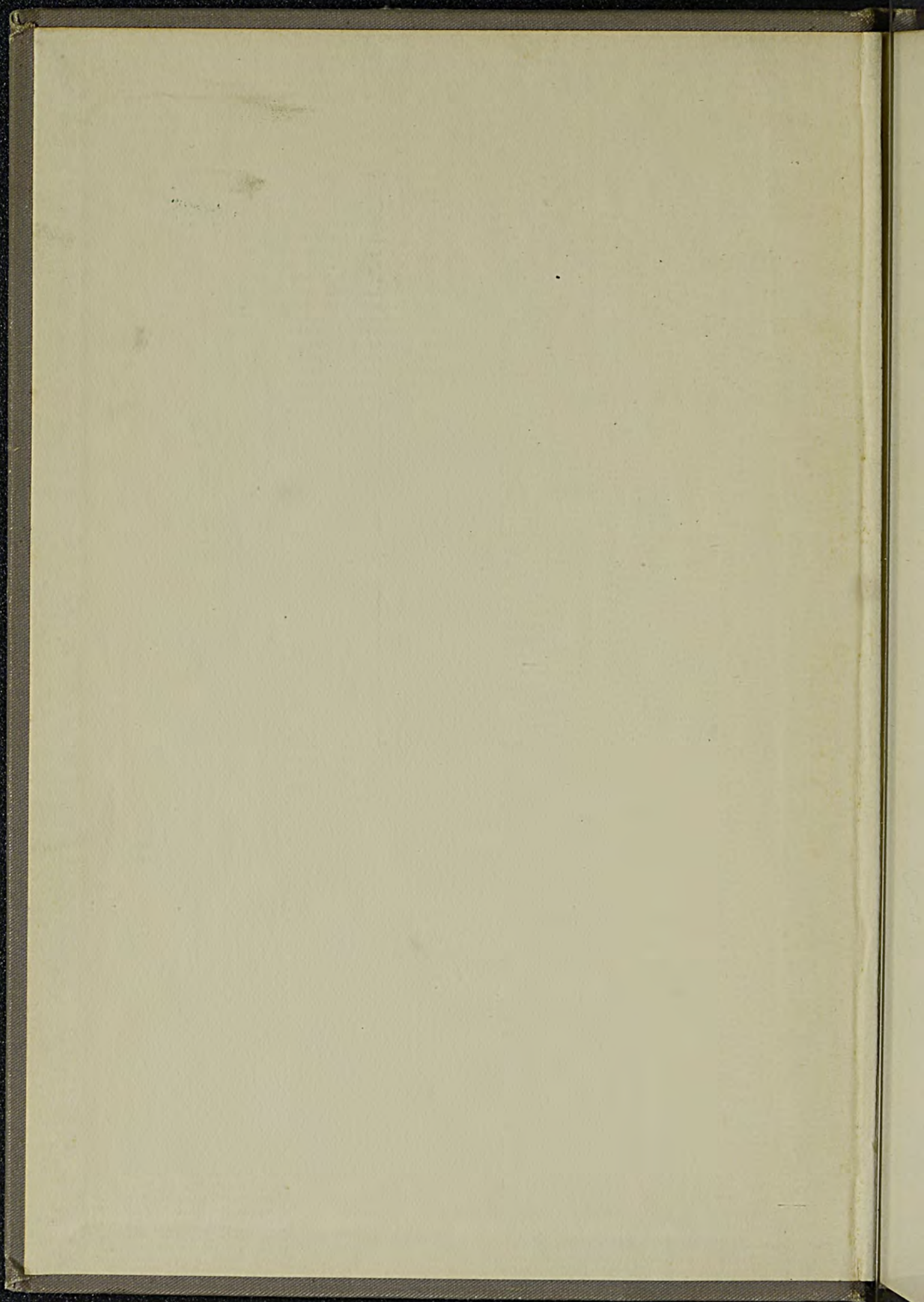


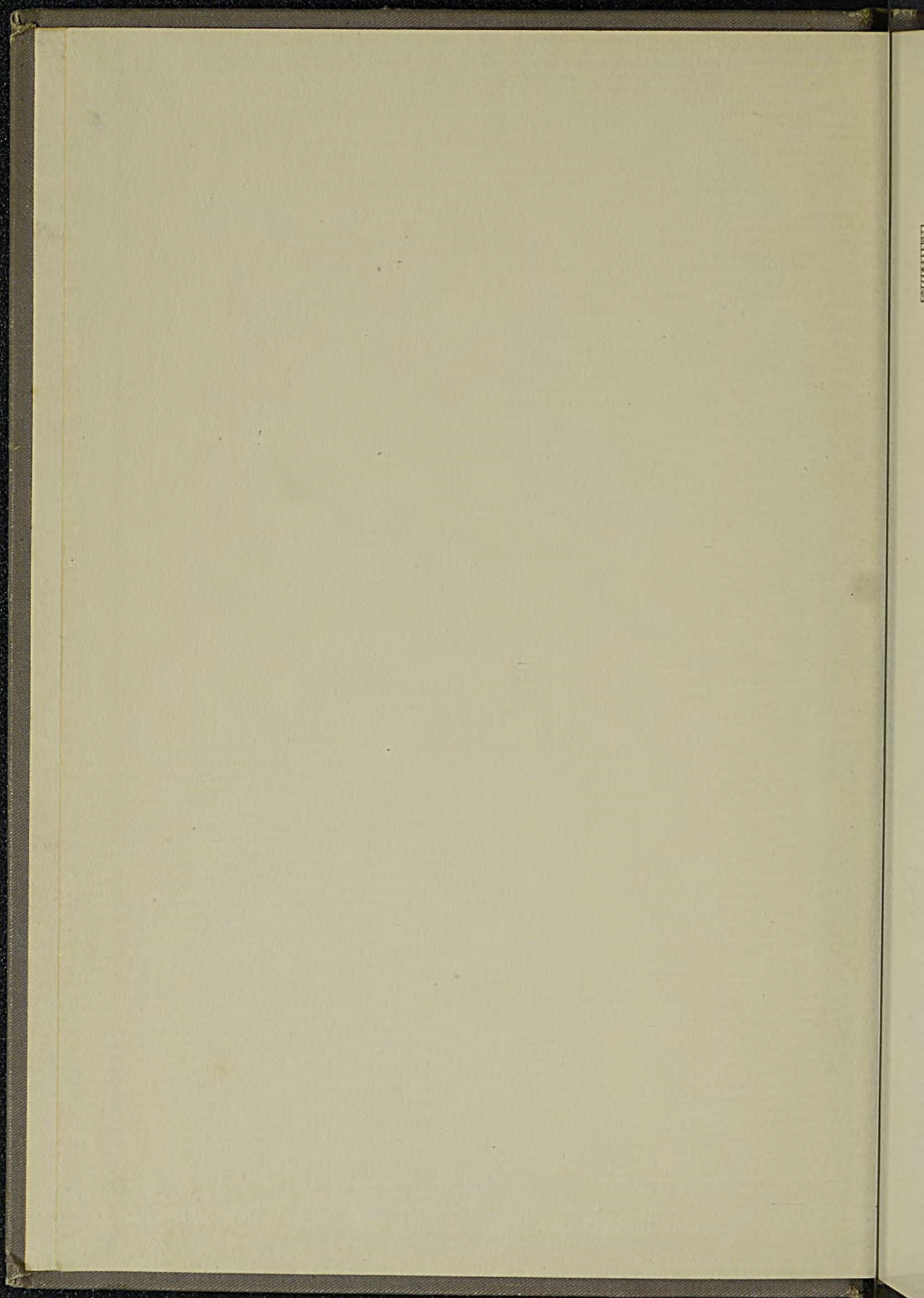
BACHELOR BUTTONS
BY FRANK CHAFFEE,
AUTHOR OF IDLE VERSES,
SONGS OF SPRING ETC.



1886
HER. L. Y.

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Corbelia G. Shaw.



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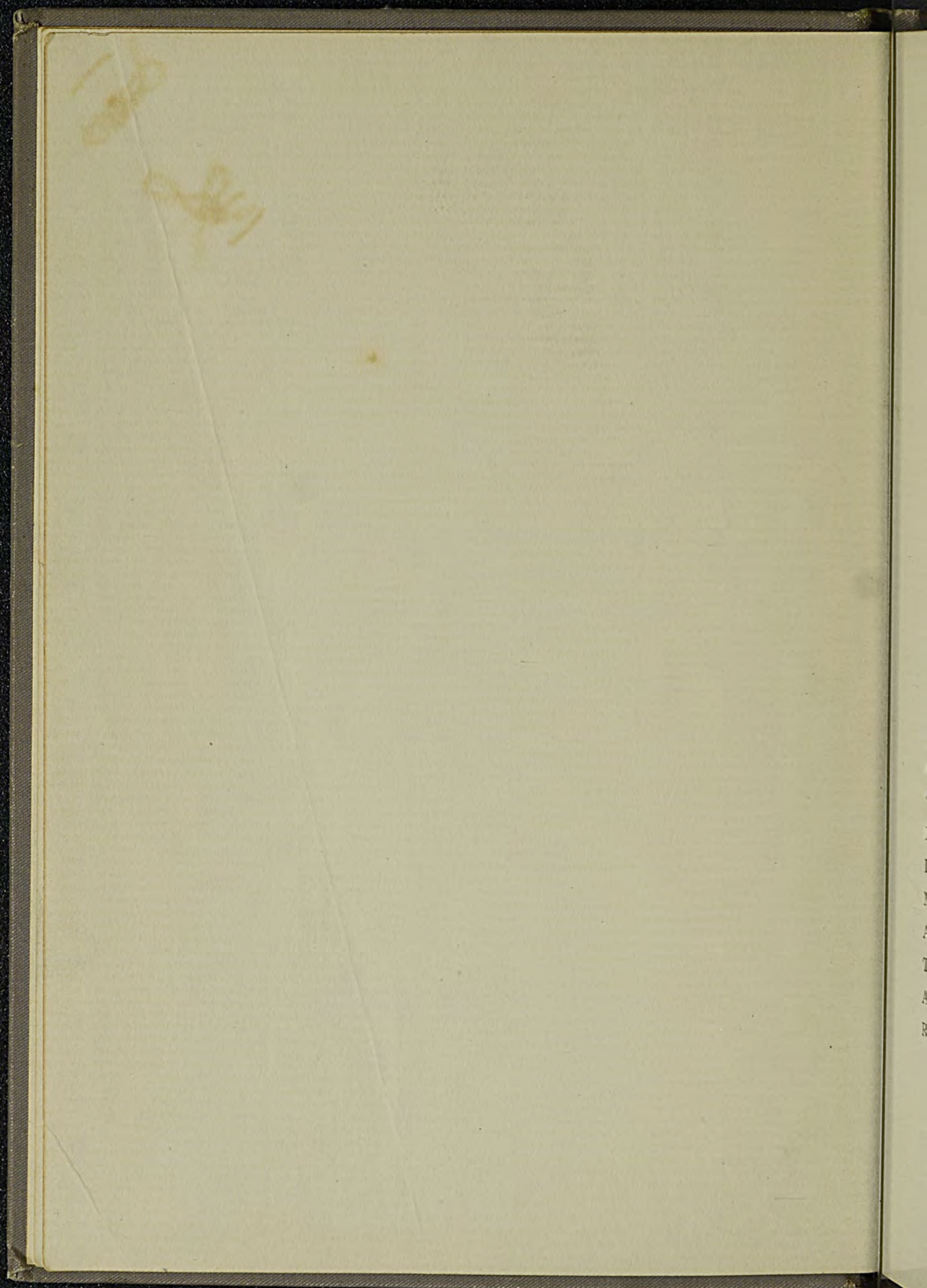
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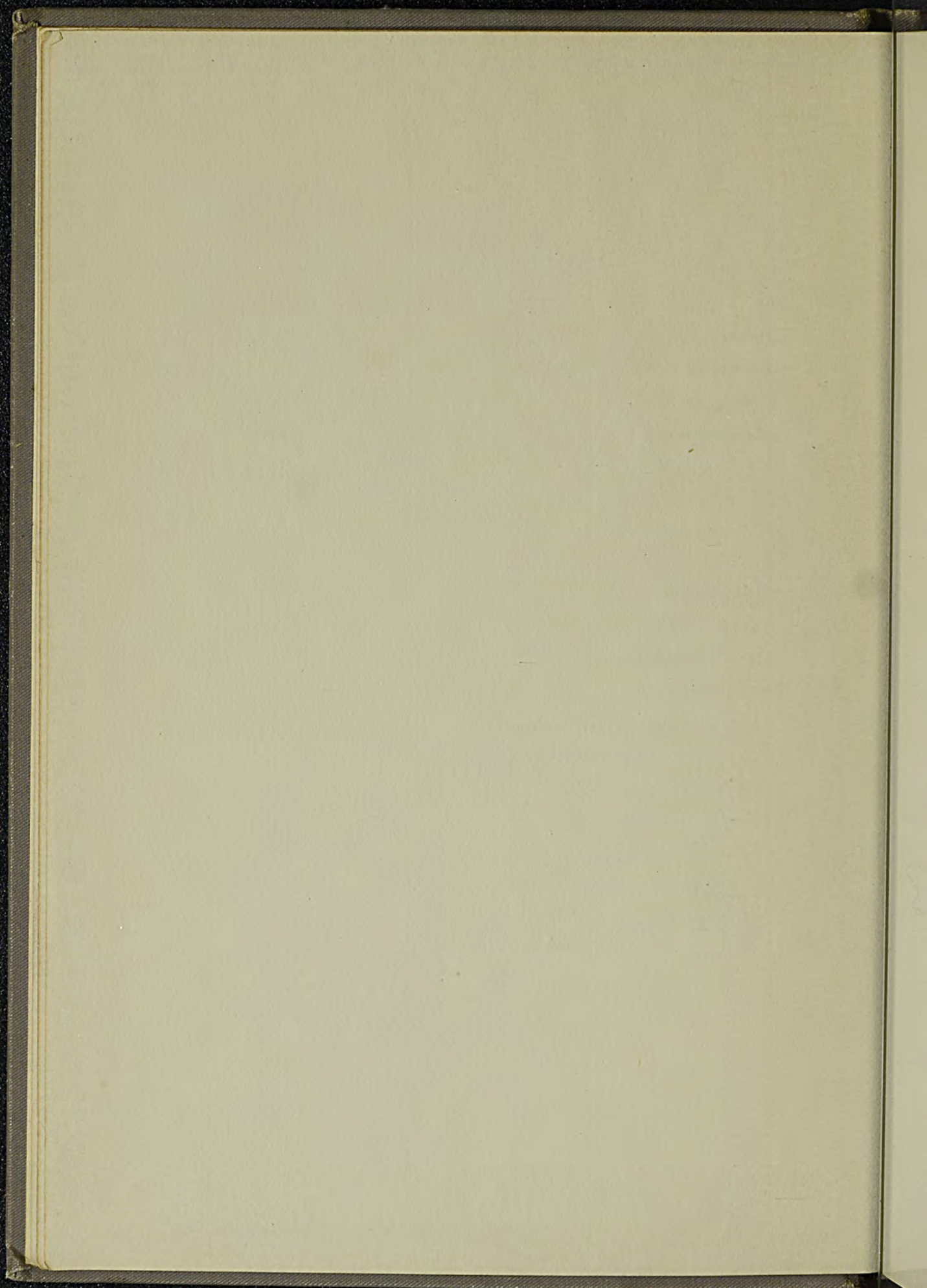
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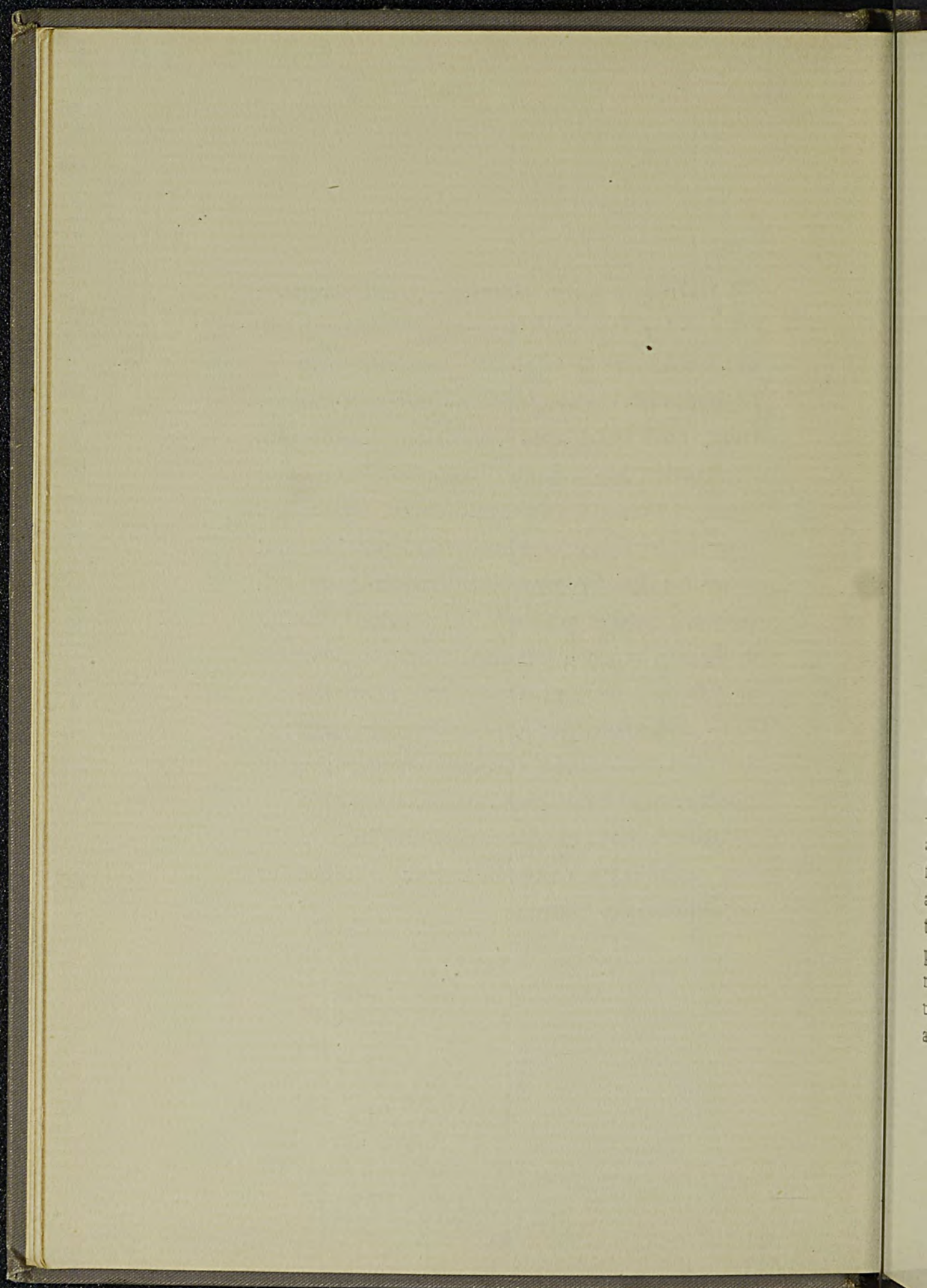


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THIS is not a book with a fixed purpose ;
not a tale with a moral, though, withal,
not an immoral tale. It does not attempt
to deal with great questions nor yet exhaus-
tively with little ones. A little of decoration,
a narrative bit, a paper 'twere bold to call an
essay, a sketch or two, and so on and so on.
'Tis but a thing of shreds and patches and
steals into good company with all due humility.
Again, a basket of chaff, in which, to kindly
eyes, perchance a grain of wheat may show ;
and last, a box of Bachelor's Buttons—all
sorts and sizes, gathered from this garment
and that—which, if you can but string upon
the thread of your mood or make to hold fast,
a pleasant thought will have found its "reason
for," and that is as much as can be hoped for
any Bachelor's Button.



BACHELOR BUTTONS.

TO fancy that a button, particularly a bachelor's button, is an inanimate object is all nonsense; it is alive, and alive with an amount of innate cussedness possessed by few other things, saving always neckties, which—but, as our Anglo-Indian friend says, "that is another story." Did you ever lose your collar button? Yes, I'll wager; and did you find it easily? No, I'll wager odds. You are dressing in a hurry, your collar button slips its moorings and drops to the floor; you look about for it; carelessly at first, for, of course, it must be almost at your feet—then with more interest—then you drop on your knees and grope for it—then you take up rugs—look in the scrap-basket—bump your head against the table corner and use language unfit for publication, and finally, by the merest accident, you overturn your slipper, almost at the other end of the room, and out rolls that pesky bit of gold. Call that inanimate? Not much—it is fiendish; the miserable little creature knows its usefulness—knows our utter and abject helplessness without it—knows

that it holds our peace of mind and contentment in the hollow of its head, and so it plays these maddening pranks to impress our slavery upon us. Other buttons share this mischievous spirit in a less degree; waistcoat buttons are particularly clever at getting themselves entirely lost, when they know that the set of which they are part cannot be matched. Suspender buttons have a playful way of disappearing; a loss you are made conscious of by a dreadful feeling as if body and soul were parting company. Someone has defined responsibility, as the feeling one suspender button experiences when it finds itself obliged to do the duty of four buttons. As for the diabolical tricks and manners of shoe buttons, glove buttons, top-coat buttons, and those most needful buttons on garments not visible, I leave some abler pen than mine to recount them.

The influence of the button is not properly estimated; it is far-reaching and direful. I knew of a chap who lost his collar button when dressing to go and propose to the girl of his heart, it took him so long to find it that when he arrived at the scene of action he found that the girl had just accepted a young missionary who took her out to the South Sea Islands, where she was eaten by the cannibals, and probably all because of that confounded

collar button. I heard the other day of a man—he couldn't have been quite the gentleman—who brained his wife with a stove cover because she had neglected to sew some suspender buttons on his sole and only trousers. I have always had an idea that Mrs. Ulysses was really busy all that long time putting buttons on the web—and, as for the Lady of Shalott, I am morally sure that she owed all her unpleasant complications to misplaced buttons. Buttons, egad!—don't tell me they are inanimate!

BACHELOR BITS.

“**B**OTHER the bachelors!” exclaimed the cleverest woman at a meeting of the cleverest women in New York the other day.

Bother the bachelors? Indeed, dear madam, your charming sex has done that, all along the time since the little episode in the garden, called Eden. “The plague o’ our life and yet how sweet.”

Most clever lady, do not, I pray you, condemn us at one fell swoop and say, “bother the bachelors all.”

Remember in your impatience at least two things; first, that in your concentration of effort at individual reform you withdrew the inspiration from many a bachelor.

Again, mark you this, some men are born bachelors, a few achieve bachelorhood, while by far the most of us have this state of single cussedness (an’ ye will) thrust upon us.

The arguments in the case, *pro* and *con*, are many, and the field too wide for me to compass, but I would fain ask, oh, sapient madam, one question—would you recommend a man

whose taste is only for *marrons glacés* to ruin his digestion and spend his life in a vain effort to be content on a diet of molasses taffy or peppermint stick?

You view us from the vantage ground of the inner circle of a happy home, a one-time bachelor its guardian, and, sad though be the thought, a possible bachelor its light and life; while we, alas, must talk back from what you have been pleased to call, in a recent article, the "circumference of home." Truly, our possible discontent may not reach you, and from your point of view, to pity us would not be consistent.

Bachelor home-making—it does sound a bit paradoxical, does it not? and yet, you know, we have to live just the same as other people; have to eat, and sleep, and have an abiding place just as much as if we all had wives to meet and greet us (perhaps) and youngsters to demand needed shoes or desired sweets (inevitably).

We may, or may not, consider "marriage a failure." We may, or may not, know that of the marriages contracted in this country an actual quarter are terminated by divorce, and hesitate at aiding to make it a half at the next census taking. We may be cynical duffers, with a disbelief in the divine unselfishness of love and a rooted aversion to curl-papers; in

fact, we may, or may not, be a host of things; but surely in all of us the spirit of self-preservation is strong, and an abiding place, if not a home, we all insist upon, and you see, to one who has not seen the sun, a Rochester lamp seems a very good light indeed. So to us who have not enjoyed the "within the circle" happiness, our more or less artistic camping places on the "circumference" seem not so bad after all.

The increase in the number of these poor chaps, doomed for a time to walk this earth alone, is undeniable. Here we are; that we are *as* we are may be regrettable, but the melancholy fact remains, and we can only ask, with the Indian and the negro, what are you going to do with us?

This problem is largely solved by the many houses builded in apartments, in which, for a usually very considerable consideration, the bachelor may set up his Lares and Penates in at least a very tolerable imitation of a home.

Have you ever paid a visit to any of these periods on the line of circumference? If you will do me the honor one day of climbing to my den up in the top of the St. Anthony, I will show you my illustration of how a bachelor may live; true, it is up a'many stairs, but I will give you a cup o' tea, which will refresh you, and will show you some rooms, unique, in

that their decoration is for the most part the work of the hands of the bachelor who enjoys them.

You see, I am not one of the bondholder bachelors, who can go to Messrs. Herter, or Beck, or George, and say: "Gentlemen, here are my rooms, make them to blossom as the rose"—on the contrary, if my small bush blossom at all, it must be as the result of my own troweling and sprinkling.

Shall I tell you how I have done it? It may interest you to know how one poor bachelor has struggled to make habitable his resting-place, and I modestly hope it may give you a little better opinion of the home-making ability of my offending class.

In the first place I secured my rooms—one large, well-lighted and airy, the other a cozy little sleeping-place—the two connected by large, double doors. The St. Anthony was new, and the walls a glare of white plaster; the woodwork, fortunately, was good, simple pine with an oil finish. My first work was to get my walls into possible form. I did that by covering them with ingrain wall paper of a warm, terra-cotta shade; for a frieze, I used a paper which is made to put under carpets; it is a cream-color, covered with indentations like nail-tops. After my frieze was up, I dusted these nail-tops with bronze, and the effect

was very pretty; a copper picture molding was added, and my walls were ready for pictures and drapery.

My windows were high, and I did want some open woodwork to put at their tops, but that was very expensive, so I devised as a substitute some frames of pine to match my woodwork, into which I laced a heavy cord, making a network, which I gilded; the result was very effective. From the bottom of these frames I hung my curtains, a dull silk in stripes of terra cotta and old yellow, with sash curtains of white muslin tied back with white ribbons.

My floors I stained a very dark red—it is not difficult to do—and the rooms looked like quite another place. I had a few good rugs, to which I added some straw mats and a strip of rag carpet, which is my special pride, and my floors were in condition. My furniture is made up of odd bits, picked up here and there, some book-shelves bought at a bargain, a china-closet made of a raisin box, painted and with a glass door.

A most sumptuous and expensive-looking divan has for its foundation a couple of packing-boxes and a cheap mattress, over which is spread a Bagdad curtain; on this divan is a riot of cushions—my one luxurious dissipation—cushions large and cushions small, cushions

grave or gay, redolent of perfumes, and inviting to the weary head.

Over the divan a swinging, iron lamp, and some shelves, with Turkish curtains before them, complete quite an Oriental-looking corner. My door panels I have decorated with conventional designs painted on blue linen; the gas globes are covered with paper lanterns, which soften the light very pleasantly.

For the large doorway I have first a curtain hung straight, of bamboo and beads—not, believe me, one of those you see in the shops, but one made from bamboo—cut in short lengths and strung upon cords, with large green or clear glass beads between, and each strand terminated by a tiny bell, so that one's coming and going is heralded by a musical tinkle. Outside the bamboo curtain hangs a pair of portières made of coffee sacking, decorated with rings of plush and fringes of Chinese coins. Here—though I blush to tell it—I was obliged to call in feminine aid, for handle a needle I cannot, and the plush rings must be sewed upon the curtains.

The terra cotta walls make a pretty backing for pictures, mirrors and drapery.

A mantel is between two of the windows, draped with an artistic old curtain; over it a water-color, bearing the legend:

“Oh, the Ingleside for me!”

and beneath, a cheerful log burning on my old fire-irons, make up an establishment not so unhomelike as might be, and when, of an evening, the "blond young man" drops in and we draw our chairs before the fire and enjoy that tête-à-tête of intimates, which needs no effort of entertaining, puffing great, fragrant clouds of smoke, gazing into the fire, and indulging in the always delightful reveries of a bachelor, the whole thing is, as our friends across the briny would say, "not half bad."

I think I should almost remain a bachelor for the pleasure of those same reveries, the dreams of possibilities, which realized, would lose half their charm.

Fancy a man reverizing with a wife beside him, arguing the desirability of a new kind of weather strip or urging the merits of a patent clothes wringer!

Not long ago it was considered effeminate for a man to have a decorative and artistic room; a pair of foils, a fishing rod or two, or a pair of Indian clubs might be permitted, but drapery, dainty bric-à-brac and luxurious pillows, ye gods, no! A man having such was considered ultra refined, and regarded with almost contempt by his probably not more athletic fellows.

Now behold the progress of the time; some of the most artistic, luxurious and beautiful

rooms in New York are the bachelor quarters where members of my selfish class lead their not always useless and selfish lives.

Up in the top of a swell apartment house, not far from Gramercy Park, are a number of tiny rooms rented to bachelors. A dozen or so light-hearted fellows, all more or less artistic in temperament and taste, occupy them.

They vie with one another, these clever fellows, in pretty and unusual decorations for their rooms. The result is in every case charming.

You go into one little room, and looking across you see, through softly-parted curtains, another room of equal size and similar decoration; and until you step over to draw the curtains you do not discover the clever trick, which is simply strips of looking glass fastened to the wall at the parting of the curtains.

In this same room is a pretty frieze, made of palm-leaf fans, finished alternately in gold and silver.

In another room one side wall is covered with a fish net, in which are tangled many fish of many colors; you can buy such fish, if you are minded to try the scheme, at any of the Japanese shops.

The next room has a frieze of the corrugated paper designed for packing bottles, cut in

squares and tacked up with ornamental nails, so that the corrugations on alternate squares run in different directions.

The side walls are done in burlaps, laid on flat, and covered with chrysanthemums stenciled on in metallic colors.

Down on Washington Square is another bachelor haunt—that quaint old building about which always hangs the romantic atmosphere of “Cecil Dreeme.”

High up in one of its towers dwells my little artist friend, a veritable Bohemian, in rooms so tiny that when he first secured them and I inquired how he liked his new quarters, he responded: “Very much, but I don’t call them quarters; they are too small; I call them *eighths*.” Do you suppose, had he a wife, he would ever have gotten into rooms small enough to say so witty a thing about? The artist’s “eighths” are, perhaps, more like studio and workshop than home; still, there is a pleasant air of comfort and many novel bits of decoration.

In that great city across the river—that “city of the future”—the bachelor’s lot is quite a happy one, and his state of bachelorhood is apt to be transient.

Brooklyn offers little inducement to the really confirmed bachelor. The young unmarried man in the City of Churches usually

does his home-making in a boarding house, where he is made so much one of the family that he must be a very hardened case indeed if presently he is not truly one of the family, as attaché to a sister, cousin, or aunt of the house.

I only know one set of real bachelor quarters in Brooklyn, and therein the "blond young man" has established himself; beautiful rooms, containing all that refined, artistic taste can suggest or clever hands construct, and yet about all an air of *mannishness* that is unmistakable.

Bachelor homes are made sometimes in queer places. I know one man who has some charming rooms over a *stable*—rooms as dainty and as artistic as if fashioned for Madame la Marquise.

The society which many bachelors in New York most affect is very delightful. It is mostly found in that pleasant land that lies just between Vanity Fair and Bohemia, a country whose inhabitants number all sorts and conditions of men—and women—and the passport across whose border is only to be kindly, and witty and wise.

There are many delightful and homelike bachelor living places, all in and about our busy city, *some* where the foot of charming woman never falls; more that are brightened

now and again by exploring parties from the world, who come to a bachelor "afternoon tea" or an evening "at home" in Singleman's Land, bringing to our lonely quarters the bit of needed brightness, just as a man who may not have a conservatory or a garden may now and then brighten a day with a knot of violets or a bit of mignonette.

To be sure there are bachelors and bachelors; some are satisfied with a hall bedroom with its usual encumbrances, but most of us do care a bit for the amenities of life and have made efforts to gather about us pleasing and comfortable household goods and gods. Some of us like it; some of us *don't*. The situation of many reminds me of a little story I heard the other day: A charming girl in Brooklyn—that city of charming girls—has a Sunday-school class of seven little maids. One Sunday, just before the recent election, the conversation in class (after the lesson, let us hope) turned upon politics. Six of the little maids, with their teacher, were stanch republicans, the seventh was as stanch a democrat. Party feeling waxed high, and the six little protectionists drew their skirts away from contact with the little free trader and crushingly sent her to Coventry. The little one stood it for some time, until human nature got the better of her, and, with brimming eyes and a sob in

her voice, she cried: "Teacher, I wish I *wasn't* a democrat; I think republicans are much nicer; I don't *want* to be a democrat, but I *have to be!*"

MADEMOISELLE.

MANY years ago, away on the outskirts of the little village of Coigneres, which nestles, you must know, on a green hillside not so many miles away from Paris, lived a simple-hearted peasant and his wife. To the cottage of these simple folk there came one day a little, black-eyed stranger, a tiny mademoiselle. Their happiness at this gift of heaven knew no bounds. The roses felt the gladness and clambered afresh up toward the cottage thatch. The fowls about the little yard, and the donkey in its stall, knew the importance of the occasion and set up a dreadful cackling and braying by way of celebration. The sky seemed to be more deeply blue than usual, and the white, fleecy clouds floated tenderly over the cottage, as if they would offer their services, perhaps as coverlids for the couch of the new little maid.

Presently from madame, at the beautiful château on the hill, came down a friendly message to Jean and Marie, and some substantial gifts for the little one.

Time rang out its silvery bells, and the years flew joyously by at the little cottage. The tiny mademoiselle grew apace, and was named, like her mother, Marie. By and by, when she was grown quite a girl, and the bit of a mirror in her white-curtained little room had told her truly that her eyes were very bright and that her hair was very bonny, the kind madame from the château looked upon her with favor, and said that Marie must surely come and live at the château and be a maid with a saucy cap and a smart apron.

Then in the thatched cottage there was much sadness and a little pride—sadness at giving up to the great world their only little one, and pride that their mademoiselle should be chosen to go and live among the grand people on the hill. Again the roses knew what was the matter and drooped sadly on their stems, and the fowls and the old donkey went about in a dejected way, and up above there were no tender, white clouds, only a dull, gray sky.

In the heart of Mademoiselle, however, was only gladness. She was to see the great world, she would learn to read and to enjoy books, and she would travel away with the gracious madame and visit strange and beautiful countries. So the little mademoiselle kissed the sad-eyed Jean and the brave little "maman"

and went merrily up the hill, her heart full of the joyous anticipation of the untried, as is ever the way with the young.

Again Time's silver chimes rang on and the years go drifting by, and many a change has been wrought by the ringing of the bells. Down under the thatched roof of the cottage there has been much of sadness. The patient eyes of Jean have closed to open no more. The brave little mother is left alone to train the saddened roses and care for the little garden, and to drive into the village with the weekly load of flowers and vegetables. Mademoiselle cannot be spared from the château just now, for even the tiled roof and the splendid curtains cannot shut out trouble; and the gracious mistress of Mademoiselle is fast following the faithful Jean.

A little later and Mademoiselle, now truly grown a woman, must leave the great château and come back to live under the thatch, for the grand madame has gone, and the château has now no place for the pretty maid. After a little Mademoiselle finds that the tiny farm, under the care of two women, cannot yield both a livelihood, and so she must go out again into the world and find the means to care for herself and to make more comfortable the now aging mother. So she goes away to Paris to some kind friends there, who help her to some

employment. But Mademoiselle is not the kind of Frenchwoman to be happy in Paris, and meeting an American family in search of a nursery governess, Mademoiselle decides to accept the position, and to cross, with her little charge, the broad Atlantic and try her fortune in the land which offers such glorious possibilities to the stranger.

Mademoiselle goes for one hurried visit to the old mother and asks her blessing—leaves assurance of many letters, which the dear old priest will read to the lonely mother—talks cheerily, too, of the comfort that shall be when Mademoiselle, grown quite rich in that far country, comes back to care always for the little mother and the thatched cottage and the roses. With tears very near the great, black eyes, and with a sad, long look backward, brave-hearted Mademoiselle starts on her long journey—first to Paris, where she joins her patrons, then over to England, where she has once been with the dear madame, whose loss Mademoiselle still mourns, and then upon the great ship and out across the glorious ocean, that is such a revelation, and after awhile up through the beautiful harbor to the great city which seems noisier and more hurried than anything Mademoiselle has ever seen—finally, to the sumptuous home of her little charge.

Life here seems very strange to Made-

moiselle. The sombre elegance of the house in which she is employed oppresses her. She learns to speak a charming mixture of French-American-English with great rapidity, and for a time all goes well.

Time's bells meanwhile have rung more changes. The little pupil has outgrown her governess and been sent away to a fashionable school; Mademoiselle is urged to remain with the family as companion and maid, and this she tries for a time. But it proves, as she quaintly puts it, "Too dead; too dead," and Mademoiselle seeks a place in the great shops.

If it be true that "a woman is only as old as she looks," then, indeed, is Mademoiselle not a day over twenty-two; but if one desires to be exact and consults the register away in Coigneres, they will find that the sparkling eyes of Mademoiselle have been sparkling many more years than that; in fact, that the silver bells have thrice rung out a decade since the morning that brought such joy to Jean and Marie and the roses.

But what is time to a Frenchwoman?

Given a pair of eyes black as night and brilliant as morning, teeth white and even, and masses of the glorious hair that is the crowning beauty of the women of France, and the charming Mademoiselle may almost defy Time; youth seems to return to her year after

year. Our Mademoiselle is not sensitive upon the subject of time; she will tell you, with a delicious shrug of her shapely shoulders, "Oui! I came here quite some long time."

A position at a flower counter in a large millinery establishment is the present point of view of Mademoiselle. Here all day long, and in the busy season far into the night, she handles wreaths and sprays and bunches as only French fingers can, twining and branching and placing them until, verily, the flowers seem almost to spring into life and breathe forth each its natural perfume.

Away over the ocean, in the little hamlet under the hill, time has dealt gently with the old mother. She is well cared for by a stout hand-maiden, made possible by the earnings of Mademoiselle. The mother tells with pride of the daughter out in America, from whom come such cheerful, pleasant letters, and also each month the little remittance that keeps the honest peasant woman in what seems to her a life of almost luxury.

Mademoiselle meanwhile toils on, sometimes very weary and lonely, yet ever with the brave heart, telling to no one the sad thoughts that will sometimes come, but always with a cheery face. The wide-open black eyes, looking out from their point of vantage, are never weary of watching this rushing, hurrying

metropolitan life, which must always seem new and strange to Mademoiselle.

After business hours, or on a Sunday in the glad summer time, Mademoiselle makes her little excursions, sometimes to the island, that is called "Coney," more often to the Central Park, or up to "ze tomb of ze great General."

If on one of these little trips any scion of our modern chivalry, noting the attractive appearance and lone condition of Mademoiselle, ventures to address her, he is met by a manner delightfully frank, and is puzzled beyond measure as the clear eyes, looking out from under the jaunty little bonnet, look calmly up to his, thinking no evil and fearing none.

When Mademoiselle, after her day's work, goes home, it is to a tiny hall bedroom, up in the top of an old house away on the east side, a house that in its palmy days was the abiding place of one of the old Knickerbocker families, a poor old house that keenly feels the difference between its first estate and its position now as a cheap lodging house. Here Mademoiselle has found a resting place.

Ah, well-a-day. It is a hard world, is it not? From the Château Blanc to the fourth floor of a lodging house; the green meadows and climbing roses about Coigneres to the stuffy little room looking out upon the chimney pots. Ah, me! Even our stout-hearted Mademoiselle

feels that the world is a little "difficult" as she toils.

The bells go clanging on and on, but now a trifle out of time. By and by the black eyes will lose their sparkle; the slender, white hands will grow yet more transparent, the step more slow, and then the bells will ring more solemnly and more sweetly. The brave heart will be nearing its rest. There will be a new face at the flower counter in the great millinery shop, and, at the old Knickerbocker mansion, on the east side, there will be a little room on the fourth floor to rent. Away in the thatched cottage at Coigneres an old mother will be very lonely. The roses will peer in at the window and try to comfort her, but they cannot, because for her little Mademoiselle, Time's silver bells will have ceased their chiming.

MY OLD CLOTHES.

THE change of tastes that come with the changes of time is never brought more forcibly to one's mind than when looking over a decrepit wardrobe made up of garments collected for some years and laid aside from time to time as having outlived their usefulness, or as being too grave or too gay for the occasion at hand.

Not many weeks ago, being about to change my lodgings, I thought it desirable to weed out my belongings and to donate a proportion thereof to the heathen, otherwise my rural relatives.

Taking a quiet day—the first or the seventh of the week, as you will—to throw open closet doors and haul down their contents, I did so until my rooms looked like an old clothes shop. It was the opening of a veritable Pandora's box. Memories crowded up and assumed definite shape with each garment that was dragged forth, some tender, some humorous, some sad, and, alas! some which I would fain crowd back and shut down the lid upon. I take up the garments, one at a time,

and it seems to me they are waking to a sort of interest in the fate in store for them.

Some of them assume a reproachful air—as of “remembering happier days”—and how highly they were valued when first purchased. Others an air of indignant protest or of distinct threat, as if they knew a thing or two that would be little to my credit if exposed. I gaze upon the confusion, and wonder, “Can I have ever worn such things as these? Can I have gone so to the extremes of style and followed so slavishly the vagaries of fashion?” Leaning forward to examine an article more closely, my throat is pinched by the abnormally high collar I am wearing at the moment, and I realize that the following of vagaries is not yet over; it is only a change of torture to fit the time. I take up an old dress suit—my first claw-hammer. How I fairly expanded with pride when first I donned it! How anxiously I awaited the opinions of my friends! In a pocket of the waistcoat I find now a dried rosebud, with several golden hairs twisted about the stem; it puzzles me for a moment, and then I remember how, ere the first dress suit had lost its freshness, I met Clarisse. It was in the little college town where I was wrestling with my classics. You see, I was very young then, and fresher even than the dress suit. Clarisse was a charming chorus

girl in a comic opera company, and to me she seemed a goddess. Ah, well! She gave me a rose when she went away, and how was I to know she had laughed at me with the older fellows, and told them of my timid efforts at love-making?

Next, I take up a suit of a sober pepper-and-salt shade; it is well worn and shows hard elbow service. This I had after the incident of Clarisse and the rosebud, when for a time I affected cynicism, and devoted myself to study—really doing more honest work than at any other time of my college life.

Ah, belle Clarisse! you, after all, did me good service, though you, careless singer, never meant it so. Here is a suit of corduroy—knickerbockers and shooting jacket. What a guy I must have looked in them, to be sure. I wore the suit at Bar Harbor for a season, with fair success, and later I wore it at a little place in the Berkshire Hills, where an old lady friend, one of the natives, evidently appreciated me at my true value. I remember one day, in the absence of other feminine incentive, I arrayed myself in the corduroys and posed on the lawn for this old lady's benefit. She gazed at me through her spectacles, an expression of disapproval gradually deepening upon her face, until it found vent in the remark: "Fidus, you do look just awful in

them things!" Her evident honesty caused my self-satisfaction to collapse somewhat, and since that time I have played tennis, or gone yachting, in long trousers.

The next article ready to my hand is a gorgeous smoking-jacket. It suggests the storied coat of many colors. Poor Aunt Lois! your eye for color always was a bit untrained; but that could not affect the goodness of the strong New England heart; and, when the smoking-sack came to me, one Christmas, I treasured it for the sender's sake, though I could never wear it without cold shivers running through me, as the brilliant red and vivid green stood out in violent contrast before my eyes. Here is an overcoat of only two seasons ago. "Oh, Fidus, don't tell me you have worn a coat like that!" A dark-brown cloth, made in the style known as New-market, tight-fitted to the figure, tails nearly sweeping the ground; huge buttons and tall collar—a very caricature of a coachman's livery. Over the chair yonder lies a bright plaid suit of last summer—such a very "chappie" suit, "don't-you-know." I must have looked the veriest Anglo-maniac in it.

Then there is a tired-looking white flannel suit. I had that new for Jack's yachting cruise. What a lot of jolly times that flannel suit has seen! I recollect it fell overboard

one day in Newport harbor, and the white flannel was well salted. Here are several resplendent waistcoats, relics of my last college year; a host of work-a-day trousers and jackets, the worse for wear; a lot of hats of varied shapes; many shoes of different builds; neckties without number. In this one bit of dainty coloring, permitted in the toilet of the modern man, I have allowed myself much latitude. A clever person, looking over my stock of neckwear, could easily trace the changes of years, from the tender pinks and blues of my "salad days," past the stronger reds and mannish plaids of early life in Gotham, and on to the grays and black and whites of my present date. Alas! for human frailty! I spend infinitely more time in the careful choosing of the grays and the black and white than I ever did on the pink and the blue.

And now the closets are empty. I drag out a huge trunk and bundle the articles in—thinking, as I do so, what the probable fate of each may be. The dress suit, with its rosebud and its memories of Clarisse, shall go to my young cousin Horace, up in the little Berkshire village. What a swell he will be! I wonder will the spirit of Clarisse haunt him! The pepper-and-salt suit, I fancy, they will give to one of the farm hands.

Next, the corduroys—I am not quite sure that there is any future for disabled knickerbockers; however, perhaps at the farm they may find a place in one of the ever-constructing rag carpets. As for the Newmarket “top coat,” I shall send it along without comment. I have a sort of feeling that it will be received with scorn, and that it will only be used as a general storm coat. In my mind’s eye, I can see it draping the severely classic form of Mary Ann, the “hired girl,” as on a rainy day she trudges down to the barn to bring in the eggs, and across the sleeve, where daintily gloved fingers have often lightly rested, will the milk-pail swing.

The “chappie” suit of English plaid may go to who will have it—the fate thereof, I trust, may remain to me unknown. As for the white flannel, I take it up tenderly; it is stained with cigar ashes and salt water, yet, spite of all, I regard it with positive affection. It has been with me on such pleasant trips that I would like to feel that its last lines might fall in pleasant places. I think Horace must have the white flannel along with the dress suit.

The waistcoats and hats and shoes are all tumbled in, then a shower of neckties, all colors, styles and sizes. What a bonanza for some crazy quilt enthusiast! Into the trunk

they go. I crowd them down and shut the lid, only keeping out the pleasant memories. To-morrow the express will come for the trunk, and soon the old clothes will know new owners, and new fields of usefulness will be theirs.

WITH ONE'S OWN HANDS.

GIVEN an old-fashioned country house—the older the better—a little money and lots of taste, and fairy tales become matters of fact, and “Aladdin’s Lamp” a possessed reality, with your own clever brain for the spirit of the lamp, and your obedient fingers for the faithful and powerful slaves.

The possibilities of such an old-time house are tremendous; they fairly make one’s fingers tingle and one’s brain whirl with the desire to be turned loose in such a place with full permission to do one’s pleasure. I heard someone complaining the other day of the difficulty of getting decorative material in country places. Material! Why the country is full of material for decorative work; material, too, that cannot be duplicated in city shops, cleverer far than any wrought by cunningest artisan or ablest mechanic. It only needs one to be a clever adaptor, with ready hands and willing fingers, and the simplest and sometimes the most despised of home products show undreamed of possibilities of blossoming like the rose and becoming things of beauty. An

old country house usually offers an excellent foundation for decorative improvement. I lately enjoyed a week in a house of this sort. On the outside it appeared a simple enough New England farm-house, but once step through its vine-hung front porch, and behold the portals of fairy-land were open! The house was the sole inheritance of an artist friend of mine, a bright and merry-hearted fellow, who, with little money but marvelous taste, has transformed the commonplace and uninteresting living rooms of his ancestors (good souls!) into a very maze of artistic and interest-crowded halls.

The one-time parlor now suggests a happy marriage of Colonial and Louis the Fourteenth styles—the floor painted light yellow, with a border of white, the woodwork, of which there is much, painted the same light yellow, with the panels of palest pink, embellished with conventional designs in gold tracery. The side walls are covered with yellow ingrain paper, such a pretty background for the many lightly framed water-colors which adorn it. The frieze is of white, relieved by pine branches in pale gold; the picture-moulding is painted in the pale pink. The windows, of which there are four, are high and small-paned; they are curtained with short curtains of alternate yellow and pale pink cheese cloth, looped

back by this clever fellow, with braids made of the soft-colored inner corn husks.

The furnishings are as happy as its decorations. The rugs are of India or bamboo matting in palest shades. Across one corner a huge divan invites the weary or the indolent. It is made of two packing-boxes covered by a cheap mattress, over which is thrown a breadth of silk rag carpet; it is backed by great easy-looking cushions (stuffed, by the way, with pine needles and sweet-smelling herbs), covered with pretty dull-colored stuffs, and bound with white cord. A bamboo lounging-chair is drawn up near a window; a low square table stands beside it, bearing always a bowl of sweet-smelling old-fashioned flowers; other chairs, painted variously pink, yellow or white, stand all about. Up in another corner an old-time-looking desk, painted in the same colors, stands invitingly open, where he who will may write. The high mantel holds an old-fashioned clock, a brass candlestick or two, a jar of golden rod, and pipes galore; for this being a bachelor's hall, no place in it is too good to be bettered by the fumes of the philosopher's weed. In each window is a window-box—just wooden boxes covered on the outside with white birch bark and bits of dry moss, and filled with masses of graceful ferns and sweet wild things blooming happily amid

their dainty surroundings. A large square doorway lets into the dining-room, and in this doorway hangs a portière which is a delight and a wonder. In appearance it suggests the Japanese curtains of bamboo and beads, and surely no Jap ever conceived a brighter idea. This portière is made of *corn-stalks* cut in two-inch lengths and strung with oak balls between · the effect is odd and pretty in the extreme.

One word about the dining-room. It is simply the most delightfully clean-looking room in which I have ever broken fast ; it is all in the colors of Delft china—old blue and enameled white. The table, painted white, and laid without a cloth, with quaint blue and white china, is a most appetizing picture. The windows are curtained with blue and white chintz, and a low buffet holds a pleasing store of pretty old china.

The rest of the house is just as quaint and pretty, but these two rooms serve to show what one man can do with an old country house, at the outlay of very little money, considerable work, and more good taste. My artist friend did all the painting and most of the other work with his own hands, and almost anyone with willing hands and reasonable ingenuity can do as much. Birch bark is a material with an endless number of decora-

tive uses; the window boxes were only one of the many ways in which my friend had made it beautiful.

A clever woman I know has in her country house a little room, the side walls of which are entirely paneled in birch bark, intersected by tiny moulding, holding the bark in place. In each panel is painted some pretty bit, or some apt quotation, artistically lettered, and a more dainty picture-gallery could scarce be planned.

A very pretty dado for a country room may be made of dried cat-tails laid flat on a dull plaster finish, and fastened with double tacks or tiny brads driven through the stalk. Have the cat-tails with long and short stems, giving a bit more variety to the design. With such a dado cover your side walls with burlaps, laid on flat, divided into panels, the centre of each filled with a design made up of pressed ferns, vines and autumn leaves. Divide this from the dado by a chair rail made of a strip of white birch wood, with the bark on it. Have a picture moulding of the same, and make your frieze of unbleached cotton cloth, well covered with designs cut out of birch bark and glued securely to the cloth. Try all this, with such additions as your preference may suggest or your fancy devise, and I warrant you'll have a room that people "will come miles to see."

A delightful room may be made by using blue denim for wall-hangings. Turn the light side out for the dado, the darker side for the side walls, and the light again for the frieze; through the cloth of the frieze cut out a design—diamonds, crescents or *fleurs-de-lis*—under which glue turkey-red cotton; the effect is wonderfully pretty. Make your curtains for the windows of the same material, with wide bands of the cut-out design, through which let a lining of the turkey-red show; decorate your side walls with unframed etchings and prints pinned against the cloth; drape your mantel with scarfs of the red and blue; get some cheap wicker chairs, and cushion and drape them with combinations of the red and blue again, and the effect will be not only pleasing, but warm and rich as well; and yet observe the simplicity of the materials used.

A pretty mantel lambrequin may be made of acorns threaded on strings, like the bamboo curtains, hung from the edge of a mantel board, covered with dark green felt, here and there a bunch of oak leaves cut from the felt and fastened among the strings of acorns; the acorns, by the way, should be varnished, to prevent their shrinking out of shape.

Another wonderfully dainty hanging may be made for a mantel in the white and gold

effect, so popular now, and so pretty always. Make your lambrequin of white canvas or duck ; on this, glue carefully, groups of wheat or rye ears previously gilded with gold paint. A couple of chestnut burrs, dipped in gold paint, make a pretty finish for the end of the mantel.

These are only a few hints that ought to suggest a thousand and one others to anyone living in the country, with Nature's storehouse close at hand. Get your materials in the glowing harvest season, when the country is at its richest, when Nature's holiday stock of decorative material is all on exhibition, and you may choose what you will ; then later, when you have less *out-doors* to enjoy, do the best you can *in-doors* with the materials you have gathered in.

A FABLE—(PERHAPS).

ONCE upon a time there was a potter whose trade was the making of a certain rough, heavy stone china. One day there came in the way of this potter a vase of unusual form and strange kind of ware. Its unusualness attracted the potter's fancy, and he made the ornament his own. Time went on, and the vase was very happy with its new owner, and the potter enjoyed his possession, until by-and-by he was struck with the fact that his vase had certain eccentric lines and curves which he had never encountered in any of his jugs or jars before, and which he could not understand. So he said to himself, "This must not be; my new vase must be moulded and shaped to the form of the heavy jugs that I have worked upon so skillfully." And he said to the vase, "I do not like these tender curves and varying lines; you must be shaped to a colder, firmer mould, or I shall cease to care for you." Then the poor, foolish vase, knowing well the value of its own unusualness; knowing, too, the inevitable result of an effort to refashion it,

yet valuing its master's affection above all, said: "Take me! do with me as you will!" and so the potter modeled and shaped and moulded, and put the fragile, highly-tempered vase through a white heat discipline until, alas! the delicate ware could stand no more, and a heap of fragments at the potter's feet was all that remained of the vase he had loved, and, too late, he realized that treatment which might improve stone china, means death and destruction to a tenderer ware.

ELAINE.

AN IDYL OF GOTHAM.

IT wasn't a fine old ancestral hall; there were no mullioned windows or corner turrets or old carved stairways; there were no ivy-draped courts, no long corridors through which rustled ghostly visitants by night; there was no romantic air of decaying grandeur about the place; in fact, everything was hopelessly, painfully, inartistically new. It was a spick, span and very swell apartment house away up town in Gotham, and there wasn't even a suggestion of romance about it.

Who could romance where the odor wafted to one's nostrils was the echo of an overdone joint, or grow sentimental in a room whose outlook was upon a beer garden across the way, and where, instead of the merry bubble of laughing brooks, the singing of birds, and all that sort of thing, came up through the open window the clink of glasses and the horrible discord of a discontented and disconnected band.

Elaine didn't mind it much, however, because it was an awfully swell flat, and it cost a great deal of money to live in an apartment overlooking the beer garden, and the rooms within were really very pretty, and done by Herter. So Elaine, who was counted quite a swell, was congratulated upon her home. Now, Elaine was not a limp and clinging maiden of the idyllic order. She was a healthy New York girl, sensible and good—as girls go nowadays. She didn't wear Greek drapery or let her hair flow—"its tresses unconfined"—and she didn't play on a harp. No; she wore very stylish dresses, which she called "gowns," because it made them more stylish, and she did her hair in the latest fashion and she drummed a little on the piano, and thought perhaps, when she had time, she should learn the banjo. Elaine had no brother to bring Lancelot on a richly-caparisoned steed for a brief call on their way to the Polo Grounds. So she had to meet Lancelot at a "dancing class," and then she had to meet him once more, and then her mamma had to ask him to call, because that was the proper way, and not as likely to frighten Lancelot as if Elaine had at the first asked him to wear her sleeve down Fifth Avenue on his glossy beaver.

Lancelot was not much of a hero. He was a rather conventional youth, and he wore

collars of abnormal height, and pinched his feet and banged his hair, and carried a very ugly cane, which he called a "stick"—all, not because he liked it, but because the other men of his set did it.

There was nothing so very "early English" about either Elaine or Lancelot, but they met, and our Lancelot found favor in the sight of Elaine, just as did the brave Round Table young man in the sight of Miss Astolat. Now, Lancelot was not at all impressed by Elaine, and when her mamma sent him a card for her evenings he called just as he did at a host of other places, and then Elaine, who was a very clever girl, didn't ask Lancelot to leave his shield, because he didn't have one, and Elaine could only have hung it over the hall door anyway; but she contrived to have Lancelot forget his stick so he would call for it soon, and then after a little she commenced having him to her dinners, and she made him sachets and cigar cases and polo caps until embroidery became a horror to him and wools a nightmare, and she asked him to escort her to theatre parties and "*festina lentes*," and bowling clubs and tennis clubs, as is the custom of Gotham Elaines with their Lancelots. But with it all Elaine's wooing seemed to make no progress, and all this time Lancelot went to other theatre parties and other Sunday

breakfasts; and there was a certain Queen Guinivere, who lived in a swell hotel, and who was fond of Lancelot, and who wanted to marry him by-and-by when the season was over, and Lancelot was quite pleased at the prospect. There wasn't any Mr. Guinivere, and some spiteful people (women, mostly, who were not as pretty as Mrs. Guinivere), said there never had been one.

Now, one day, as Miss Astolat was calling on Mrs. Camelot, and they were talking over their friends and their irregularities, with that sweet charity which characterizes the converse of the modern young woman, Mrs. Camelot remarked, that she heard Lancelot was to marry that horrid widow in June. Elaine didn't droop and cry, "Love, thou art bitter, sweet is death to me," but she said yes; she "had heard so"—which she hadn't—and she called her carriage and drove right home, and there, in the dainty drawing-room overlooking the beer garden, she found a rich, elderly bachelor waiting to see her.

Now, this bachelor had wanted to marry Elaine for a long time, and this morning he had come to once more urge his suit, and Elaine knew that "the gods had sent him," and she said "Yes," and the bachelor went away satisfied; and Elaine wrote a nice little note, commencing "Dear Mr. Lancelot," in

which she said that she was to be married in May, and that she would be so pleased if Mr. Lancelot would be one of her ushers at the wedding; and, having despatched this missive, Elaine was content.

Lancelot, when he read the note, felt very much surprised, then very much aggrieved, and he said a bad word and felt that Elaine had thrown him over, though really she had only done by him as he would have done by her, had she given him time; but the sense of justice in the heart of the Gotham young man is a peculiar sentiment, and in Lancelot it was offended, and he voted Elaine's treatment cruel, and himself an ill-treated young man, which was just as it should be, and he went off and consoled himself by dining with Mrs. Guinivere.

By-and-by, in May, there was a brilliant wedding, and Elaine was married to the elderly bachelor, who turned out a good sort of fellow, after all, and they were quite happy—for married people. And then, in June, Lancelot married the Widow Guinivere, and Mrs. Bachelor (*nee* Astolat) went to the wedding with Mrs. Camelot, and they both remarked how the bride had fallen off and how dissipated the groom looked, and then they went to the Pinard breakfast, which they said was very bad, and of which they ate a great

deal, and then drove home with the consciousness of duty well done in their hearts.

Mr. and Mrs. Lancelot went on their wedding trip, and Mrs. Lancelot wanted to go to all the places where Mr. Guinivere had taken her, and she had a great many reminiscences, and Lancelot thought reminiscences a bore, and didn't care much for his wedding trip; and they came home to Gotham after a little, and all settled down and lived and battled and were briefly happy, as is the way with our now-a-day knights and ladies.

This idyl is unlike the older one, for many reasons. There wasn't any elderly bachelor at the Round Table for Elaine to marry, so, of course, she had to die. This idyl is quite as probable and perhaps just as healthy in tone. It hasn't any moral—an idyl of Gotham couldn't have a moral—and it isn't intended to prove anything. In fact, I don't know that it is much of an idyl, after all.

A BACHELOR TEA.

A WHILE ago, when I was not too old to remember that I have a birthday, shivering amidst the swirling leaves of mid-November, a charming woman, whose reputation as a good liver, in the best sense of that expression, is known from Tacoma to Tallahassee, made a dinner party for me. It was a dinner that warmed the cockles of my bachelor heart; an idyl in gastronomics that would have driven Savarin to suicide, from envy, and have drawn a sigh of satisfaction from Epicurus himself. And all done in the house, too, and under the direct supervision of Madame herself; Madame, who later sat at the head of her table, radiant in satin and point lace, and made the dressing of the salad, by her own thoroughbred fingers, a feature in the entertainment that would linger long in the mind of any lover of dainty picturesqueness.

Madame had remembered my favorite flower, and the dinner was a very chrysanthemum show—the great, pungent, ragged, Bohemian blossoms were massed through the centre of

the table, and waited appreciation in generous groups beside each plate.

Some fellow has said : "A fig for your bill of fare ; show me your bill of company." All very pretty, but I warrant you that fellow had already dined well when he said it. Better, say I, a bill of fare and a bill of company in perfect accord. Clever people, satisfied by clever cookery, are twice their clever selves, and the brightest things at a dinner are always said after it becomes evident that the wheels of management are to move smoothly.

So much for an entertainment that was not a bachelor affair, except in so much as it had an all unworthy bachelor for its motive ; so much that I may show you the difference, and say : "Look you on that picture, then on this!"

One of the most regretful things in a bachelor's life is the continual reception of courtesies at the hands of householders and homeowners, the enjoyment of which leaves us hopelessly, ignominiously, irretrievably in debt, for what can a poor bachelor do in return for all the pleasant things that are done for him? He can give a dinner at "Del's," of course, but that is commonplace ; or a theatre-party, but so can anyone else.

From out of every difficulty there must be a way ; no lane is continually without turn, and so the bachelor, stranded upon the social shore,

sees afar the glimmer of a light, and, struggling towards it, finds his salvation in a five o'clock tea. Here is something indeed that the bachelor *can* do; something that, done by a bachelor, is a bit out of the usual line.

A man with pretty rooms has but to get some jolly matron to do propriety, and straightway he can ask his friends to do him honor.

My friend Fidus is a bachelor after my own heart, young enough not to be *passé*, and old enough to have gained that pleasing *savoir faire* which comes, alas, only with experience. Fidus lives at the "Saint Anthony" in rooms that delight the artistic eye; rooms well filled with all that ministers to creature-comfort and strikes terror to the feminine soul at the thought of dusting. In these pretty rooms Fidus gathers the friends whom he delights to honor, and makes them a cup of tea that, served as it is in the daintiest of Dresden cups, and aided and abetted by cakes and the prettiest trifles in confections, is a pleasant thing to remember.

Fidus, clever man, has a little book, in which, under various headings, he has classed his friends as "beauties," "lions," "artists," "clever people," and a longer list of "just nice people." From this, as a *chef* from a cookery book, he combines one beauty, one lion, two clever people, two artists (previously tested)

and nice people to taste, into a social *soufflé* that is altogether charming.

As the spring days come, Fidus would fain do something as slight acknowledgment of many attentions showered upon him during the season, and so, after consultation with Madame La Veuve, he takes down his book, and soon a well-planned "Tea" is arranged.

Fidus is most fortunate in having for a *chaperone* for such occasions his sister—dainty, winsome Madame La Veuve, whose graceful ways and happy manner do much to make a Fidus Tea a success.

With Madame La Veuve comes this day "the little country girl"—a pretty maid with a fresh sweetness about her, like a breeze across a field of clover; "the little country girl" who, under the chaperonage of Madame La Veuve, has turned the heads and won the hearts of half the men in Madame's set.

The shades are drawn and the lamps lighted. And such a lot of lamps as there are; quaint hanging lamps, burning perfumed oils, old iron lamps, and pretty modern lamps, all with shades of softening colors.

Small tables stand all about, loaded with pretty and artistic trifles, each table happy in holding a jar of old-fashioned sweet-smelling flowers. The open fireplace is filled with palm leaves, and either side a jar of lilies suggests the

Easter time. Into this pretty, odorous den, Madame La Veuve welcomes Fidus' friends.

Over in one corner stands a pretty tea-table with an alcohol lamp, a dainty tea-cloth, and pretty china galore. Down at this table sits Fidus to pour the tea, with a satisfied air that argues no mad desire to change his state. In fact, Fidus has said that he has never married, because, as yet, he has found no woman who harmonizes with his rooms.

The guests drop in with delightful informality—Madame La Critique with the journalist; a clever young actor, with his “stammer and his hammer”; Miss Blossom, who is the beauty of the day, and who is thrice blessed, in that she is witty and wise as well as beautiful; young Methuselah, whose pink-and-white complexion and bright eyes belie his assumption of years; the Chippendale young man, whose art-work is the talk of the town; the young theologian, who is busy doing up his worldliness before he goes into orders next year; these, and a lot of bright girls and clever men, who drop in to “sit and chat as well as eat.” Fidus sends about the tea on pretty trays, and people gather in groups or *tête-à-tête* and everyone is happy, for at Fidus' teas there are no discordant elements. Bits of conversation float up from all quarters, and many a clever thing is said across the cups o' tea.

In one corner Fidus is chatting with young Jack Esculapius, an M.D., whose Harvard honors still sit somewhat loosely upon him. Jack, in the fullness of his heart, is pouring into willing ears rhapsodical praises of a lovely girl he has recently met. Fidus listens, his teaspoon carefully balanced athwart his fingers, and presently says :

"Jack, old chap, I'm not going to chaff you about the business—if it is only an 'affair,' it will enlarge your experience and do you no harm, but, for heaven's sake, be sure before you commit yourself, whether it is an 'affair' or the genuine thing."

"But, Fidus," murmurs Jack in mild protest, "this girl is so different from any I have known."

"I dare say," says Fidus, "but a girl may be very delightful as a 'crush,' but it's going to be quite a girl that will stand the test of possession. Isn't it Story, who says :

'For a whim to last a month or so, your future life you
blast,

Take my advice, drain nothing to the lees,

Only just-tasted pleasures long can please.

What we desire is grateful while desired ; possessed,
'tis worthless;

Ah! we soon grow tired with the continuous every-
day, of what once seemed so charming when we
had it not.' "

"Ah, Madame La Critique, let me get you a cup of tea," and Fidus turns to that charmingest of women, smiling, as he pours the tea, and says:

"Madame, you are a living refutation of the brutal fling that marriage is a failure."

And truly, if avoirdupois counts for anything, she is justly that, for Madame La Critique represents exactly one hundred and seventy pounds of kindly wit and clever wisdom, dashed with a *sauce piquante* of wickedness that makes her irresistible—a woman beloved of all men and one woman; a woman who waxes most witty over a cup of tea, and who has that happy faculty of drawing from others their conversational best. And now the men are allowed to smoke, and as "he who smokes thinks like a philosopher," so brighter grows the witty converse, and through the clouds of fragrant smoke bright voices and merry laughter ripple in waves of pleasant sound. Dr. Esculapius, over his cigar, waxes confidential and tells to the "blond young man" the story of his love. The journalist, who is the other half of Madame La Critique, tells a funny story about a "pi" and a "form" and a "devil." Young Methuselah tells how they did it when he was a boy; and the "blond young man" braces up and assures everyone that he *could* say something, but he won't;

and so on, and so on, everyone saying something, and no one saying anything dull, for at teas in Bachelorland, while the guests are not "all brains and no style," they are equally not "all style and no brains."

Presently, Madame La Critique says it is time to go home, and gathers in the journalist from a corner *tête-à-tête* with "the little country girl," and the clever actor goes away assuring Fidus that it is "the pleasantest tea he ever met." And so the guests drop away, one or two at a time, taking with them pleasant memories of bachelor hospitality, and bearing about them the scent of the cup that cheers but not inebriates.

"TABLE D'HOTE."

IS it a bit of the Latin quarter of Paris? Is it a corner of a picture of artist life, or, perhaps, a page out of the book, "Bohemia?"

Listen; a small, enclosed garden, on three sides brick walls ten feet high, painted white and covered with masses of clinging vines. On the fourth side the wall is covered by a not badly painted landscape, seeming to extend the garden indefinitely in that direction; under foot a carpet of white gravel, with little borders of fresh, green box, scattered here and there; tables laid for dinner, and away up over all, the bluest of skies, lighted with a delicious, twilight glow.

At a table over in the corner, next the painted scene, sits a swarthy Spaniard, twirling his waxed moustachios and gazing out from under his heavy eyebrows. At a table opposite, is a woman dining solitaire. She is tall, fine-looking, handsomely dressed; her age, perhaps, forty; her large, black eyes wander here and there in a restless, seeking way. Down in the centre of the garden is a table occupied by a party of young journalists,

whose guest is a bright-eyed grisette. They are merry and light-hearted, and laugh joyously as they sip their *vin ordinaire* and puff their cigarettes.

At the next table are two young women, evidently of the *demi-monde*, who are devoting themselves to the business in hand, *i.e.*, dining with a vigor, leaving small space for imagination.

At other tables, a long-haired artist or two lengthen out their repast; a German of the untidy, Socialist order devours all before him, and a tired clerk is dining a country friend, to whom, later, he will show the wonders of the great city.

At a table over against the wall, where the vines hang thickest, a tall, dark young man is dining, and between times he turns the pages of a Balzac novel, or glances interestedly about at the *habitues* of the place, who send curious glances back again to the young stranger, who has wandered into their midst. The tall young man puffs a cloud of smoke from his cigarette. Glancing through it, he sees the gleaming eyes of the dark woman at the corner table—eyes with a gleam of danger in them—but the young man only smiles a little to himself and then at the bright-eyed grisette, who gayly sends him smile for smile across the shoulders of one of her journalists.

Presently the shadows deepen ; the volume of Balzac is closed, and the young man strolls slowly out into the everyday street. The sun has gone down behind the old monastery on the Hoboken hills, the stars are coming out, and, in the little west-side garden, night has fallen.

MADAME MYSTERIA.

ONE day, in the early springtime, when everything was waking into new life, when the air was so fresh and sweet that even through the streets of Gotham floated the knowledge that only a little way out the fruit trees were blossoming and the grass growing tall, in the midst of this sunshine and fragrance came Mme. Mysteria. From whence? Ah, if I could tell you that, would she be Mme. Mysteria? She came; that is all I can tell you. She may have been builded of sunshine or born of the blossoms; if you are fortunate enough to know her you will think her all of that. The pretty Viola says that Mme. Mysteria is made up of "dimples, smiles and blue-eye flashes," and pretty Viola is always right. Mme. Mysteria came into our midst as quietly as the sunshine, and yet with the same sunshine's sparkle and warmth. White, and charming, and feminine, and, as "Picturesque Polly" often tells her, "just as sweet as a peach," she came to Gotham to enter the lists of the struggling many—for Mme. Mysteria is one of the busy

bees, and must work each day, with her clever pen, to care for herself and the bright-eyed boy, who is the link that binds her to happier days. Certain women have a way of surrounding themselves with an artistic atmosphere, wherever their home may be; Mme. Mysteria is such a woman. The little apartment, which is home to her and the "boy," is a very artist's studio; pretty pictures cover the walls, dainty bits of ornament, brought from here and there—did Madame collect them? we may not know—are upon all the tables. Among the many pictures is never a portrait; among the many books, not one has a name written in it; nothing that can, in any way, throw light into the darkness out of which came this fair woman. Mysteria is not rich, and yet her easy familiarity with all the luxuries of life argues a lifetime acquaintance with the good things brought by wealth.

Out of the past come no visitors to the hostess of the studio, or, if they come, they are spirit visitants, not apparent to us fleshly ones, for, in her new life here, Mysteria goes about with smiles and kindly words for all; friendly always, but allowing herself few friends. A few days ago Mme. Mysteria gave a dinner party at the little studio apartment; it was just a *partie carrée*, and it was delightful. The guests were: First, "the pretty Viola,"

who, with her white face and starry eyes, looked a very Juliet—one for whom any Romeo would gladly scale impossible balconies. Then there was Fidus, a youth just clever enough to be Jack at all trades but never to master one; but Fidus always sees the humor of a situation, and so Mysteria finds him amusing. With Fidus comes the “blond young man.” The “blond young man” is a delight to us all—he never does the thing that you expect him to do, but always something pleasant and kindly. He never says the regulation thing, but, in a manner unique, he will bring out of an apparent chaos of language a delicate compliment or a subtle reproof. This was the little party that gathered in Mysteria’s little picture-book dining-room, with Madame herself at their head, all dimpling smiles and clever stories. Such a merry little dinner as it was; all the dishes fit to “set before a king”—dainty china and clearest glass, a mass of odorous flowers in a curious Indian jar; coming and going with lightest footsteps, deftly attending our every want, is that cleverest of handmaids, “Picturesque Polly.” Over us all is shed a charming light from rosy globes shrouded in smilax. At the last, Fidus and the “blond young man” are permitted to indulge in cigarettes, with the little Japanese cups of black coffee and the tiny glasses of

Benedictine. The smoke from the Turkish tobacco floated slowly upward, and through it Mysteria's blue eyes gleamed, and Viola's dark, Italian eyes made a strong contrast to the white, white face from which they shone. And then, Mysteria and the "pretty Viola," and the "blond young man" and Fidus, come back to the pretty drawing-room. The lights are dimly burning in several prettily-shaded lamps, and in through the open windows the moon sends its brightest rays. Mysteria sinks into a great willow chair, and Fidus lays the guitar across her lap. The white fingers stray over the strings and, presently, Mme. Mysteria sings us a little Portuguese love song; it is a sad little song, and Madame's low, sweet voice, has a pathetic little tremor in it, and, as the song ends, something that glistens like a diamond falls from Madame's eye through the moonlight to the floor. The "blond young man," who has been listening and watching intently, gives a start and says "By Jove!" under his breath. But Madame is instantly herself again. She puts down the guitar with a laugh, and turns to Fidus as she says: "Why need the people in song always be unhappy?" And Fidus, clumsy Fidus, must needs ask: "Did it remind you of something sad that has happened to you?" Madame smiles a little wearily, as she answers, "Oh,

no; nothing has happened to me. Fidus, my friend, a woman should have no yesterday; to-morrow may have possibilities, but yesterday has none."

Soon we are laughing and chatting merrily again, Mysteria the merriest of all, and only the "blond young man" knows about the tear that fell through the moonlight.

When Fidus and the "blond young man" say "good-night," and stroll homeward through the moonlit street, Fidus breaks a silence, with the remark, "I wonder what was the yesterday of Mme. Mysteria?"

The "blond young man," who has been strangely silent, knocks the ashes off his cigar and says, as he thinks of the little love song and the glistening tear-drop: "I don't mind about her yesterday, old chap, but I am a bit interested in the possibilities of her to-morrow."

A-COACHING.

MME. LA VEUVE is in search of a new excitement. The reputation of her country-place must be kept up. All known amusements have been tried, and the hungry guests of the little Madame still cry for "more." 'Tis a flash of genius that brings to the mind of Madame the old stage-coach, that plies at times between the neighboring villages. We will hire the coach, with four horses and a driver, and, with a party of congenial spirits, we will spend a day exploring the beautiful Connecticut valley.

With Madame, execution follows quickly upon thought, and, her plan being hailed with wild delight, preparations are made at once to carry it out; a day is chosen. It shall be Saturday, so that the men may come up from town.

The old coach is engaged, and Jehu is warned to be on hand early, with his horses well groomed, and surely, with tassels of brightest scarlet at their ears.

Crisp little monogramed notes from Madame summon from various quarters those whom

her ladyship delights to honor. Madame's dearest friend and fellow conspirator in all matters of social import is drawn immediately into solemn council, as to luncheon, which, it is decided, we are to take with us and enjoy when and where we will, for, as Madame urges, "it is so tiresome to be hungry."

Friday night comes, and Madame's party watch the sun go slowly down into a clear and promising west.

The guests, who are stopping in the house, go up to their rooms, each warned to rise with the lark, for an early breakfast, as we are to start at eight o'clock.

Morning dawns. As early as six o'clock a sort of restlessness pervades the house, and presently a most blood-curdling blast is blown from a tin coach-horn in the room of the "blond young man;" a blast that rouses the household most thoroughly, and also sets the dogs howling dismally.

Soon the party come trooping madly down stairs and out upon the beautiful lawn, congratulating each other upon the perfect morning, for surely Aurora never clothed herself in more glorious sunshine or more delicious breezes.

We take a hearty breakfast, which, Madame's mamma warns us, will be our last comfortable meal for the day.

Promptly, at eight o'clock, the coach sweeps up the drive; the horses are fresh, and evidently appreciate the style they gain by sporting the red tassels. The old yellow coach is cleaned up until it fairly shines. Quaint, old-time vehicle, how many years it has carried its passengers from Springfield, drowsing slowly along through the little villages to the westward, and now, in its old age, it is drawn up to take a jolly party of young people for a day's pleasuring.

Jehu, who is in charge, is a character full of anecdote and replete with local information. He regards Madame, as do most of the natives about the place, as infallible.

We are ready. Madame, in a dainty toilet of black and white, with a huge bunch of golden rod at her belt, leads the way. Miss Fiancée, in a dashing, bright-red gown and big white hat, follows. They are attended by the "blond young man," who, in white flannel and blue "Tam," is as picturesque as a man need be, and by Madame's brother, Fidus, who poses as a *blasé* man of the world, but who in reality enjoys things more than anyone else.

The party mount to the top of the coach, and, with a jolly farewell to the older people, who watch us off, drive gayly away toward Springfield.

Arrived opposite that lovely city, we stop to wait for the rest of our party, and presently, with a clatter and a dash, they come driving across the pretty north end bridge.

There is coquettish Miss Montclair, behind a great bunch of red roses, a little scarlet and black wrap across her arm, ready for conquest and for fun.

Next is young Esculapius, our fledgling M. D., who is disposed to regard us all as possible "subjects."

Lastly—he is always the very last man anywhere—comes Madame's younger brother, a dashing youth of twenty, known variously as the "Infant," the "Kid," and "Mamma's Boy;" he is the very funniest boy in the world, and is the sworn ally and accomplice, in all matters of mischief, of Miss Montclair.

A number of carriages, containing friends from town, have gathered to see us off, and, having crowded our entire party on the top of the coach, with much waving of handkerchiefs and tooting of coach-horns, we start.

According to the eternal fitness of things, Esculapius has climbed to the topmost seat, beside Miss Fiancée, regarding her, probably, as an interesting study. At her other side is Fidus, who is bound to see fair play, and, in a measure, protect the interests of Miss Fiancée's future lord and master, who is not with us.

On the other seat, Madame and Miss Montclair are either side of the "blond young man." The latter has charge of a huge box of confectionery, which adds to his popularity.

The "Kid" is, as usual, at the feet of Miss Montclair and beside the driver.

Madame has selected a party with a view, as she expressed it, of having "not the least bit of spoons," and her success is a fact. With Miss Montclair and the "Kid" in a party, sentiment, except of the most exaggerated kind, is effectually barred out.

Leaving the bridge, we go bowling along the fine, hard road on the west bank of the Connecticut, northward. The lovely, broad, placid stream gleams through the trees; away ahead of us the graceful mountains, Tom and Holyoke, raise their heads, showing darkly blue through the early autumn air.

Pretty summer places, open and hospitable looking, are all along the road, and farm-houses, with fronts tightly closed, after the manner of New England farm-houses, but with ever a side door, beside which a row of milk-pans, bright from a recent cleansing, disport themselves in the sunshine.

Wherever we see sign of human life, the girls toot wildly at the coach-horns, and the men wave hats or handkerchiefs. The spirit awakened in the heart of the native by these

demonstrations is as various as the individuals, the response being usually pleasant and indulgent; occasionally, gruff or frigid.

One old lady waves a broom in response to a most graceful doffing of the "blond young man's Tam," and that youth declares that they "understand each other."

We rattle through Holyoke, past its many mills and across its bridge, under which the river is hurrying along, then away into the pretty, rolling country through South Hadley. Here we stop at the old road house for a brief rest and some necessary additions to our luncheon, then we drive out nearly to the foot of one of the mountains, where we find a picturesque spot beside a brook. Here we unload, and, as there are already loud calls for luncheon, we get out our baskets and make ready. Now commence the usual series of picnic misfortunes. The "blond young man" falls with one foot in the brook while making a wild effort to reach for a coffee-pot full of water.

Fidus and Esculapius are busy building a fire to boil the coffee; they get sadly smoked and very much heated; finally, after many efforts, we growl that it is no use, and we must do without the coffee. Madame comes bravely to the rescue, seizes the coffee-pot, and, with Miss Fiancée and the "Kid," departs

for the farm-house, which is a little above us on the hillside.

The rest of us lie about, gazing hungrily at the "spread," which we have vowed not to touch until the return of the foraging party. Presently, with much laughter, they appear, the "Kid" first, with a pot of steaming coffee, the delicious odor of which makes us ravenous; Madame, with a huge apple pie, a purchase from the farm larder, and Miss Fiancée with a basket of fine apples.

We get to work immediately, and make sad havoc with the good things which Madame's cook has provided. Our hunger satisfied, we lounge about on the banks for an hour, while Esculapius, who has brought his guitar, discourses sweet music; we sing college songs until the woods ring again, until bye-and-bye the coach is ready, and we mount to the top and turn homeward.

We make a stop at Mount Holyoke Seminary, the place where Madame says "they make missionaries," and stroll through the pretty grounds.

Then once more we start, and such a glorious drive as it is, down the east bank of the river this time, to Springfield, where the mamma of Esculapius gives us a most dainty supper, and then away across the old bridge and through the country road, and so up to

the long, low Queen Anne cottage, that owns Madame La Veuve for its mistress and all our coaching party as its guests.

We clamber down at the door a little tired, perhaps, but well satisfied with our jaunt a-coaching.

FROM OUT MY ATTIC WINDOW.

IT is not really an attic window, you know, but it is rather high up in the world. It is a bachelor den up in the top of an apartment house, in one of the old parts of the town. This apartment house is called the "St. Anthony," and is devoted to the task of sheltering bachelors; bachelors of the stanchest kind, whom it would take much of feminine loveliness to tempt from the comfortable elegance of an apartment in the St. Anthony, and to exchange the delightful, cozy, independent, selfish life of male single-blessedness for the matrimonial fetters, rose-wreathed though the latter may be.

I am one of the bachelors, and my quarters are up in the top of the St. Anthony; they are not very commodious—not so wide as a church door, nor yet so small as those of my friend, the artist.

My little sitting-room is mightily blessed, in the fact that it has three goodly windows; one looks out to the eastward, away over into the land of Brooklyn, and through its cur-

tains, however closely drawn, the morning sun comes briskly in, and routs me out in time for breakfast.

My other windows face the west, and I am so high above all the brick and mortar about me, that I look out through space across to the Jersey hills. My three windows, like three cameras, take pictures all the time, and many a droll sight I see through their panes, and many a strange sound comes floating upward when my casement is open.

Sometimes, when I look down from my east window, I see, at the back windows of an old-time house, a group of jolly children having the finishing touches put to their toilets, making them ready for school; such delightful, bad children they are, to be sure. The oldest is a girl, prim and precise; I don't much care for her. The next is a perfect brick of a boy—a thorough *boy* boy—a manly little chap, full of wholesome mischief and healthful fun.

In a window in the next house is a doleful contrast—a handsome dining-room, a round breakfast table, drawn close to the window—a man and wife at their morning meal. They are not too far away to see the irritable expression of their faces, and the situation is an easy one to grasp.

As a student of human nature, I do not

consider it objectionable to peep into my neighbor's window; but when unpleasant situations meet my eye, the peep is a short one, and I never spend much time watching this wrangling couple.

Sometimes I look down, almost under my very window, to a little flat in a little apartment house, over which the St. Anthony towers in a protecting way. In this flat live such a charming little couple—a bright, manly fellow and his dainty, pretty little wife, and a tiny midget of a baby. They seemed so happy, these two, with the little pink bit of humanity; and sometimes, when they sat talking about the little chap, and watching its wry faces and queer antics, their merry laughter would float up to me and, somehow, give me a queer feeling, of something not quite right in any bachelor luxury.

But, alas! into the little apartment, down under my window, came one day a messenger, bringing grief to the dark-eyed little man and his sweet, blonde little wife.

The curtains were drawn close, and, when I passed in the street, I saw a white crape on the door bell, and then I knew that the tiny, pink baby had gone away to come back no more. After this, I did not watch the little flat, with its saddened tenants. Of late I have turned my attention westward,

and studied human nature in the varied phases shown through my two large windows.

This western outlook is not upon New York's sweetest quarter. The nearest building to the left is a huge factory, in which work a crowd of girls. When the "blond young man" comes to see me, he spends half his time at the window nearest this factory, opera-glass in hand, gazing down at the "pretty maids, all in a row," as they deftly ply their trade of box-making.

The lasses, during their lunch time, watch the St. Anthony with considerable interest. They gaze up at the windows, and, catching the "blond young man," with his wicked eyes, looking down through the glasses, they smile up at him gayly, demurely, or naughtily, according to their proclivities.

There is one pretty maid, however, who never smiles at us, and seldom glances our way. The wiles of the "blond young man" have no effect; she will have none of him, at any price. Such a pretty girl as she is, too, and so sadly out of place among her flirtatious, romping companions; dainty and neat, always quietly dressed, her hair smoothly coiled, and, withal, such a nice manner, that I have made endless pretty fairy stories about her. I dare say, if the truth were known, she swears at her mother, drinks beer with her father, and

beats her young brother; but I infinitely prefer my pretty unreal to the ghastly, bare facts.

Another bit of life upon which I look from this window is an Irish family—a father, mother, and such a lot of sturdy young Hibernians. The mother does washing in the little back room, and the father goes out to work. My Irish people are not a bit thrifty, and I can see, with my glass, how painfully scant is the furnishing of their table. I sent them a turkey last Christmas, with “St. Anthony’s compliments,” and then watched them from my window; it was worth the price of the turkey.

There are many windows in range into which I do not see; or, seeing, feel it my duty never to reveal what I see.

There is one window that is such a pretty picture—it is a corner bow window—inside is a confusion of artistic draperies; a gilt cage, with two little feathered tenants, hangs in between. The little beggars are “love-birds,” I’ll wager; and outside, on the window ledge, a box of flowering, fragrant plants stands, as a trap, to catch the sunshine. Often, as I watch this window, the draperies are softly parted by such a fair, white hand, and through them to the window comes a vision so dainty and fresh, and altogether lovely, that the

bachelor hearts in the St. Anthony all do a little fluttering on their own account.

The pretty vision goes up to the love-bird cage and chirrup a bit to the inmates. Then she bends over the flower-box with a dainty, caressing touch, and, presently, she parts the draperies and goes back into the room, and the curtains fall, and we, at the St. Anthony, can only wonder at the rest of the story.

When the evening is fine, the "blond young man" and I have our little table drawn to the window, and have a cozy dinner by the light of the setting sun. Then we light our cigars, and have our coffee and tiny glass of Benedictine, and the great, fragrant cloud of smoke floats away out of the window; then the "blond young man" lifts his glass of Benedictine, and says: "Here's to Mme. Mysteria"; and we drink the toast, then fall a-dreaming, until we both start, guiltily, with a feeling that this is not the sort of thing for St. Anthony young men, and then begin, hurriedly, to tell each other how awfully jolly it is to be a bachelor.

And this continues until the "blond young man," whose gaze has been wandering about outside the window, suddenly exclaims: "By Jove!" and reaches for the opera-glasses.

COZY NOOKS AND PLEASANT
CORNERS.

IF I could build a house just as I want it, I'd have as many corners in it as there are in a Virginia rail-fence; in fact, I think I would have it *all* corners and piazzas, and the piazzas should be all corners, too. I don't mean of necessity *angles*, and, surely, none of my corners should be angular. A woman said to me, the other day: "I could manage my drawing-room beautifully, if I only knew what to do with the dreadful corners!" "The corners, my dear friend!" I cried, "why, make them the *features* of your room, of course, and only regret that your room has not eight instead of four of them." So we went to work. In one corner we put a divan, covered with a Turkish rug; across, at the picture moulding, a brass rod supported a pretty, half-transparent curtain, drawn back in a deep loop; within this inclosed space, on each side, we put plates of mirror flat against the wall, from divan to picture rod, held in place only by tiny plush-covered moulding;

from the ceiling above we hung an old Moorish lamp, shedding the dimmest of light. What could be more attractive than such a corner, absolutely compelling to a sentimental *tête-à-tête*!

Jack, the bashful son of the house, was one day led into this nook by a lovely girl, to whom he had been struggling to declare himself, and, when he saw her from so many points of view, in the kindly mirrors, he straightway gathered himself together and did the deed, and so they were married, and lived happy ever after; and that was only *one* corner. There were no more bashful sons in the family, so we made the other corners—one into a delightful cupboard, for a collection of china; across another we had a mirror, three feet by five, framed in a flat, plush frame, hung about three feet from the floor; three carpeted steps filled the space below the mirror; on either side of the steps we placed tall palms in pretty jars, and the effect was precisely that of passing up the steps into another room. For the fourth corner, which was near a window, we had a queer little desk made, where one might "write a sonnet or scrawl a *billet-doux*." And so, madame's drawing-room has no more any severe and painful corners, but, instead, four pretty life-saving stations in the oblong arid waste of a conventional metropolitan room.

Corner mantels are wonderfully pretty, either with a "sure-enough" fireplace, or, if the corner chimney be not feasible, a good imitation, with some pretty andirons. A corner window is a delight, and a deep window-seat in such a window is a joy—a place in which to truly make the acquaintance of one's friends. I saw such a pretty library den the other day, in which only the book-shelves were across the corners; the side walls were filled in with engravings and bits of armor, while mirrors were cleverly hung to reflect the book-shelves. At the side, a huge bow window, heavily curtained, formed a cozy nook in which to sit and chat, or in which one might hide, in company with a friendly book, and "let the world slip."

Folding screens are helpful aids in making conversational corners here and there. A little sofa, or, perhaps, a couple of easy-chairs, and a tiny tea-table, shielded by a screen, bring two friends within gossip's easy range, and make the chat across the cup of tea as friendly and as personal as if the half one's dear five hundred were not walking up and down the drawing-room, just outside.

The decorators and furniture makers are appreciating the desirability of making corners attractive, and corner buffets and china closets innumerable are now to be had;

corner-chairs are not bad, and a corner desk is really very convenient, as well as pretty. A happy effect may be gained by hanging a picture across a corner, then drawing some drapery from the bottom of the frame back into the corner some distance below; complete the line by placing a large jar beneath. Another pretty trick is to hang a *portière* of bamboo and beads across your corner; see that the space within is dainty with pictures and, perhaps, a bric-à-brac laden shelf or two, and, lighted by a prettily-shaded lamp, the effect from outside is charming. Make corners in the centres of your rooms, with a sofa and a couple of lounging-chairs, or a table and a few chairs that look as if they could hold only congenial people.

If you are to have a lot of people about, see that chairs, and lounges, and divans are grouped in pleasant combinations, with conversational possibilities; for, alas! to entertain is not always to be entertaining, and it is well to divide the responsibility. Nothing is more delightful at an "affair" than to find plenty of comfortable and convenient nooks and corners in which to sit down.

I know a charming woman—a perfect hostess in other respects—whose idea of a brilliant evening is the perpetual motion of her guests, and no sooner does one, foot-tired and very

weary, seat one's self, with the hope of a minute's rest, than madame, "on hospitable thoughts intent," floats up with the remark: "Oh! you are sitting down; then, I'm sure, you are finding it dull. Come away, I have someone I want you to meet." And so you resume your tramping up and down, with, perhaps, now and then a possible rest against the mildest-mannered side of a door-frame. There is a drawing together sort of sociability about corners and inclosed spaces that other localities lack. On a piazza it is always into the *corners* that the agreeable and interesting people drift; from the corners come the ring of merriest laughter or the sound of sweetest music; 'tis in the corner that Ethel sits, with the last new book, and waits for Jack; 'tis in this same corner that, a little later, we find Jack smoking his philosophic cigar, and meditating upon the vagaries of the charming sex to which Ethel belongs. Across another corner a hammock hangs, in which the children lark and scramble, and in a shady doorway seat the little mother sits and reads; and so, surely, the well-rounded and well-filled corners hold many a bright and pleasant thing.

As one in leaving a party of friends gives his hand last to the one of whom he takes away pleasantest recollections, so I bring you last the ingle corner—the very centre of the

home, the point about which cluster the sweetest thoughts and the tenderest memories, the space hung thick with childhood's pictures. Who has not some fair mind-picture of the cozy fireside corner occupied by forms of loved ones? Who, with hope so dead, that, somewhere in the misty future, does not look for an "ingle nook" of his own, in which there is room for two, and from which he may, perhaps, greet his friends at the hanging of the crane?

"The canty hearth where cronies meet,
And the darling o' our e'e,
Which makes to us a warl complete—
Oh, the ingleside for me!"

THE VERY YOUNG MAN.

IT is true, and, pity 'tis, that the genus Boy has disappeared from our land. The remorseless Herod, of unhealthful progression, has slain, not only the first born, but the entire family of Boys (with a capital B), and the places that knew them, and resounded with their glad boyishness, now know them no more. In their place, rattling about, but in nowise filling it, have we only the hybrid "very young man"—a veritable juvenile Methuselah, young in years, but old, so very old, in everything else; far ahead of us aged fellows of thirty or forty; a thing of shreds and patches, not content to be a boy, and far from fitted to be a man, occupying a half-way sort of place, indeed, on which can dwell neither "fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring."

You see, I am far enough past the very young man period to look at the subject from both sides of the fence. I have not forgotten the aspirations, the mortifications and complications of the very young man, and yet I know how it feels to be launched upon a

fourth decade, and *that* is getting quite along, you know. Don't quarrel with your youth, my juvenile friend; if fault it be, inexorable time will soon mend it, without any aid from you, and it is a fault, I assure you, that, like a blessing, brightens as it takes its flight. I know a boy who is a perfect delight to me, because he *is* a boy; he tries to be manly and succeeds, but he doesn't want to be a man until his time comes; he simply tries to be the best sort of boy for which he can find a model, and tries to excel in boys' accomplishments.

I know another chap—or, I think I should say "chappie," under the circumstances—about the same age, who simply can't and won't be a boy. I don't believe he has ever been a boy. His companions are all years older than himself; he is ready to give advice on all subjects, and "straight tips" on all occasions; in short, he is altogether a most impressive and depressing sort of person, and makes a giddy fellow of thirty seem very youthful by comparison. He would, really, in his inmost soul, like to "pitch in" and have a good time, but it would be at such a sacrifice of his dignity, that it is not to be thought of for a moment, and so he struggles to be content with his very bad realization of a very bad ideal, while the golden years slip away, and he will not

know, until too late, how much of the real enjoyment of youth he has missed.

Most youths seem to have an insane fear of being caught doing any kindly or humane act. Riding up town the other day, I looked down from my post of vantage (*en passant*, do you know what a fine place from which to study human nature is the top of a Fifth Avenue stage?) and saw one of our juvenile swells, listening hastily to a beggar-woman's plea. Taking some coin from his pocket, he bestowed his alms in a shame-faced sort of way, and was hurrying from the scene of his kindly doing when, glancing up, he caught my eye taking in the situation, with all the approval in the world. His face turned a violent scarlet, and, jamming his hands in his pockets, he walked furiously away in an opposite direction.

You see, he was a very young man, and I am not; I have passed the age until which one is supposed, by his juniors, to be susceptible to the needs and ills of his fellow-men.

I think there is an idea prevalent in the mind of the very young man, to the effect that the man who is not so very young, and after whose manner and method he desires to fashion himself, looks down with a noble scorn upon anything suggestive of kindly charity or kinship with suffering humanity.

The very young man, *etat* sixteen, and from that to twenty, thinks that, to be grown, he must adopt the manner and carriage of forty, and that, to be manly, he must launch into agriculture, *i.e.*, must put in a substantial crop of extremely untamed oats. Very often it is really not at all in accord with the youth's actual taste, but he regards, at least, the appearance of wickedness as an absolute necessity. It is all very like Bertie's explanation, in that inimitable play, "The Henrietta": "Every fellow thinks the other a devil of a fellow, but he isn't!"

I know a lad who is a very usual type of the very young man; a charming fellow, full of talent, an innate gentleman—which, in my belief, is the best kind—and yet he is kicking against the limitations of youth with all his force, lashing himself with withering sarcasm, and hurling invectives at the years for their lagging feet. Isn't it pitiful that one should grow impatient of the bloom of the peach, and brush it so vigorously away, in mad anxiety to get at the hard, smooth surface underneath, which, alack-a-day! can never again bear the tender grace of the years before the twenties? This, my friend, smokes a pipe; that, you must know, is so very old; he talks knowingly of the Gaiety dancers; in short, he does everything he can to induce in the minds

of other fellows the belief that he is a devil of a fellow, but he isn't; the innate gentlemanliness holds its own, and *noblesse oblige*. He has not, truly, the inclination to be "tough," only the desire to be mannish, and a misconception of what constitutes true manliness.

Isn't it Thackeray who defines a gentleman as "one having high aims?" Coloring meerschauts and ogling chorus-girls aren't exactly "high aims"; are they, my laddie?

I heard a funny story the other day, *apropos* of the way in which youths expose their youth in their very efforts to disguise it. A clever woman, whose brother is one of the very young men, was asked by a man friend: "Your brother has just commenced smoking, has he not?"

"Yes," was her reply; "but how did you know?"

"Why, fellows don't stand on the front of the ferryboat, puffing smoke like a locomotive, and offering cigarettes to everyone they meet, unless they are very new at the business."

There is, among my acquaintances, a certain very young man, a great, loose-jointed fellow, with the promise of athletic manliness in his figure, satisfied and happy with the sports of his age, happier with his chums than in a drawing-room, yet, with a certain graceful shyness that is pleasant to see. He won my

heart long ago by his careful politeness in his home, showing plainly that his best manners he considered not too good for his sisters, and his most profound deference not too respectful to offer to his mother. He is not a bit of a prig withal, and he knows black from white, every time; only, you see, his inclinations lead oftenest away from the black, and he follows them, and, it seems to me, that is a very nice sort of a very young man to be.

The older man is largely responsible for the unpleasant aggressiveness of the very young man. I remember well the gratitude I used to feel to a man ten years my senior, who treated me like a man and a brother; who talked to me as if I were a being with at least a modicum of common sense; who never snubbed me because of my juvenility, and who left me that boon most precious to the youngster—my self-respect.

A chap of seventeen is talking to a pretty girl. Up comes a man a decade older, breaks into the conversation, acknowledges his introduction to the younger fellow with a nod, and then proceeds to ignore him. Presently, monsieur twenty-seven sails away, with the young woman on his arm, without so much as, "by your leave," and all this, forsooth, because the other fellow is "nothing but a kid, you know." Take the girl away, by all means—

that is fair enough—and Laddie will do the same for someone else when his turn comes; but do be courteous and friendly, and leave Laddie, at least, his self-respect. Don't be—as I heard a youngster express it, the other night—so “blooming fresh” about it!

Take your youth gracefully, Laddie; you may lack the *savoir faire* of a dozen years later, but compensation is yours, and you have what no amount of *savoir faire* can ever replace—the capacity for enjoyment in the keenest and best sense. The whole world is blooming fresh, in far other than your slangy sense, and the bloom is yours to enjoy. Don't be the very young man of caricature and song; be, instead, the jolly, whole-souled, wholesome *Boy*; and when the time comes to be through with that, be “a man as is a man,” and, surely, *that* is the man with the boy's heart, and heartiness still in him!

FADS AND FADISM.

THE thirst for the unusual is abroad in the land ; the desire to be unlike one's *confrères* has become a rampant mania, before which customs, conventions, theories and facts flee away and hide themselves in desuetude. The quaint blossom—individuality—is emphasized, and forced in a hot-house of sensation until it becomes the orchid—eccentricity. To be eccentric is to attract attention ; to have one's little day, and then to be passed, shelved and forgot while some newer one, with some newer fad, receives, upon willing shoulders, your flimsy mantle of unsubstantial popularity. What fools these mortals be, indeed, to prefer the one high jump into insecure conspicuousness, rather than the slower climb, by well-known roads, to a well-founded and merited popularity.

It is such short-lived conspicuousness, too ; no sooner does one accomplish some weird eccentricity than half a hundred others rush madly to follow suit, and, behold ! your specialty has become the fad of many, and you are left not even the poor comfort of calling a

bad thing, truly, your own. Many of the fashionable fads have their point of start in the necessity or convenience of the starter; for example: Mrs. Gilflory, who is accounted authority in matters of establishment, has weak eyes, and so, for her drives, she has her brougham arranged with very tiny side-windows; she has not driven twice up the avenue before half the matrons and maids in Vanity Fair are besieging the carriage makers to build them broughams with small windows, or, better, with no windows at all. Again, Jack Coupon, whose valet has just varnished his shoes, turns up his trousers to protect them from the fresh varnish, and thus walks down town; the next morning, not a self-respecting member of the morning parade but paces the avenue with trousers turned up. A tale is told of the way in which the fashion for men to go ungloved to evening receptions came into vogue. A certain person abroad—the very wrinkle of whose trousers we struggle to copy—became heated one evening, possibly by over-indulgence in American punch, and tore off his gloves and threw them on the floor; of course, after that, no American, who felt that he was an American (and wished himself an Englishman), could appear with gloves. One day a chap—probably an untidy Englishman—having on a pink percale shirt, and not

finding a collar to match it, clapped on a white collar, and appeared at the club. Straightway every chappie in town felt that no true happiness could be enjoyed outside a pink shirt with a white collar, and it even went so far that the haberdashers actually made for the market, pink, and blue, and brown shirts with white collars attached.

Among the fads of to-day, the giving of dinners with distinctive features is prominent. One woman gives a dinner at which everything possible is pink; another woman must out-do this, or die in the attempt—which latter she very nearly does, when she gives a green dinner, and almost poisons her guests with confections stained this unhealthful color; then comes a white-and-gold dinner; a National dinner, in red, white and blue, and so on, and so on. One woman picked up, in Europe, a marvelous toy imitation, in rare china, of a park wall, with urns and gateways, and with this her dinner-table is laid out, park fashion, the urns filled with tiny ferns, the gateways flanked with candles, while dainty vines clamber "over the garden wall." Why not add a toy coach or two, madame, and a few tin soldiers, and then call in the youngsters, and what rare sport they would have. Ah, well! we are all but children, and best pleased with toys, after all.

The latest vagary of this sort was a Greek feast, at which live fish swam in a fountain in the centre of the table, and the wine-glasses were garlanded with rosebuds. A most violent fad is that of collecting—collecting no matter what, so long as a collection is made—fans, china, gloves, shoes, watches, gems, and so on *ad nauseum*. I heard a man say, the other day, to a young woman: “I wish I knew something to collect.” “China,” suggested madame, and the dear fellow went immediately to work buying china cups, and plates, and pitchers. One girl I know announced, some time ago, that she was collecting plates for a harlequin dessert-set, and that contributions would be gratefully received. Her friends found it an easy way to pay her a compliment, and, at time of going to press, her collection numbers *one hundred and nineteen!* The young woman would fain have stopped long ago, but the word had gone forth, and her last condition is worse than her first, and her fate will probably be to lie buried 'neath these bits of china, as did the Indian maid, who had betrayed her father's city, beneath the gold and jewels the invaders heaped upon her.

Another girl is collecting vinaigrettes; she has seventy-nine at last counting, and still at it. These are a few of the least hurtful fads; there are others, many of them not so harm-

less; and think what might be accomplished if one-half the time and energy expended on this one fad of collecting was devoted to some, even fairly, useful purpose. A fad is pretty sure to be not in the best taste; it argues a departure from established form, and usually, in matters where custom, necessity and circumstance have chosen, the best method for establishment. The reaction is sure to come, and, after the untasteful prodigality, perhaps simplicity will obtain—when we tire of the orchid, perhaps, we shall go back to the daisy—and bethink ourselves that, after all, old things are best.

"LIGHT INFANTRY."

THERE is a popular fallacy abroad, and secure, I fear, in a good strong foothold, to the effect that bachelors are not fond of babies. It is an unmitigated slander. All depends as much upon the baby as upon the bachelor. There are babies and *babies*, just as there are bachelors and bachelors.

Some babies ought to be apologized for, in that they are alive, and some bachelors ought not to be allowed to live, even with an apology. But to say, in a sweeping, denunciatory, general way, that bachelors don't like babies, is a libel on the bachelors, and a reflection on the babies. We don't understand babies very well, to be sure, and it is a trifle disconcerting to have an animate object, of whose construction, arrangement and disposition you have no knowledge, thrust bodily upon you, as is the playful custom among young married people, when they can bring their baby and their bachelor friend into conjunction.

You call on your friend, who has been somewhat recently blessed; you know his wife but

slightly, and, naturally, you have not even a sight acquaintance with the new arrival; but you know about the general character of fresh importations from babyland, and you would willingly postpone the meeting. However, you are allowed no choice. Jack thumps you on the back, and says: "Old man, you must see the boy!" and the young mamma blushes, and twinkles, and says: "Oh, yes; of course you want to see baby, the very first thing." Of course you *don't*, but you suppress the truth, and say: "Dear me; yes!" So nurse is called, and comes in with a limp, squirming bundle, all white cambric and lace, terminating at one end in an appallingly explosive-looking head.

Before you know where you are, Jack has seized the bundle, and with the remark, "Isn't he a dandy?" thrusts the alleged baby into your most unwilling arms. Now, I leave it to any law-and-order-loving member of the community, whether or no any one, bachelor or spinster, matron or patriarch, could *love* such a baby, introduced to one in such a manner! You may be interested, and you are, certainly, awestruck, for you never suspected a live human being could be so small—but, love it? no! certainly not! And your chances of loving it grow less, as a shout goes up from Jack at your expression of unrest, and the

pretty mamma says, reproachfully: "I'm afraid you bachelors don't love babies"—and that's the way we get the reputation of *not* loving babies. Now, I'd like to know whose fault is it? Certainly not the baby's, and, certainly, not our own, for we are equally helpless.

Most bachelors have a very pleasant feeling in their hearts for the little ones, and, as soon as the youngsters have a suggestion of intelligence, we are delighted to meet them, and become their stanchest friends, their aids and abettors in fun and frolic, and, still later, we not infrequently serve as guide-boards, pointing pleasant and profitable roads.

I am a bachelor. I own it with humiliation, but that is neither here nor there; I *am* a bachelor, and I speak feelingly. Give us a fair chance, and you'll see that we do love your babies!

I have some friends who have a tiny girl-baby, just beginning to walk and to talk, just beginning to show quaint little traits, like her mamma, and droll suggestions of mannerisms, like her papa. She is dainty, and sweet, and altogether lovable. Why, the very "chappiest" bachelor in town must find such a winsome little maid a thing of beauty and a growing joy.

There are houses in which the baby *pervades* the place. A very small baby can fill, to the

exclusion of everything else, a very big house. It reminds one of the story of the old Greek, who, at the death of a tiny infant, made a very large funeral, and then apologized to his friends for the small size of the corpse, as being an inadequate *motif* for such a tremendous commotion. It's very much the same way with some live babies, only their parents don't apologize.

You go to pay a call at a certain house; in the grounds you see the gardener coming mysteriously toward you. He says: "Excuse me, sir, but, please, go up softly; the *baby* is asleep." You go up to the house with the tread of a burglar; you are admitted by a maid, who shows you to a dimly-lighted drawing-room, and flits noiselessly away with your card. After a time, madame comes in, saying: "I must keep you very quiet, for we give up everything to baby, at this hour"—and then you sit and carry on a conversation in whispers, like a couple of dynamite plotters, until you feel that to be alive is almost a crime, and that making a noise is the unpardonable sin. And, presently, you go away, and you *don't* love that sort of a baby, and small blame to you for it.

Then, again, look on this picture. I know a certain busy woman, in whose house dwell a couple of babies, such babies as bachelors

do like. You might call at that house six times, and not suspect a baby; on the seventh call you might be made glad, by a small voice calling from the stairs: "Hullo, ole feller!" and, looking up, see your tiny friend, madame's healthy, handsome, vigorous boy baby, struggling away from nurse to get down to his bachelor friend. When you find a bachelor who doesn't like *that* kind of baby, you may make up your mind that he is abnormal. He is not a "sure enough" bachelor; he is intended for a married man.

MISPLACED SWITCHES.

TO recount the things that are, and should not be, would fill many a mighty volume. Too much we are given to genteel shrug of our mental shoulders, when we find things awry, and dismissal of the subject, with the feeling that it is not worth the trouble of an effort to set it right. There is an expression in trade, applied to a lot of goods, bought in any certain, or uncertain, condition; the purchaser is said to buy the goods, "as is." I think the expression very well applies to the way in which most of us lazily accept the irregularities, the incongruities and the inharmonies of life; we take them, *en masse*, "as is." To be sure, we cannot make over the world; in fact, we don't want to; it is a very good job, "as is," and we cannot exactly make over human nature, but we can do a great deal toward it; temperaments cannot be reconstructed, but they can be remedied; corners and angles must exist, but there are many pretty tricks and graceful touches, by which they can be softened and rounded. Excess of virtue, become a vice, is one of the most

depressing traits to run up against, in one's friends, 'tis often a switch, so misplaced, that train after train is run on to a siding, and, sometimes, disaster and wreck must result.

Take firmness, for instance; in moderation, a most desirable virtue; in excess, a most hard-shelled and unmanageable vice. Firmness is not stubbornness; firmness has dignity, and appears only when occasion requires; firmness shows itself in action, the result of calm, reasonable judgment. Stubbornness is simply an "I won't," in huge capitals. Firmness, in matters of import, is desirable, but, like justice, should be tempered with mercy. The firmest, strongest characters, are often as well the most tender. When your firmness is a necessity, and yet causes pain to someone, it is not a necessity to bear down upon the hurt to emphasize the firmness. A surgeon, who finds amputation necessary, does not hack and haggle, to show that he is able to use the knife and saw; he goes quietly to work, if he knows his business, does the painful, pain-causing work, and then, mark you, he *binds up the wound* with tenderest care; he does not sandpaper the quivering flesh, and say: "Behold! I am doing this by way of emphasis." I have seen parents so firm in their dictates to their children, that the children only remembered, forever after, the stern severity of

that alleged firmness; and, when *they* had children of their own, they took warning thereby, and went to the other extreme, and gave license, instead of reasonable liberalness, and so everybody turned out badly, and nobody was quite right.

I know a man who is an absolute maniac on the subject of firmness; no sooner does he become conscious of his desire to *do* a thing, than this insatiable deity is set over against the desire, and the many times innocent and desirable desire is offered a helpless sacrifice, and my adamant friend rests content, with the consciousness of the exercise of his unnecessarily pugnacious attribute.

Resist obvious wrong, or things plainly undesirable, with firmness, of course, but quiet firmness, always. Isn't it Dr. Holmes, who says: "There is a politeness in religion, as in all other things?" and so surely there is a polite firmness. Don't use a *club*. If a bulwark be really stanch, the waves dash up against it and then roll away again, leaving the bulwark unchanged, save, perhaps, a little smoother and more polished for its calm and dignified resistance of attack. I have seen affection loaded on to a train, and, through a misplaced switch, hurried far away from its heaven-meant destination. A bright woman I know, and a good woman, too, according to her

light, wastes more affection in a day upon a wretched little Skye-terrier, than would suffice to make her children happy for a week. A good enough dog is Tatters, but up in the nursery are a bright-eyed boy and a dainty girl, who are so infinitely better, that it certainly argues something radically misplaced, when they cannot have as much of mamma's time as can this same Tatters; it is a clear case of affection going to the dogs that one cannot exactly approve.

Talent run upon the wrong track is, alas, too often a richly-laden freight train thrown down an embankment, and its cargo scattered and dissipated. The man who can write crisp, terse and telling prose, must needs fancy himself a poet, eschew his best line of work, and burn the midnight oil over efforts in verse that are not often published and less often read. The clever woman who can hold her friends spell-bound, while she tells them a story, relates an incident, or *talks them an essay*, runs her freight on to the domestic track, and goes down loaded with cook-books. Then, saddest of all, is the lovely woman, with just enough conversational and dramatic talent to make home pleasant and to entertain her friends, and yet who would fain be seen by other worlds, and so takes her poor little over-valued wares into the public market-place,

where defeat, humiliation and ignominy wait upon her.

I know such a pleasant fellow, who, a year ago, after considerable study, went upon the stage; he worked hard and gained some place among his fellows. A few days ago he came and told me that he had concluded he was on the wrong track; that his talent might be directed, with his inclinations, to the Church, and he immediately commenced his studies. Such a lot of force and energy is misdirected. A case in point is that of a woman who works early and late in the administration of public charities, while her family depend upon the care of servants for their scanty comfort.

Misplaced personal attention is a bad thing, too, do you know? I know men who are faultless as to hats, but their shoes are shocking; and, again, girls who, at a glance, appear perfection in the matter of toilette, but who, on closer inspection, will be discovered to have gaping seams in their sleeves, dangling ends of braid on dress skirt, and many of their decorations *pinned* on. Don't concentrate so much attention on your hats, that you forget your shoes; and, again, don't diffuse your attention so entirely that you lose sight of details. I met, not long ago, in Boston—blessèd Boston—a fellow who *talked* delight-

fully ; in fact, he assured me that conversation was the talent he had most cultivated, and that to be a thoroughly clever *raconteur* was his ambition. Later, occasion arose for me to receive a letter from this same young man, and, ye gods ! what a fall was there ; for, to apply, reversed, the criticism of someone upon Goldsmith : "He talked like an angel, but wrote like poor Poll." In his desire to talk well, he had forgotten that recorded thoughts do longest live, and could write a letter not even tolerable in phrasing or orthography.

Let me add one little anecdote *apropos* of misplaced switches ; trivial, except, perhaps, as it shows misplaced emotion. On the beach, one summer day, at a fashionable bathing place, I sat with many another watching the bathers in the surf, among them a pretty woman, who had been particularly noticed for her abundant coils of lovely hair — hair, I observed, she guarded well from old Neptune's too-caressing touch ; presently, however, a huge and sportive breaker, more smitten, perhaps, than his fellows with madame's charms, rushed boldly up and enveloped her in a mad embrace, from which she escaped only to be seen clutching wildly at what appeared to be a mass of floating seaweed, and gathering in, alack-a-day ! what proved to be the glittering coils of a sadly-misplaced switch, and madame sped

away up the beach to her bath-house, her almost bald pate glistening in the sun, leaving the thoughtful one to ponder that a switch misplaced brings oftentimes, if not disaster, at least ridicule, which to some of us is twice as bad.

A CUP O' TEA.

SHE was a sweet girl, bright, clever and altogether lovable; added to the charms with which kindly Nature had showered her, she was enveloped in that golden atmosphere which a papa's millions must of needs find it possible to add to the most fortunate of Nature's favorites.

He was as well remembered by Nature, for he was indeed good to look upon, with all the charms that come to the goodliest of men; but, alas, he stood alone in the clearness of his own strong manhood, for no golden haze surrounded him. His blood was blue, and his heart was true, but of shekels he had none.

Her name was Kitty, and she was soft and fluffy, and purry, as a Kitty should be.

His name was John, and he was strong, and mannish, and tender, as a John generally is.

They met one summer at Richfield Springs, and then again in town when the season opened, and it was all over with them at first sight. He loved the ground she walked upon, and well he might, for she wore a two and a half shoe, and Louis Quinze at that. And she

loved him according to her light. But you see papa was a millionaire, and he had gathered in his millions by hard work, and he was ambitious for his daughter, and intended that she should marry a great man some day and take her share of the millions to join to some other great estate, for he believed that to him that hath should be given. And so he frowned upon his daughter's lover; and when John came to ask his permission to wear this flawless jewel, which he had already won, the old gentleman said: "Nay, nay, young man; the man who takes my daughter must be able to care for her in the manner to which she is accustomed."

At that John looked very sad, for he knew his salary of twelve hundred a year would hardly suffice to pay for Kitty's Louis Quinze shoes, but being endowed with the manly pertinacity that usually goes with the name of John, he did not give up, but said:

"Kitty, little girl, if you will wait for me, I'll go away to China and ask my uncle, the old tea merchant there, to give me a position where I can make the wherewithal to come back and buy your father's favor."

And Kitty said she would wait, and she really meant it. And she cried a lot of very salt tears all over John's coat collar and bade him a forlorn good-bye. And then she put on a

plain gown and ugly shoes, and for a week or more felt like a widow.

John meanwhile sailed away across the seas to the land of the Oolong and the Orange pekoe, and he found his old uncle, and he said: "Uncle, I haven't wasted my substance, because I didn't have any, but I have been something of a prodigal and now I want to settle down, and there is a jolly little girl in New York whose governor won't let her marry me until I have made a lot of money."

And the old uncle, who was given to economy of speech, only said "Humph!" but he thought several things, and among them was that he would teach that old millionaire a lesson. The impudence of him, to refuse *his* nephew. But first he must see what sort of stuff this fine-looking nephew was made of, for he had known little of him since the days many years ago when he had sailed away to the Flowery Kingdom to seek his own fortune, and John had been a tiny and a very uncomely baby. So he set John to work, and though the old chap was gruff and exacting, John was satisfied to work hard because of the money, and all went very well indeed.

Away in New York the time went hurrying along, as time has a way of doing in the metropolis. For a few weeks Kitty was very sad, and she cried every day a little over John's

picture, and she said he was a "dear thing." But by and by she began to "take notice" and society claimed her again for its own. And the months went by and a year had gone. Letters came from John every mail, and now and then some pretty curio came along to remind Kitty of the thoughtful lover in China land far away. And Kitty wrote nice jolly letters (but not by every mail), and she still said Jack was a dear thing, but she didn't cry over his picture any more. And so things went on until Mrs. Gilflory came home from Europe, and in her party was Sir Somebody Harcourt, and then the fun commenced. Now Kitty wasn't any more of a snob than most of us, but when the other girls were all raving over the baronet, Kitty couldn't help remembering that she was prettier than any of them and just letting him see that she was; it wasn't human nature to withstand a thing of that kind, now was it?

Sir Harcourt was a very nice sort of a chap for a baronet, and no sooner did he meet this charming little American (and verify the report of her father's wealth) than his English heart went out to her, and nearly every afternoon found Sir Harcourt drinking tea in Kitty's drawing-room. Of course all the other girls nearly died of envy, and Kitty felt the full value of her conquest when she walked

down the avenue of a morning with her baronet by her side. About this time along came a little chest of particularly choice tea, which John thought his sweetheart might find comforting; but Kitty hardly noticed it, and just passed it over to the butler and hurried away for a drive in the park with Sir Harcourt. Now, matters with the baronet had gone much farther than Kitty had intended, but somehow he *was* very nice and John was *so far* away.

The drive in the park this sunshiny afternoon proved an eventful one, for Sir Harcourt told Kitty in true American fashion that he loved her and wanted to make her Lady Harcourt. And Kitty was very much startled, for to do her justice she hadn't really expected anything of the sort; but now that it had really come, and after the first shock, she could not help thinking that Lady Harcourt was a very nice sounding title, and China and John seemed *very* far away indeed.

And finally she promised the baronet that she would think it over, and if he would come to-morrow she would give him his answer with his cup of tea. And Sir Harcourt was very satisfied and felt sure that her answer would be "yes." And when he went away he pressed Kitty's hand and she pressed his just a little.

The next afternoon Kitty told her butler to serve tea at five, and that she was at home to

no one but Sir Harcourt ; and then she put on her most fetching gown and sat down among the tea things, and she said "Lady Harcourt" over several times, and certainly it did sound well, and she wondered how Lady Harcourt would stand with royalty and just where she would go in to dinner and a lot of other things ; and just then the butler came up with the tea and lighted the pretty little tea lamp and said : "Miss Kitty, it is some of the new tea."

Thoughtless Kitty did not even remember what the new tea was, but thought she would just make herself a cup to steady her nerves, because it was nearing five and the baronet would soon be here, and so she poured the boiling water over the leaves — that were like her love for John, not dead but only curled up a bit. And the leaves unfurled themselves and a delicious odor arose from them and pervaded all the room.

As Kitty sat inhaling the delicate fragrance she seemed to float away into a sort of dream-land, and she saw herself as my Lady Harcourt going about London town with a coronet on her head and all the other attributes with which the average American girl invests rank, and she saw herself going to drawing rooms and all sorts of glorious affairs, but somehow in all the dream there was very little of Sir Harcourt himself, but very much of his title.

The dream went on, and Kitty saw herself one fine day at a garden party surrounded by a lot of gay people, when some one came up and said they wanted to present an American friend, and Kitty looked up straight into a pair of tender reproachful eyes, and lo ! it was John — dear, slow, delightful old John — and just here there was a little crash, and Kitty's cup and saucer were in fragments on the floor, and dreamland had vanished, as Kitty suddenly remembered that this must be the tea that John had sent her ; and all her love for John unfurled itself like the tea leaves, and she had no more any doubt about what she was going to do. The butler came and swept up the broken china, and Kitty felt that her dream of a title was swept away along with the bits of Royal Worcester ; and she was really very glad about it.

Just then the bell rang and Sir Harcourt was shown in, and Kitty could only tell him very sweetly that she would give him his cup of tea but that she could *not* be Lady Harcourt, and he behaved very well indeed, for a baronet, but went away feeling rather sad. And Kitty flew up to her room with eyes very bright, and she took down John's picture and dusted it with her lace handkerchief, and said he *was* a dear thing, and had a good cry, and then she felt better. And she said John was

worth a thousand baronets, and she didn't care where she went into dinner or whether she had any dinner at all, if she only had John.

And do you know the very next mail brought a long letter from John, telling how the old uncle had made him his partner in the great tea house and he was to establish a New York branch, and that he would be home on the next steamer, and if Kitty was willing they could be married at once, as he felt sure his uncle's letters in this mail would satisfy her father. In due time John came, and Kitty's father having heard meanwhile from the old uncle smiled upon him. And "so they were married" with great pomp and splendor. Sir Harcourt sent Kitty a beautiful five-o'clock tea service for a wedding present, and, poor chap, he never knew how appropriate a gift it was. And ever after, in a place of honor in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John, was kept a little caddy of a particular kind of tea, a cup from which, Mrs. John avows, saved her for her John and sent Sir Somebody Harcourt back to England.

THE PECULIAR MAN.

THE peculiar man is a public nuisance. He obtrudes his peculiarity on all occasions with the same sort of pride that causes a Neapolitan beggar to glory in the display of some ghastly deformity.

The peculiar man glories in his peculiarity, he calls it individuality and avers very truthfully that nothing should make a man sacrifice his individuality. He quotes, "The leopard cannot change his spots," and so emphasizes his peculiarities.

The peculiar man invariably has the most remarkable set of principles. True, one should have principles, but it remains the province of peculiarity to force its principles down the helpless throat of its neighbor. Our peculiar man accounts for all his unpleasant traits by the stock remark, "Oh, you know I am a peculiar man." And so he is—peculiarly disagreeable.

The leopard's spots are born with him; the blemishes on the peculiar man are usually the product of cultivation, and exaggerated to form an excuse for bad temper, obstinacy, or

some equally unpleasant trait, only permissible without reproof behind the shelter of peculiarity.

What right has any man to claim a monopoly of traits either good or bad? A man goes about growling at everything, a perfect bear, never a pleasant, civil word for anyone. "But then he is a peculiar man." A man eats at outrageous hours, it is all right. He is peculiar. A man drinks everything or nothing, goes nowhere or everywhere, has bad manners, bad habits, bad clothes; but claims peculiarity and feels himself safely hedged from criticism and entirely exempt from the duties owed by the civilized, commonplace man to his fellows. This sketch is not funny, it isn't intended to be funny — it is moral.

ABOUT PICTURE FRAMES.

CAN you not remember in the days of your visits to the house of your grandmother (and your grandmother had the best of everything)—the pictures that adorned—save the mark!—the walls of her rooms; paintings, and good ones at that, sunk deep in heavy frames of flowered gold composition; engravings framed in black walnut, and, as pendants to larger pictures, hair flowers, photographs of burial plots, and, most ghastly of all, a coffin-plate mounted on velvet,—framed in oval frames and rendered more hideous by a convex glass.

I believe we have outgrown the hair flowers and the coffin-plates, but we cling to our traditions in the matter of the heavy gold frames, and the walls of our drawing-rooms of to-day will fix us with the glittering limitations of our best pictures. Of course there are paintings upon which a gold framing is most suitable, but it need not be oppressive; if you want perspective, gain it by shading on a flat frame, not by sinking the picture into a box that stands out from the wall like a mass of gilded stucco.

Surely the picture is the feature, and the frame should be only accessory.

Too often one gazes with astonishment upon a gorgeous frame, and then discovers that in its glittering depths is engulfed a choice picture.

Awhile ago, a bold man had a pretty yachting picture given him ; he took it to an alleged "artistic" frame-maker, and said : "I want a plain oak frame upon this picture, with an actual rope tacked on the outer edge and gilded."

The frame-maker's eyes opened wide, and his mouth curved in a contemptuous smile. "But," remonstrated he, "I never heard of framing a picture in that way." "True, Mr. Frame-maker," responded our bold man, "and it is just possible that there are other things, not dreamed of in your philosophy, which may yet be good."

And the bold man got his frame, and the pretty yachting picture, with its plain wood frame and its suggestive bit of rope, was a thing of beauty and an entire success, and do you know it was really the signal for a departure from the old stereotyped style of picture-frames? for the bold man was so pleased with the result of his boldness that he gave a "tea" at his bachelor quarters, and invited a lot of his clever friends to come and

drink tea and admire his picture-frame. The charming women who came exhausted their adjectives upon the frame, and went away vowing that they would each possess just such a picture, in just such a frame, and presently the frame-makers were all very unhappy, for nobody would have a marine picture framed in anything but plain wood and gold or silver rope.

That was the beginning, then the dealers took it up, and soon the market was flooded with oddities in picture-frames, good, bad and indifferent; of course many of them are bad from every point of view, vulgar in coloring, poor in execution, and altogether objectionable, but out of this mass of untasteful trash many bits, artistic and artful, choice and chaste, have been evolved.

Why not have our pictures suitably and appropriately framed?

Why, because a picture is painted in oils, must it be hedged about and boxed in by a monstrosity in gilded plaster? One might as well put all women into gowns of the same cut and color, simply because they are women and done in flesh and blood; an' we did, what a jolly lot of frumps we should have, to be sure!

Then, again, because a picture is a water color or a photograph, is that any reason why it should be centered in an acre of mat. as

white and as tombstony as a Philadelphia doorstep?

Do you know how pleasing and restful is a landscape in oil, framed in a wide, perfectly flat frame of dark stained chestnut? If not, just try it on the next painting you have framed, then hang it on one of your walls which is covered with dark warm paper and see how delightfully the color of the wood will blend in with the picture and the wall, and what a relief it will be, after the Kiralfy-like glitter of the tinseled boxes, in which we have been wont to entomb our choicest paintings.

You have a lovely water color, a bit of beach, and beyond, a stretch of sea as blue as the sky above it. Don't swamp the dainty thing in a wide, staring white margin; try instead a mat of the prevailing tone of the picture, the blue, which comes in exactly the right shade, in the dull-finish ingrain wall paper; then outside this put a narrow frame of dull-finish ebony, and see if the effect does not please you.

Perhaps you are framing a flower-study of gorgeous coloring. Get some silk of the most emphatic color in the study, lay it in folds for a mat; this gives a bit of perspective, then outside your silk place a frame of wood, roughened with the chisel and colored in dark bronze.

A famous French etcher frames all his etchings in dark blue mats, with narrow black

frames. The effect of the cream color Japan paper on which the etchings are printed, the blue of the mat, and the black line of frame is very pleasing.

Etchings as a rule are better matted close, unless indeed they be proofs, in which case perish the thought that for any amount of effect would we cover the signature of our artists, who so conscientiously avoid signing more than the limited number of proofs.

Avoid for etchings or anything else, dead white mats; use soft grays, or, better still, deep cream shades. Photographs will stand stronger colors for mats, and charming effects may be gained by using mats of the ingrain paper in soft greens, old blue, terra cotta, or yellow, always with a narrow rather than wide frame of cherry, oak or ebony.

Frame your pictures with their hanging place in mind, with a view to harmony with the walls on which they are to hang, and the drapery and upholstery about them. Don't introduce too many colors into your frames. A good rule to follow in framing colored pictures is to use a shade of the pronounced color in the picture as the prevailing color in your mat and frame. In a desire to have appropriately suggestive clothing for your pictures don't rush to another extreme and make them trivial. Because your picture is a military

subject, don't tie a toy cannon or a bunch of firecrackers on the frame.

You will find plenty of dealers ready to suggest and carry out the most extraordinary combinations, for after all it is ducats, not elevation of taste, that most of us are working for.

The picture and its frame should be so in harmony that they are individual, and when we have so framed our pictures that in regarding them the observer does not say: "What lovely frames!" but rather, "What perfect combinations!" surely we shall have achieved a success.

I remember seeing not long ago, among some wedding presents, a tiny etching, a perfect gem, signed by an etcher of note. It was framed first in a wide white mat, and then in an elaborate gold frame.

The guests, almost invariably, in looking at it, remarked upon the magnificence of the frame, and passed on, with hardly a glance at the exquisitely dainty art work that was so over-dressed. The donor in his desire to do honor to the etching, had lost it completely in too fine a frame, where a simpler treatment would have emphasized the merit of the little picture.

Simplicity of effect seems a most desirable quality in picture-framing. Use expensive

materials if you will, though you will find that the pleasant result depends more upon the coloring than upon the other qualities of the material used. Combinations of metal effects are sometimes very happy; for instance, a frame for a marine subject may be made of chestnut, silvered, showing the grain, and then dusted over with pale green bronze; the effect is exactly that of the sea-green water with the shimmer of the light upon it.

Again, a high-colored sunset, in a similar framing, of chestnut gilded and washed over with a rose color, deepening into red at the outer edge, is beautiful; it extends the coloring and interest of the picture, without attracting attention to the frame.

Some of the most commonplace materials may be worked into framing. A coarse sponge paper made originally to put under carpets is extremely pretty for mats. Another paper which came into existence as a packing for bottles may serve a more æsthetic purpose, by being treated with gold or bronze and used for covering a frame for some pretty figure etching.

You can have a pine frame made of the desired size and of thin wood by your carpenter; then get some of the matting that comes around tea boxes, stretch it over your frame, wet it to flatten it, then tack neatly in place;

when dry, you can paint the matting with metal paint, or in plain color of dark warm red or a dull green. Have a glass fitted, and you will find that you have an extremely pretty frame.

You can get up a variety of pretty effects, with similar pine foundations, covering the wood with folds of silk or cretonne, or with some of the Chinese chintz, which is very effective and costs very little.

Wonderfully pretty framing for small etchings and photographs may be easily made. Get some of the ingrain paper, in colors to suit the intended surroundings, cut it into mats, have glass cut to the same size, put in your picture, add a card-board back, and bind the whole with paper of the color of the mat or of a darker shade. If you are clever with your brush, you can make these little pictures even prettier by a bit of decoration on the mat, a tiny marine in the corner, a conventional flower design, or any drawing suggestive of the picture itself.

One word about the hanging of pictures after they are well framed. Flat frames should be hung flat against the wall; in fact most pictures look infinitely better hung flat than they do tipped forward as if they were about to fall upon one.

Avoid wires, and hang your pictures by

pretty cords or tiny chains, using two picture hooks instead of one, making your cord go straight up to the molding, keeping to the lines of the room and not making unpleasant angles with the corners, and, paradoxical as it may seem, above all things hang your pictures low.

RAILWAY FANCIES.

OUT of a great city on a railroad train, gazing through the window at the hurrying panorama, there must come to the active and impressible mind many a fancy and somewhat of deep thought. The huge pile that makes up the dwelling place of all sorts and conditions of men is left speedily in the distance; soon, looking back, only the cloud of smoke is seen rising like the ghost of the coal and wood which it has one time inhabited; and, by the way, what is the smoke and where does it go? I don't mean the hard, dry facts that the scientists give us; I mean the spirit and the romance of it. It rises slowly and hangs over the place it has known with a reluctance like unto the spirit leaving the body, and then floats away and is lost. Is it lost or only waiting somewhere for rehabilitation in the form it once occupied? Are immaterial things impossible of annihilation? The car wheels rumble on and we leave the suburbs behind us. Why does a great city sweep its most uninteresting things to its outside edge? All cities ought to be compelled to

surround themselves with beautiful parks, so that the first impression on approach would be pleasant and the memory would be picturesque on leaving.

Through the suburbs to a suburban village, neither one thing nor the other; not fish, flesh, fowl, nor yet red herring. A spot only of use as an abiding place for young married people who are not yet classed. And now we are passing a great cemetery, a populous city of the dead. Dead, say we? How do we know they are dead: because we have buried them, forsooth? The life that we know has departed, 'tis true, but what do we know of the life that may be going on in this city of the dead? What may not be happening in these narrow houses we have builded for those for whom we no longer had place above ground? And how much of our action is the result of influence coming from these same quiet dwellers under ground? Pagan? yes, if you choose; but how *can* we *know*? Now we are running across miles of flat, unbuilt country, and the car wheels rumble and sing of what may be. Here a city may one day spring up with its toiling, thriving, suffering throng. Another railroad may cross here and a Junction town grow up.

There away out in the fields is a house. The nearest station, nay the nearest habita-

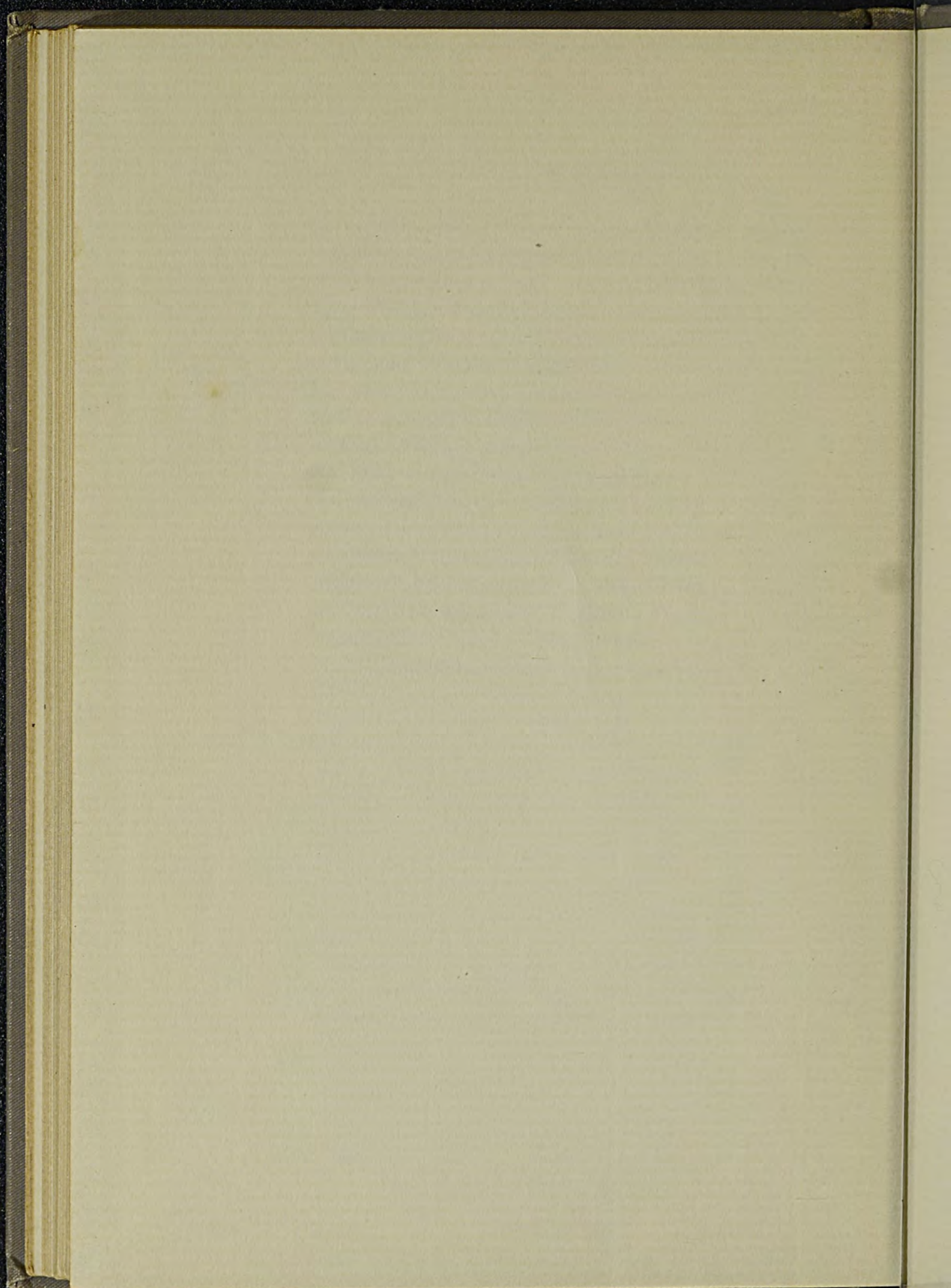
tion, is many miles away. This is a place where only a great mind or a very little one could dwell; great enough to rise superior to all surroundings, or small enough to be unconscious of them. Now through a pretty town, neat and trim, showing its best side to the railroad passers. Out beyond it on a hill I can see a great gray stone building with grated windows; it is an insane asylum, a great place in which are placed a lot of people a little crazier than we who may dwell without. People who fancy themselves what they are not,—as if we did not all do that. Who of us really believes that he is just what he affects to be? Bah! Who of us does not know that he is *not* what he would have others think him? Think of the motley fancies roofed by an “insane asylum.” Think of the kings and queens, the prophets, the inventors, sages and philosophers gathered there; shut up because they are dangerous. And what is it to be dangerous? They are homicidal, they may *kill*. To kill is to make dead, and to be dead is to be nothing. But you tell me the spirit is eternal and lives independent of its habitation; so after all it would be only a forced change of habitation. Not so great a misfortune, perhaps. Why not let these poor people out and try the experiment? Perhaps they would only evict those

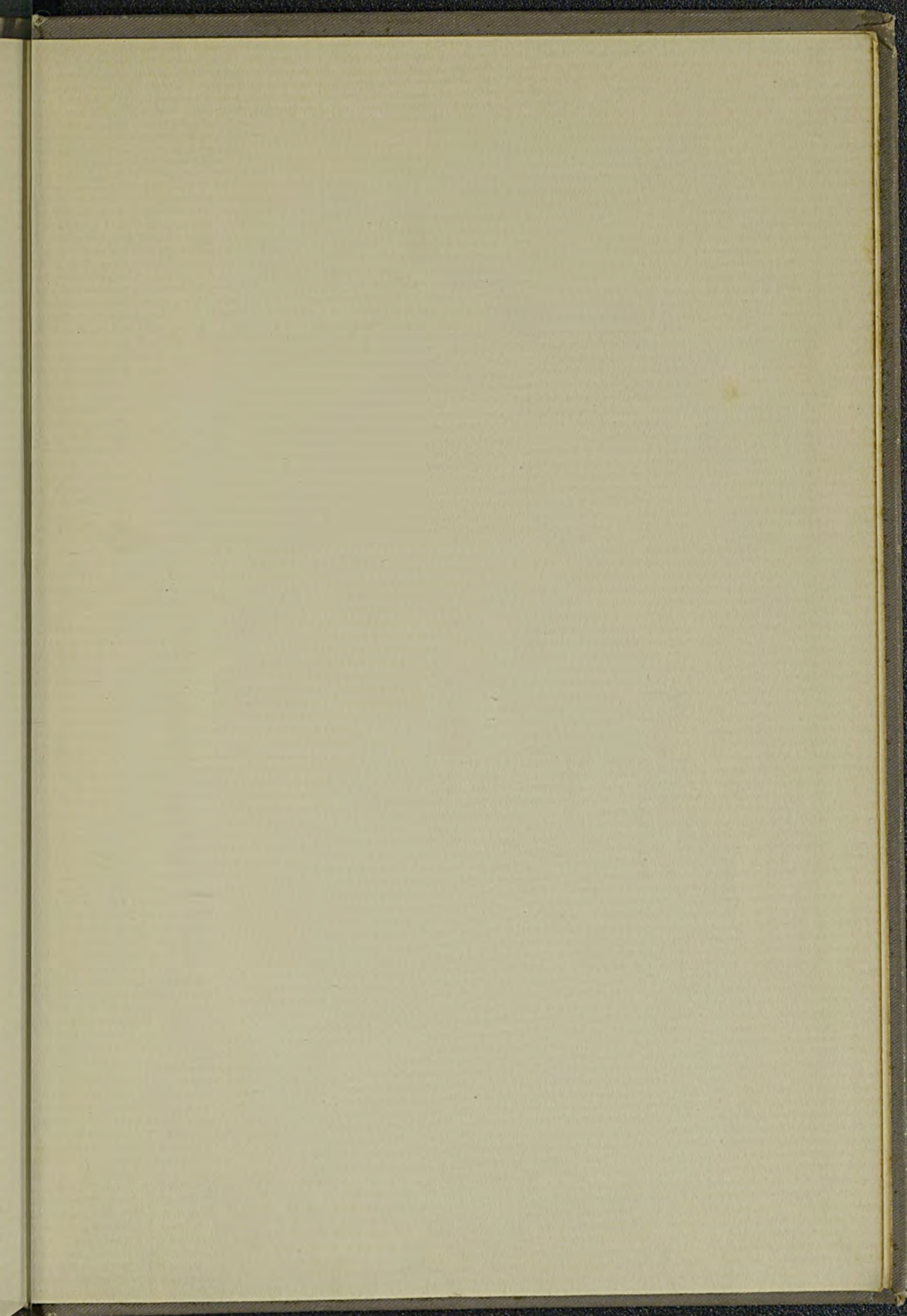
who ought to change their residence, and in any case would it be any worse than allowing twelve gentlemen, without prejudices, opinions, or much of anything else, to decide that a poor beggar shall be hanged by the neck, have his head cut off, or sit in a chair and be struck by lightning?

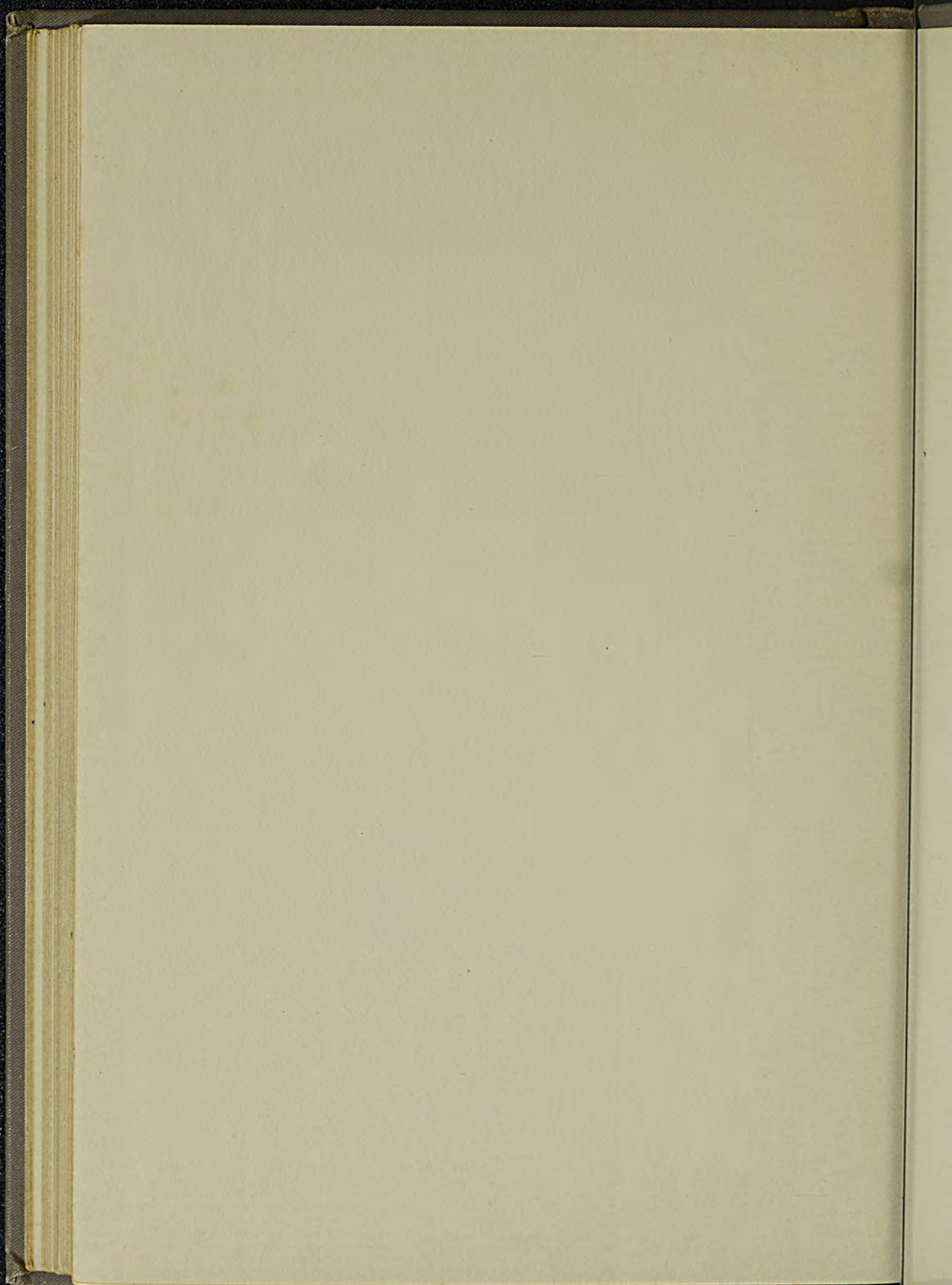
We are whirling through a forest now, great trees all about us—trees neath which Fauns and Dryads, Nymphs and Satyrs may have held festival. And now the wood-choppers are at their work and the chips fly and the great trunks come down, and the chips will be burned and the trunks will be sawed into lumber and a house will be built, and a modern Faun will till a garden and a nineteenth century nymph will drop in for afternoon tea.

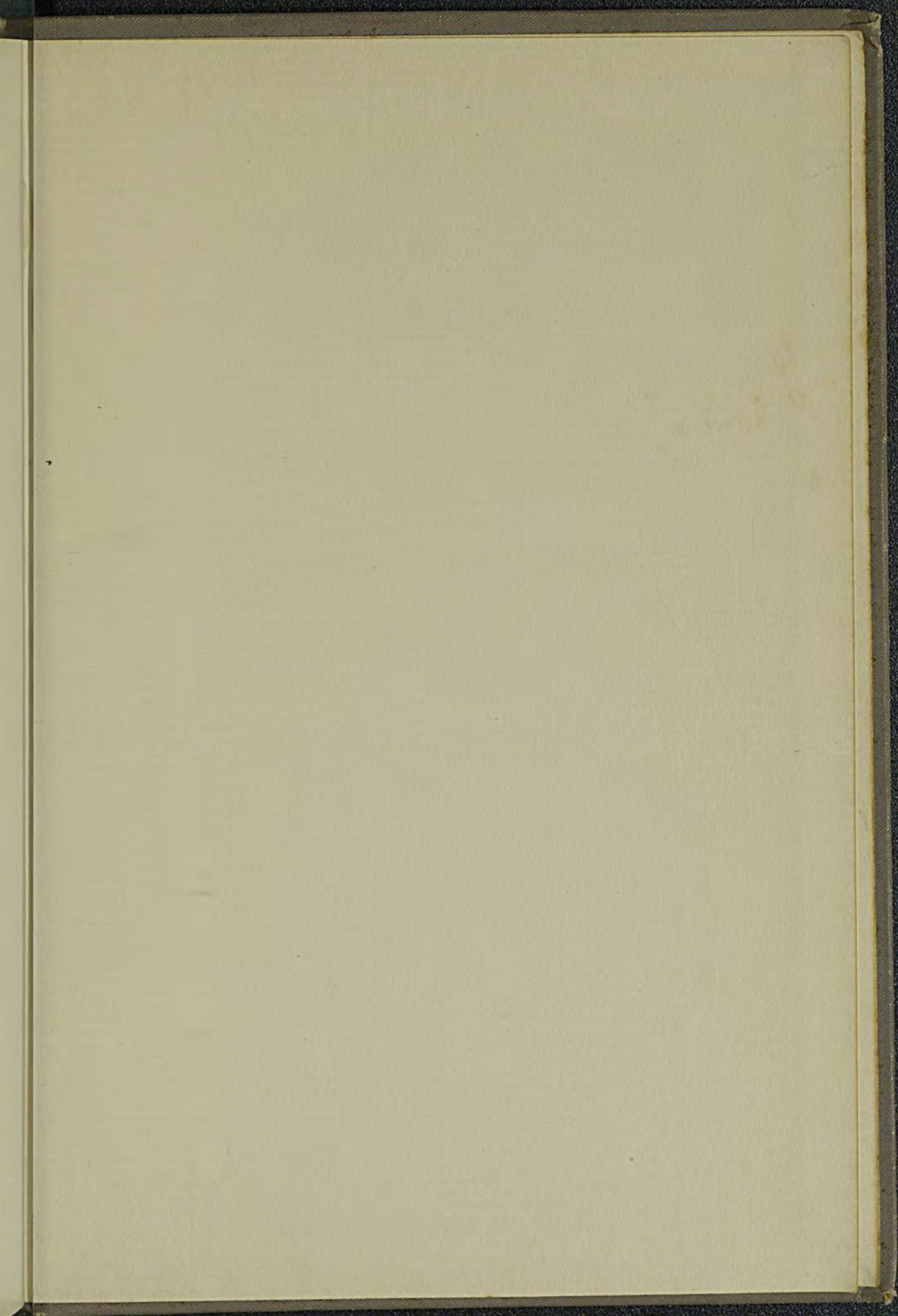
We whirl through a village, past a school house, out from which pours a crowd of juvenile humanity. What a wealth of possibility is there. A future bishop with arm about the shoulders of a some-day defaulter; and that, my little bishop, is a more Christian act, though you know it not, than many a one you'll do after the church has claimed you for its own. A tiny maid, who will one day write books that shall set the whole world thinking, comes forth hand in hand with one over whom crime and sin and sorrow shall hold high revel. And now the car wheels ring a merrier tune:

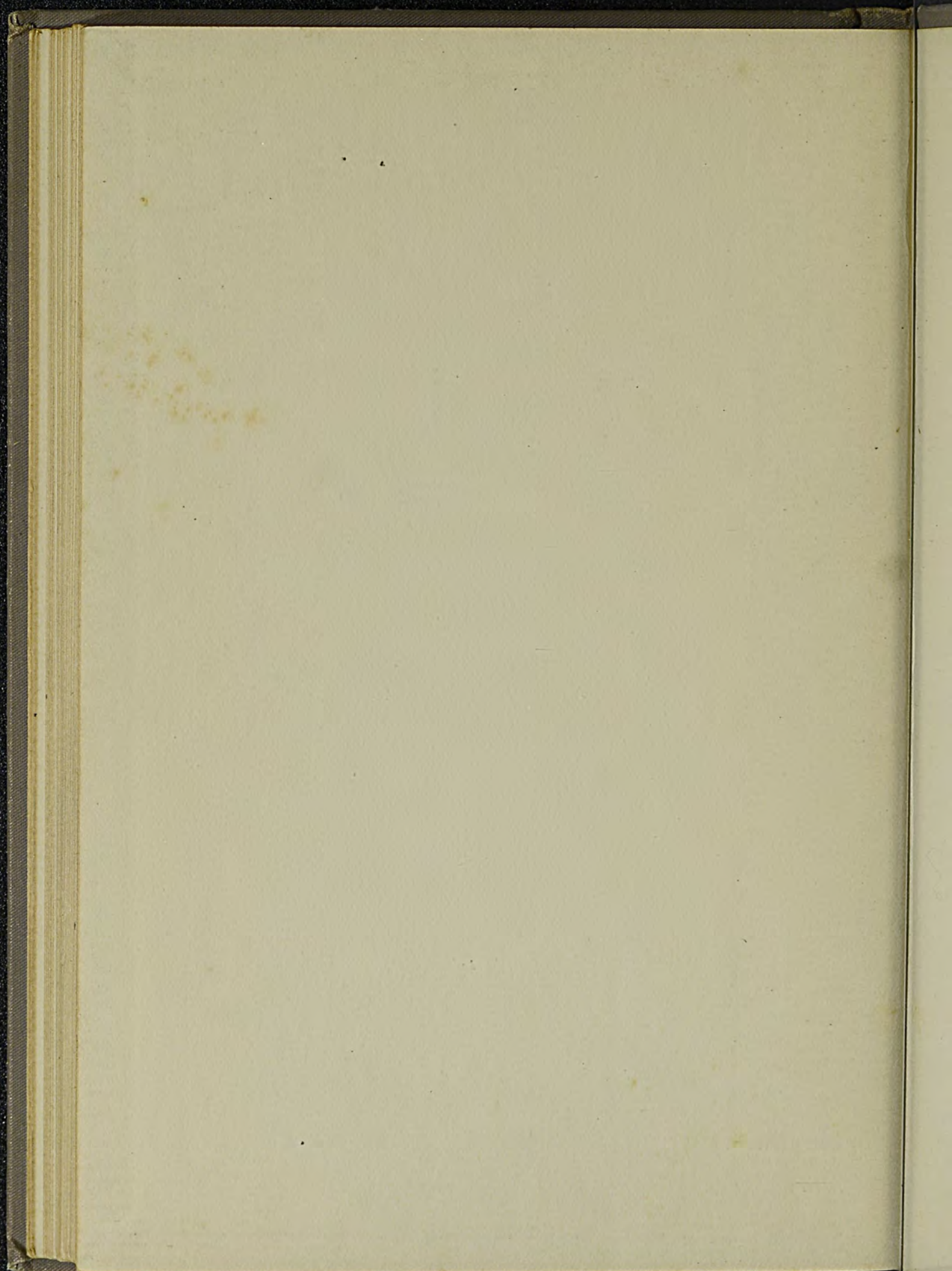
we are running along with the sea in sight, the glorious sea that holds its lesson at once of breadth and depth, the sea upon which float all our ships — ships laden we know not with what freight for us. Ships that perchance may never come in. What a marvelous mystery! What a tremendous power is the sea! And we rumble on into the great station of the city by the sea, and we catch a glimpse of the ships that represent the commerce with all the world, and we have no more time for fancies, but must reach out and grapple with ever-present facts. No more time for poetry or romance, for here is the cabman and the table d'hôte is near at hand. It is as well that the lines run so close side by side, the farce and the tragedy, the comedy and the drama.











3/86
Kristiansen
20:00

