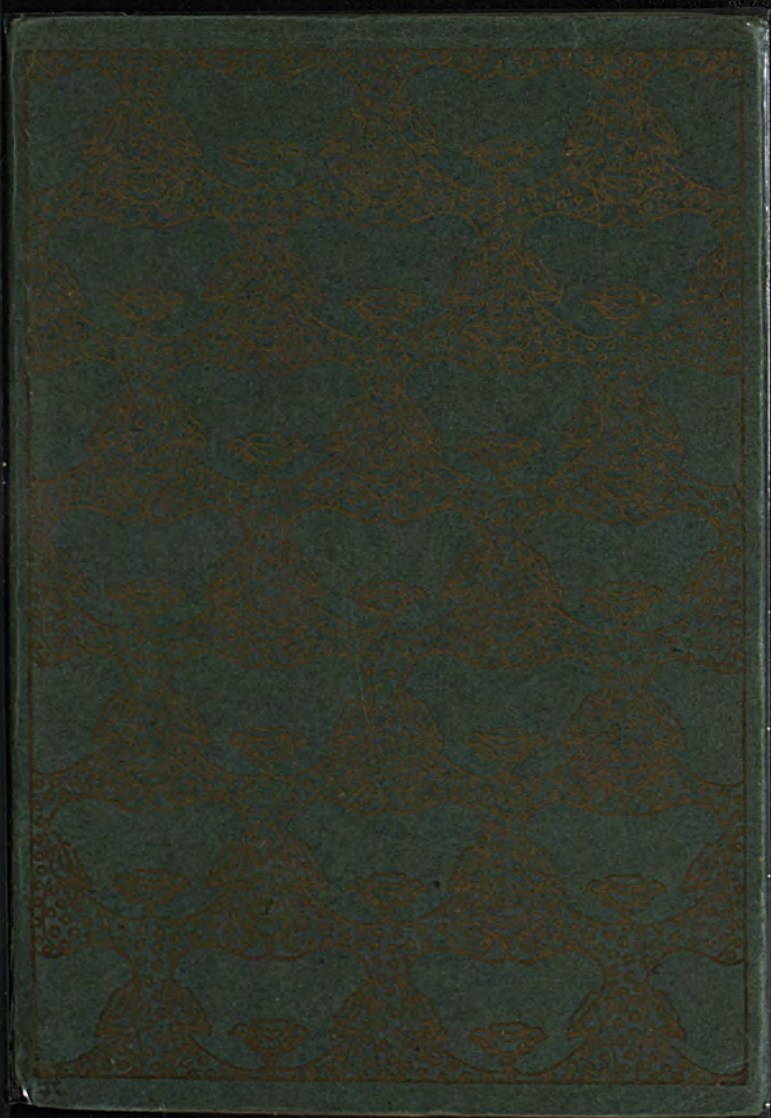




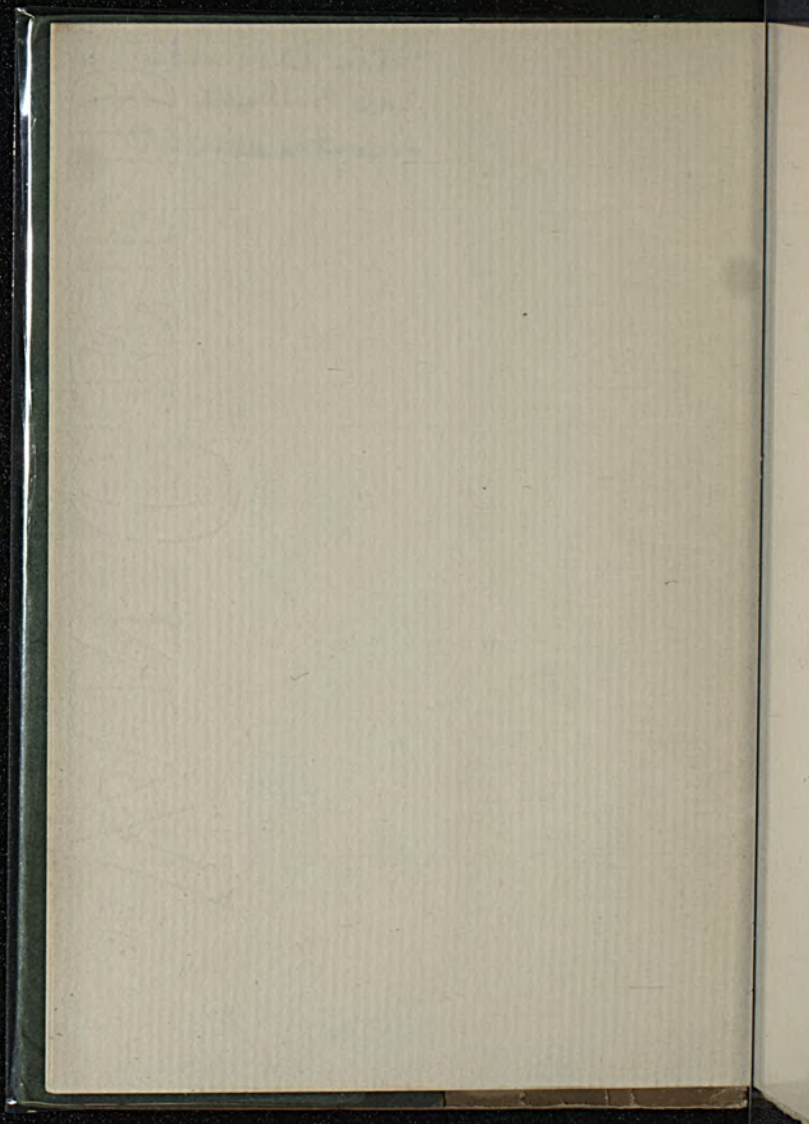


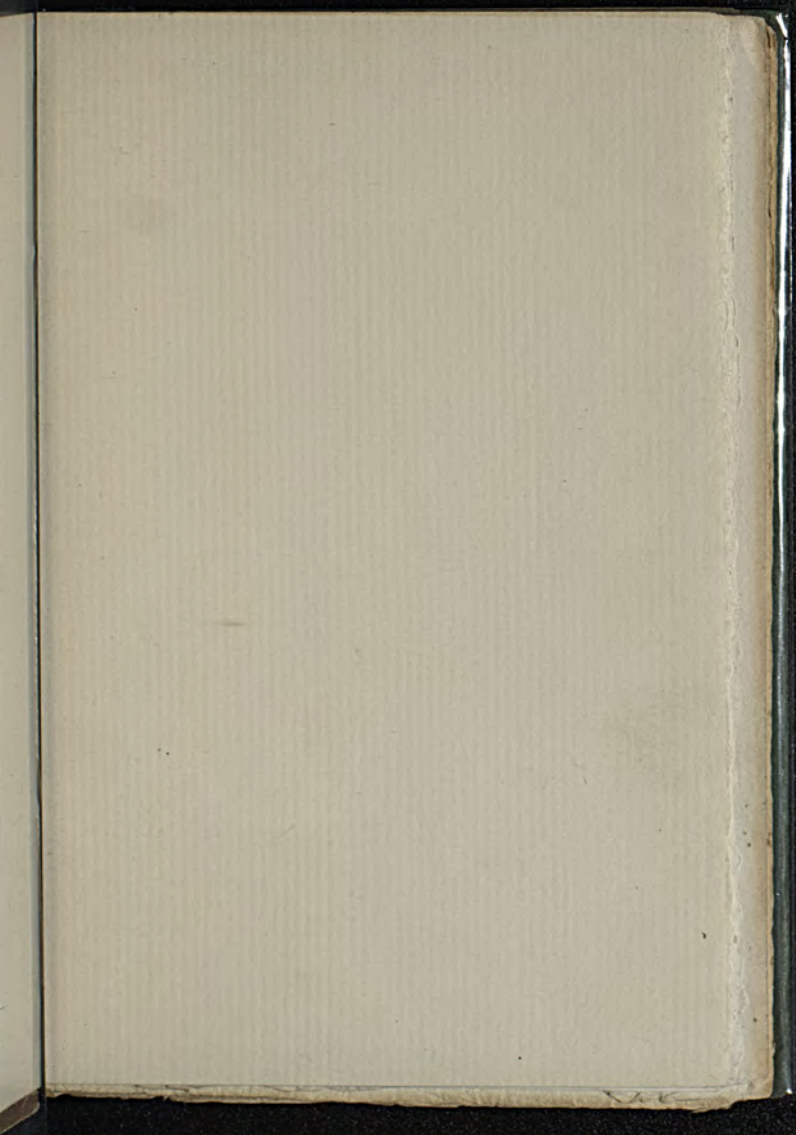
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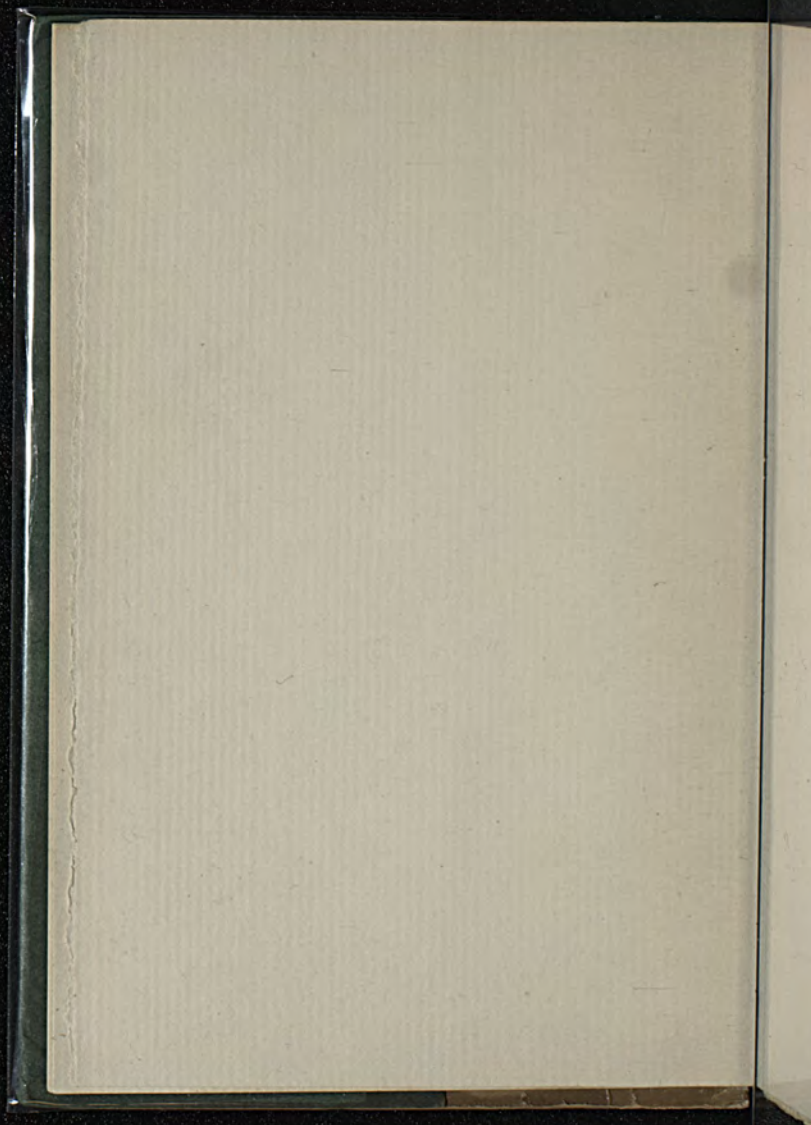


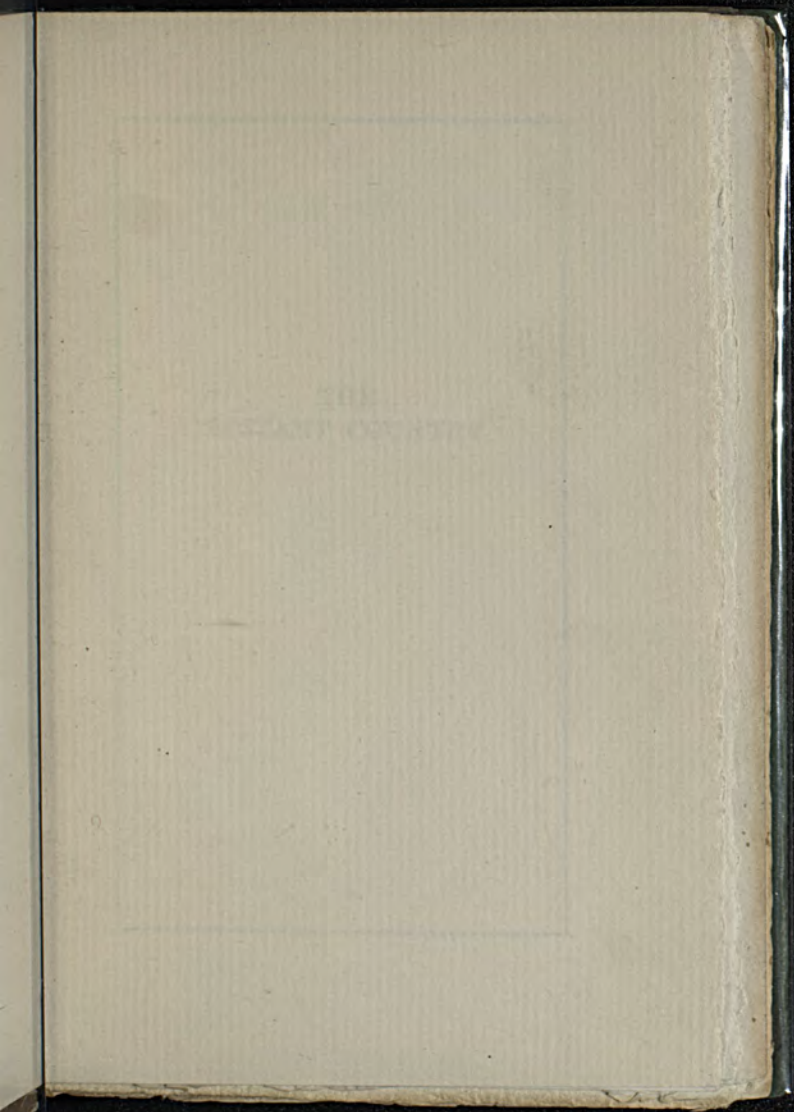


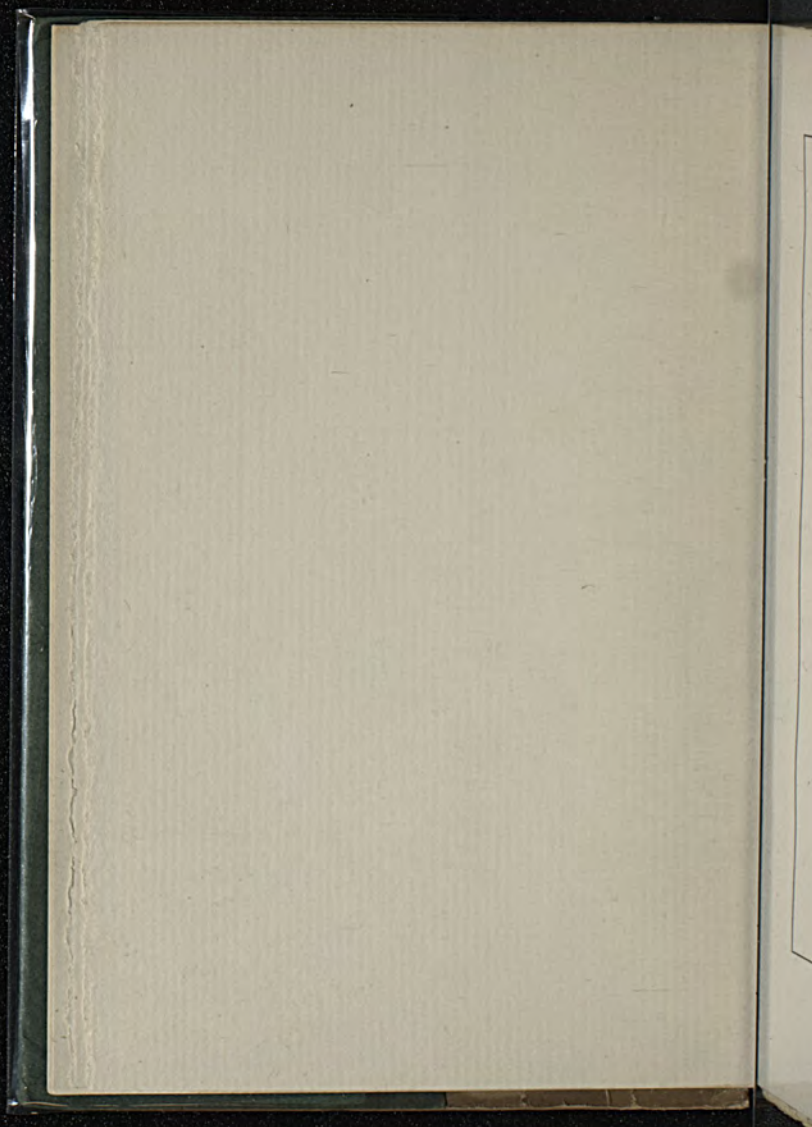
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THE
DISTANT COUNTRY

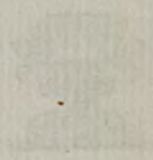
THE
FAR EAST

THE DISTANT COUNTRY
& OTHER PROSE POEMS
BY FIONA MACLEOD



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THE LATEST REPORT
A. OTHER LARGE FORM
BY MISS MARY



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FOREWORD

FOREWORD



FOREWORD

I*N reprinting these three selections taken from The Dominion of Dreams, I wish to avail myself of the opportunity of setting forth briefly how I first came to know the work of "Fiona Macleod." Taken together The Distant Country, A Memory of Beauty and The Wind, the Shadow and the Soul, comprise a little suite of prose poems which in my*

judgment will stand for all time as fitting "finale and farewell" of that rare artist known to us under the pseudonym destined to pass into a beautiful memory—"Fiona Macleod"—a name bearing in itself the impress of inspired audacity!

As far back as the summer of 1894 I received from England a copy of "Fiona's" first book Pharaïs, followed in rapid succession by The Mountain Lovers (1895), The Sin Eater and Other Tales (1895), The Washer of the Ford (1896), Green Fire (1896), and From the Hills of Dream (1896). In 1897 tales from The Sin Eater and The Washer of the Ford were

reissued with six additional stories heretofore uncollected, the whole being "organically grouped under their distinctive headings : Spiritual Tales, Barbaric Tales and Tragic Romances." These in turn were augmented by The Laughter of Peterkin : a Retelling of Old Tales of the Celtic Underworld (1897), The Dominion of Dreams (1899), The Divine Adventure ; Iona ; By Sundown Shores : Studies in Spiritual History (1900). Finally with The Winged Destiny : Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael (1904), a series of writings came to an end which for ten years had proved an ever widening source of delight to

all who cared to track this elemental Celtic spirit on its wonder working way.

In 1901 on a visit to Edinburgh it occurred to me that an American edition of the poems might be arranged and through her publishers, (Patrick Geddes and Colleagues,) I laid the matter before "Miss Macleod," whose identity they professed their inability to disclose, with the result that in October I brought out a revised and enlarged and final text of From the Hills of Dream: Threnodies, Songs and Poems, in the Old World Series. Since that time various other volumes have appeared with my imprint, and it was doubtless owing to this

fact of my having, so to speak, re-introduced "Fiona Macleod" to the American reader, that Mr. Sharp wrote me to meet him in Boston when on what was to be his last trip over sea. I came at his bidding and shall not forget that December evening at his hotel where for a few—all too few—hours I was drawn into the magic circle of his radiant intellect. Ill as he was at the time no one seeing him would have thought him so. When we parted at midnight I was not told in so many words, whatever I had been invited to suspect, that in this our first and last interview I had looked for the first and last time into the eyes of his

greatest imaginative creation — the heart of whose pathetic little mystery has been so rudely trampled upon by a few folk who profess a sense of wilful exclusion from the inner shrine of his confidence.

Is it then so very strange or unpardonable that a writer, finding himself in possession of this new genre and feeling that his own name was, as some have declared, at a literary discount, should seek to enhance its æsthetic value even to the extent of creating a legend which to a hypercritical mind might seem a trifle too near the border line of deception?

If I do not quote from the two score letters received from

"Fiona Macleod" during the years 1901-1904, it is because this is neither the time nor place to do so becomingly. It is enough for the present to say that they only confirm what Sharp's friends already know of his delightful capacity as a correspondent. Such rare personalities cannot be said to die: they go their way into the Unknown alone and unattended save by the love they leave behind — they go alone but unafraid.

There are passages of abiding truth in "Fiona Macleod's" writings, one of which as I read it now has the splendour of an ever-widening spiritual beauty: IS NOT LOVE MORE GREAT THAN WE CAN

CONCEIVE, AND DEATH THE
KEEPER OF UNKNOWN RE-
DEMPTIONS? *And so when
William Sharp died, (on the
12th of December, 1905,) "he
fared into silence with the
glad words, 'All is well.'"*

*"Death touched his wrist and took
his pen,
And lured him from the world of
men,
She mourns by that Sicilian grave,
Nor roams to find another slave."*

T. B. M.

December, 1906.



I
THE
DISTANT COUNTRY

*"He has loved, perhaps; of a
surety he has suffered. Inevitably
must he too have heard the 'sounds
that come from the distant country
of Slendour and Terror;' and
many an evening has he bowed
down in silence before laws that are
deeper than the sea."*



I

THE
DISTANT COUNTRY

THERE is a poet's tale
that I love well, and
have often recalled;
and of how in the hour of
death love may be so great
that it transcends the height
of hills and the waste of
deserts and the salt reaches
of the sea.

Last night I dreamed of
Ithel and Bronwen: con-
fusedly, for a noise of waves
and the crying of an inland
bird were continuously

wrought into the colours and fragrances of places remote from moor and sea, with the colours and fragrances of a land of orchards and pastures and quiet meres, and with the thin, poignant fragrances and acute breadths of colour of the sun-wrought East.

And when I woke, I knew it was not really Ithel and Bronwen, Red Ithel and Pale Bronwen, of whom I had been dreaming. Nor yet of an antique day, nor of the remote East, but of two whom I knew well, and of this West of rains and rainbows, of tears and hopes, which I love as a child loves a widowed mother.

Then I slept again, and

before dawn dreamed, and again awoke. But it was not of Bronwen and Ithel now that I dreamed, but of Aillinn and Bailê the Sweet-Spoken.

Among the stories of the Gael there is one that women love most. It is that of Bailê the Sweet-Spoken. When Bailê who lived in one part of Gaeldom, suffered in any wise, Aillinn, who lived in another part, suffered also and with the same suffering. So great was their love that distance between them was no more than a flow of water between two other flows in a narrow stream. That is love, that cannot live apart. But in an evil hour the hate of a base nature caused a death-

image to appear to Aillinn and to Bailê Honeymouth. And when Bailê the Sweet-Spoken saw his dead love, his heart broke, and the grass was less cold than was that which lay upon it. And when Aillinn saw her dead love, her life went away in a breath, and she was more white than were the white daisies in the grass where her great beauty lay like a stilled, motionless flame. Each was buried where each fell. Then this wonder was known throughout Gaeldom, that an apple-tree straightway grew out of the grave of Aillinn, which the wind and the sun and moon and unseen powers moulded at the top into the

form and head of Bailê ; and that out of the grave of Bailê grew a yew-tree, of the upper leaves and branches of which the unseen powers and the moon and the sun and the wind wrought the fair, beautiful head of Aillinn. That is love, that cannot dream apart. That is love, that for ever remoulds love nearer and nearer to the desire of the heart.

And when seven years had passed, the yew-tree and the apple-tree were laid low. It may be that one who loved not with the great love bade this to be done : for it is only the few who love as Aillinn and Bailê loved, and the smaller or weaker the soul

is, the more does it abhor or be troubled by the white flame. But the poets and seers made tablets of the apple-wood and the yew-wood, and wrote thereon amorous and beautiful words. Later, it happened that the Ardree summoned the poets to bring these tablets before him at the House of the Kings. But hardly had he touched them when the yew-wood and the apple-wood were suddenly one wood, swift in their coming together as when two waves meet at sea and are one wave. And the king and those about him could see the pale apple-wood inwoven with the dark yew-wood, nor could any

magic or incantation undo that miracle. So the Ardree bade the wood of the love of Aillinn and Bailê be taken to the treasury, and be kept there with the sacred emblems of great powers and demons and gods and the trophies of the heroes. And that is love, that heeds neither the word of man, nor the bitterness of death, nor the open law, nor the law that is secret and inscrutable.

But when I heard a mavis singing above the dew on the white wild-roses, and saw the blue light like a moving blue flame under-slidden with running gold, and knew that it was day, I thought no more of Aillinn

and of Bailê the Sweet-Spoken, nor of Red Ithel and Pale Bronwen, nor of the far, dim East where Ithel lay among the sands and Bronwen's love flickered like a shadow; nor of the remote far-off day of those four lovers of dream; but of two whom I loved well and who had their day in this West of rains and rainbows, of tears and hopes.

Love is at once so great and so frail that there is perhaps no thought which can at the same time so appal and uplift us. And there is in love, at times, for some, an unfathomed mystery. That which can lead to the stars

can lead to the abyss. There is a limit set to mortal joy as well as to mortal suffering, and the flame may overleap itself in one as in the other. The most dread mystery of a love that is overwhelming is its death through its own flame.

This is an "untold story" that I write. None could write it. A few will understand: to most it will be at once as real and as unreal as foam, as no more than the phosphorescence of emotion. One may see, and yet deny: as one may see in the nocturnal wave a flame that is not there, or a star caught momentarily in the travelling hollow, and know that there

is no flame but only a sudden gleam of infinitesimal, congregated life; no star, but only a wandering image. But, also, one may deny that which is not phantasmal. He who is colour-blind cannot see colour: he who is blind to that little infinite flame of life which creates the blue mist of youth and love and romance cannot discern in youth or love or romance the names of those primitive ecstasies that in themselves are immortal things, though we see only their fruitions and decays: and he whose soul is obscure, or whose spirit is blind, cannot see those things which pertain to the spirit, or

understand those things wherein the spirit expresses itself.

But for the some who care, I write these few words : not because I know a mystery, and would reveal it, but because I have known a mystery, and am to-day as a child before it, and can neither reveal nor interpret it.

They loved each other well, the two of whom I speak. It was no lesser love, though upheld by desires and fed with flame; but knew these, and recognised in them the bodily images of a flame that was not mortal and of desires that were not finite. They knew all of joy

and sorrow that can come to man and woman through the mysterious gates of Love, which to some seem of dusk and to some seem of morning or the radiances of noon.

Year by year their love deepened. I know of no love like theirs. It was, in truth, a flame.

One hears everywhere that passion is but unsatisfied desire, that love is but a fever. So, too, as I have heard, the moles, which can see in twilight and amid the earthy glooms they inhabit, cannot see the stars even as shining points upon the branches of trees, nor these moving branches even, nor their wind-lifted shadows.

Their love did not diminish, but grew, through tragic circumstance. As endurance became harder,—for love deepened and passion became as the bird of prey that God sets famished in the wilderness, while the little and great things of common life came in upon this love like a tide,—it seemed to each that they only withdrew the more into that which was for them not the most great thing in life, but life.

To her, he was not only the man she loved: to whom she had given the inward, unnameable life as well as that which dwelled in the heart and in the mind, in the

pulse and the blood and the nerves. He was Love itself; and when sometimes he whispered in her hair, she heard other words, and knew that a greater than he whom she loved spoke with hidden meanings.

How could she tell what she was to him? She was a flame to his mind as well as to his life: that she knew. But he could not tell her what words fail to tell. She could feel his heart beat: his pulse rose to her eyes as a wave to the moon: in those eyes of his she could see that which was in her own heart, but which she had to blind and lead blindfold, because a woman cannot

look upon that which is intolerable. Doubtless it was not so with him. This she could not know. But she knew her own heart. The untranslatable call was there. She heard it in those silences where women listen.

Sometimes she looked at him, wondering: at times, even with a sudden, mysterious fear. She did not fear him whom she loved, but unknown forces behind him. He spoke to her sometimes of that which cannot pass: of love more enduring than the granite hills, of passion, of the spirit, of deathless things. She feared them. She did not fear with the mind: that leaped, as a doe

to the water-springs. She did not fear with the body, for that abhorred death and the ending of dreams. But something within her feared. These things he spoke of were too great and terrible a wind for a little, wandering flame.

Did he not think thus himself? she wondered. Was it because he was a man that he spoke blithely of these far-off, beautiful and terrible things?

Once they were lying on a grassy slope, on a promontory, on a warm, moonlit night. A single pine-tree grew on the little, rocky buttress: and against this they leaned, and looked through the

branches at the pale, uncertain stars, or into the moving, dark, mysterious water.

"It is our love," he whispered to her: "we are on the granite rock: and through the tree of our little world we look at the unchanging stars: and this moving tide is the mystery that is for ever about us, and whispers so much, and tells so little."

It was sweet to hear: and she loved him who whispered: and the thought was her own. But that night she lay thinking for hour upon hour, or, rather, her mind was but a swimming thought; a thought that swam idly on still seas in deep darkness. How wonderful were these dreams

that love whispered : how . . .

But when at sunrise she woke, it was with a sense that the horizons of life crept closer and closer. She smiled sadly as she thought of how measurable are the mortalities we flatter with infinitude: the sands of the desert, the green hair of the grass, the waves of the sea.

Often, of late, she knew that he who loved her was strangely disquieted. "Too many dreams," he said once, with double meaning, smiling as he looked at her, but with an unexpressed trouble in his eyes.

More and more, because of the great, enduring, pitiless flame of love, she turned to

the little things of the hour and the moment. It is the woman's way, and is a law. And more and more, wrought by longings and desires, he whom she loved turned to the inward contemplation of the things that are immortal, to the longings and desires that have their roots in the soul, but whose tendrils reach beyond the stars, and whose flowers grow by the waters of life in Edens beyond dream. It may not be men's way; and he had the fatal gift of the imagination, which is to men what great beauty is to women—a crown of stars and a slaying sword.

They turned the same way, not knowing it. How could

they know, being blind?
Blind children they were.

He feared the flame would
consume them. She feared
it would consume itself.

Therein lay the bitterness.
But for her, being a woman,
the depths were deeper. He
had his dreams.

When, at last, the end
came — a strange, a tragic,
an almost incredible end,
perhaps, for love did not
veer, and passion was not
slain, but translated to a
starry dream, and every
sweet and lovely intercourse
was theirs still — the suffer-
ing was too great to be borne.
Yet neither death nor tragic
mischance came with veiled
healing.

Love, won at a supreme hazard (and again, I do not tell the story of these two, who had, and now in the further silences have, their own secret, for ever sacred), proved a stronger force than life. Life that can be measured, that is so measurable, is as a child before the other unknown power, that is without measure. The man did not understand. He fed the flame with dreams upon dreams, with hopes upon hopes; with more dreams and more hopes.

Once, dimly foreseeing the end, she said, "Love can be slain. It is mortal." He answered, almost with anger, that sooner could the soul

die. She looked at him, wondering that he, whose imagination was so much greater than hers, could not understand.

She loved to the edge of death by will. Will can control the mortal things of love. Instinct wore her heart by day and by night. She put her frail strength into the balance, then her dreams, then her memories. Before the end, hesitating, but not for herself, she put her whole mind there. Still, life weighed lower and lower the scale.

One day they talked of immaterial things. Suddenly he asked her a question.

She was silent. The room

was in darkness, for the fire had burned low. He could see only the ruddy gleam on the white skirt; the two white hands; the little restless flame in an opal.

Then, quietly, she told him. She had not ceased to love: it was not that.

Simply, love had been too great a flame. At the last, at that moment, she had striven to save all: she had already put all in the balance, all but her soul. That, too, she had now put there with swift and terrible suddenness.

The balance trembled, then Life weighed the scale lower, and lower.

It was gone. That had gone away upon the wind,

which was light as it, homeless as it, as mysterious. Out of the balance she took back what else she had put there: her mind, quiet, sane, serene now, if that can be serene that neither fears nor cares because it does not feel: and the dreams, and desires, that had turned to loosened fragrances and shadows: and hopes, grey as the ashes of wood, that fell away and were no more.

She was the same, and yet not the same. He trembled, but dare not understand. In his mind were falling stars.

"I will give you all I have to give," she said; "to you, who have had all I had to give, I give that which is left.

It is an image that has no life."

When he walked that night alone under the stars he understood. Love can come, not in his mortal but in his immortal guise: as a spirit of flame. There is no alchemy of life which can change that tameless and fierce thing, that power more intense than fire, that creature whose breath consumes what death only silences.

It had come close and looked at them. Long ago he had prayed that it might be so. In answer, the immortal had come to the mortal. How little of all that was to be he had foreseen when, by a spiritual

force, he accomplished that too intimate, that too close union, in which none may endure! I speak of a mystery. That it may be, that to many, if not all, this thing that I say will be meaningless, I know. But I do not try to explain what is not a matter of words: nay, I could not, for though I believe, I know of this mystery only through those two who broke (or of whom one broke) some occult but imperious spiritual law.

They lived long after this great change. Their love never faltered. Each, as before, came close to the other, as day and night ceaselessly meet in dawns and twilights.

But that came to her no more which had gone. For him, he grew slowly to understand a love more great than his. His had not known the innermost flame, that is pure fire.

Strange and terrible thoughts came to him at times. The waste places of the imagination were peopled.

Often, as he has told me, through sleepless nights a solemn marching as of a vast throng rose and fell, a dreadful pulse. But, for him, life was fulfilled. I know that he had always one changeless dream, a hope, a faith. I do not know what, in the end, clouded or unclouded that faithful spirit. But I,

too, who knew them, who loved them, have my assured faith: the more, not the less, now that they are gone to that "distant country of Splendour and Terror." Love is more great than we conceive, and Death is the keeper of unknown redemptions. Of her, I have had often, I have ever, in my mind the words wherewith I begin one of the tales in this book: "It is God that builds the nest of the blind bird."



II

A MEMORY OF BEAUTY

*"Cover her face ; mine eyes daz-
zle ; she died young."*

WEBSTER.



II

A MEMORY OF BEAUTY

MANY years ago a beautiful dark woman came to Ard-nathonn, and lived there a while, and died, as she had lived, in silence.

None in that remote place knew who she was; nor of any there was ever known the name of the man who loved her, and died, or the name of another man who loved her, and died.

They called her "the foreign woman;" and where

the nettle sheds her snow
above the lichened stones in
the little seaward-sloping
graveyard, there appear on
one stone these words only:
The Stranger.

In the ruined garden of
Tighnarnathonn stands a
broken sundial. Here may
still be deciphered the legend:
Time Past: Time to Come.

Time past, time to come.
It is the refrain of our
mortality.

And Aileen? . . . That
great beauty of hers is no
more. It is unthinkable. If
loveliness can pass away as a
breath . . . nay, did not one
in Asia of old, one of the
seers of the world, interpret

thus: "I am Beauty itself
among beautiful things."
The dream that is the body
eternally perishes; only the
dream that is the soul
endures.

Of the two men who loved
Aileen, there is no more than
this to be said. One, he
who had his days with her,
had the greater peace, the
happier life. The other . . .
he wrote this song —

"Aileen, Aileen, heart of my life,
my pulse, my flame,
There are two men loving thee,
and two who are calling thee
wife:

A name is a name, but Love is
love, Aileen my Queen!
True art thou, dear, true and
strong, in life and in death.

Thou to me, I to thee, this is the wonder, the joy :

This is our breath of life : that I am for thee, and thou for me ! ”

Can it be that all three are dead ? There are times when I look for the coming of two at least, as the stranded seaweed for the sea. When the love of men is as the idle wind, and the loveliness that was woman is less than dust, the word alone does not perish. This is my solace, my hope.

It is a commonplace that death is held most mournful when it is the seal of silence upon youth, upon what is beautiful. Peradventure, life incomplete may some day be

revealed to us as the sole life that is complete. Howbeit, we need not lament when love has been gloriously present. I think often of that old sundial inscription —

“Light and Shade by turns,
But Love always . . . ”

To have loved supremely!
After all, the green, sweet
world had been good to her,
its daughter. She had loved
and been loved, with the pas-
sion of passion. Nothing in
the world could take away that
joy; not any loss or sorrow,
nor that last grief, the death
of him whom she so loved;
not the mysterious powers
themselves that men call God,
and that move and live and

have their blind will behind the blowing wind and the rising sap, behind the drifting leaf and the granite hills, behind the womb of woman and the mind of man, behind the miracle of day and night, behind life, behind death.

This was hers. She had this supreme heritage. In truth she was crowned. And he . . . from the first he wore the glory of her love, as morning wears the sunrise. It is enough.

Both now are alien far hence, in a land unvisited of us. I think I know that when she died, alone, and in a strange place, with unrelinquished name, and leaving only a memory of beauty, she

heard the voice of him whom
she loved with the one love.

.
Can love itself be as an
idle bow upon our poor per-
ishing heavens? Is love a
dream, a dream within a
dream? If so, the soul her-
self were a vain image, as
fleeting as the travelling
shadow of a wave.

Alas, how brief that lovely
hour which was her life! It
is only in what is loveliest,
most fugitive, that eternity
reveals, as in a sudden flame,
as in the vanishing facet of
a second, the beauty of all
beauty; that it whispers, in
the purple hollow of the
dancing flame, the incommu-
nicable word.

Strange mystery, that so many ages had to come and go, so many lives to be lived, so many ecstasies and raptures and sorrows and vicissitudes to flame and be and pass, just to produce one frail flower of perfection. I sometimes think of this unknown loveliness, this woman whose sole pulse now is in the sap of the grass over her head, not as a mortal joy, but as the breath or symbol of a most ancient and ever new mystery, the mystery of eternal beauty :

“ . . . For I have seen
In lonely places, and in lonelier
hours,
My vision of the rainbow-aureoled
face

Of her whom men name Beauty :
proud, austere :
Dim vision of the flawless, perfect
face,
Divinely fugitive, that haunts the
world,
And lifts man's spiral thought to
lovelier dreams."

She is gone now who was
so fair. Can great beauty
perish? The unlovely is as
the weed that is everywhere
under the sun. But that
wind which blows the seed,
alike of the unlovely and of
the children of beauty — can
it have failed to wed that
exhaled essence to the glory
of light, so that somewhere,
somehow, that which was so
beautiful is?

I hold to this.

III

THE WIND, THE SHADOW,
AND THE SOUL

*"Thus begins another vigil, that
of the singers in God's acre."*

The Shadow of Arvor.

"The will of God is in the wind."

Santez Anna.

*"The Wind and Silence, God's
eldest born."*

The Book of the Opal.



III

THE WIND, THE SHADOW, AND THE SOUL

THERE are dreams beyond the thrust of the spear, and there are dreams and dreams; of what has been or what is to be, as well as the more idle fantasies of sleep. And this, perhaps, is of those dreams whose gossamer is spun out of the invisible threads of sorrow; or it may be, is woven out of the tragic shadows of unfulfilled vicissitude. It is of little moment.

One who was, now is not.
That "is the sting, the wonder."

One who was, now is not.
The soul and the shadow
have both gone away upon
the wind.

I write this in a quiet sea-
haven. Tall cliffs half enclose
it, in two white curves, like
the wings of the solander
when she hollows them as
she breasts the north wind.

These sun-bathed cliffs,
with soft hair of green grass,
against whose white walls
last year the swallows, dusky
arrowy shuttles, slid incess-
antly, and where tufts of sea-
lavender hung like breaths of
stilled smoke, now seem to
me merely tall cliffs. Then,

when we were together, they were precipices which fell into seas of dream, and at their bases was for ever the rumour of a most ancient, strange, and penetrating music. It is I only, now, who do not hear: doubtless, in those ears, it fashions new meanings, mysteries, and beauty: there, where the music deepens beyond the chime of the hours, and Time itself is less than the whisper of the running wave. White walls, which could open, and where the sea-song became a spirit, still with the foam-bells on her hair, but with a robe green as grass, and in her hand a white flower.

Symbols: yes. To some,

foolish ; to others clear as the noon, the clearness that is absolute in light, that is so obvious, and is unfathomable.

Last night the wind suddenly smote the sea. There had been no warning. The sun had set beneath narrow peninsulas of lemon and pale mauve ; overagainst the upper roseate glow, the east was a shadowy opal wilderness, with one broad strait of luminous green wherein a star trembled. At the furtive suffusion of the twilight from behind the leaves, a bat, heedless of the season, flittered through the silent reaches ; and when it too was lost in the obscurity, and darkness was silence and

silence darkness, the continuous wave upon the shore was but the murmurous voice of that monotony. Three hours later a strange confused sound was audible. At midnight there was a sudden congregation of voices; a myriad scream tore the silence; the whole sea was uplifted, and it was as though the whirling body of the tide was rent therefrom and flung upon the land.

I did not sleep, but listened to the wind and sea. My dreams and thoughts, children of the wind, were but ministers of a mind wrought in shadow. They did "the will of beauty and regret."

At dawn the tempest was over. But for an hour thereafter the sea was in a shroud of scud and spray: I could see nothing but this shimmering, dreadful whiteness.

Why do I write this? It is because in this past night of tempest, in this day of calm, I have come close to one of whom I speak, and would image in this after-breath, as a sudden fragrance of violets in an unexpected place, a last fragrance of memory. Yet, I would not have written these last words to this book if it were not for the keen resurrection of my sorrow in the very haven of to-day's noontide.

I was in a hollow in the

eastern cliff, a hollow filled with pale blue shadow, and with a faint sea-rumour clinging invisibly to the flint bosses and facets of the sun-warmed chalk. Before me rose gradually a grass-green path, aslant upon the upward slope. There was absolute stillness in the air. The trouble of the waters made this landward silence as peace within peace.

Out of the blue serenities, where nothing, not even the moving whiteness of a vanishing wing, was visible; out of the heat and glory of the day; out of that which is beyond—an eddy of wind swiftly descended. I saw the grasses shiver along the

green path. A few broken sprays and twigs whirled this way and that. In my own land this has one open meaning. Those invisible ones whom we call the hidden people — whom so many, instinctively ever reducing what is great to what is small, what is of mystery and tragic wonder to what is fantastic and unthinkable, call "the fairies" — have passed by.

There are too many who inhabit the world that from our eyes is hidden, for us to know who pass, in times, on occasions like this. The children of light and darkness tread the same way. But to-day it was not one of

those unseen and therefore unfamiliar kindred.

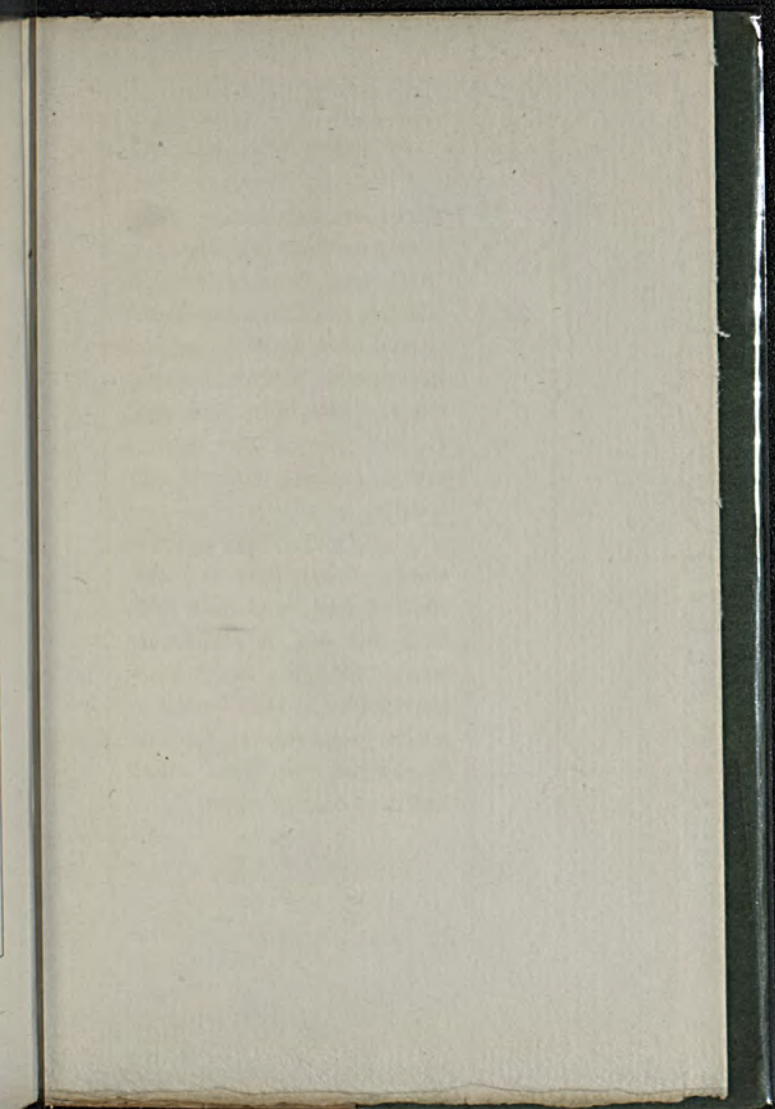
For when I looked again, I saw that the one whom I had lost moved slowly up the path; but not alone. Behind, or close by, moved another. It was this other who turned to me. The image stooped, and lifted a palmful of dust in the hollow of its hand. This it blew away with a little sudden breath; and I saw that it was not the shadow, nor the phantom, but the soul of that which I had loved. Yet my grief was for that sweet perished mortality when I saw the eddy-spiralled greying dust was all that remained.

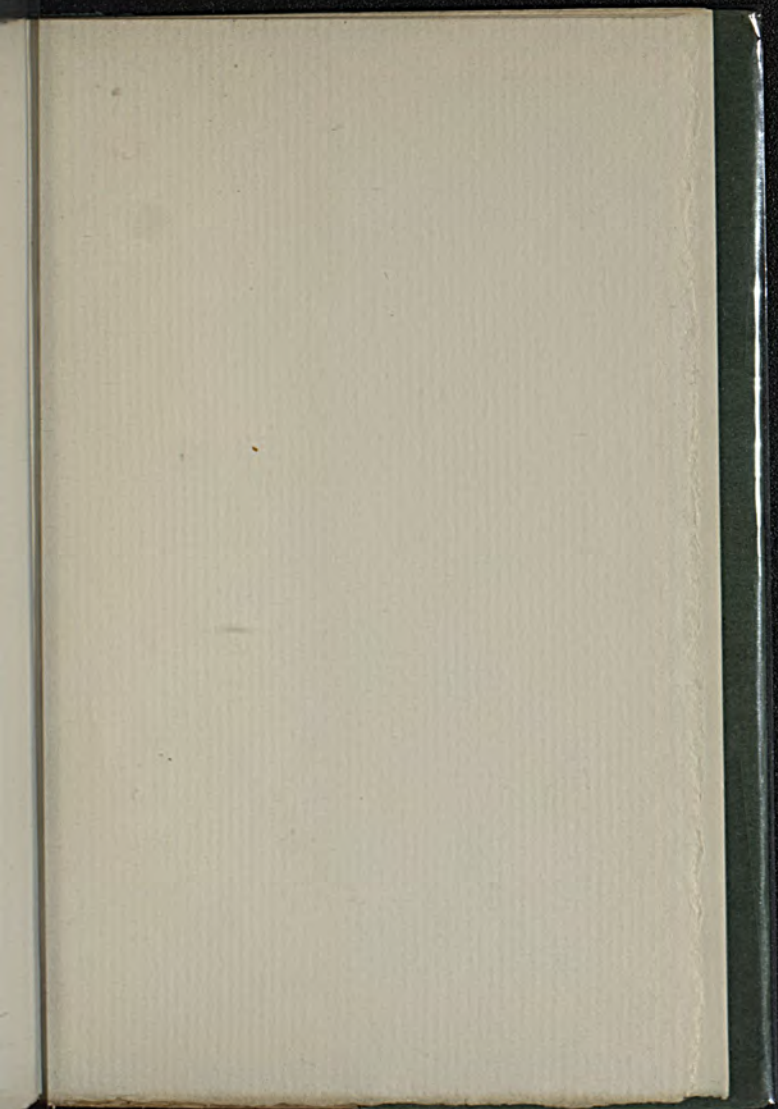
But for a second I had

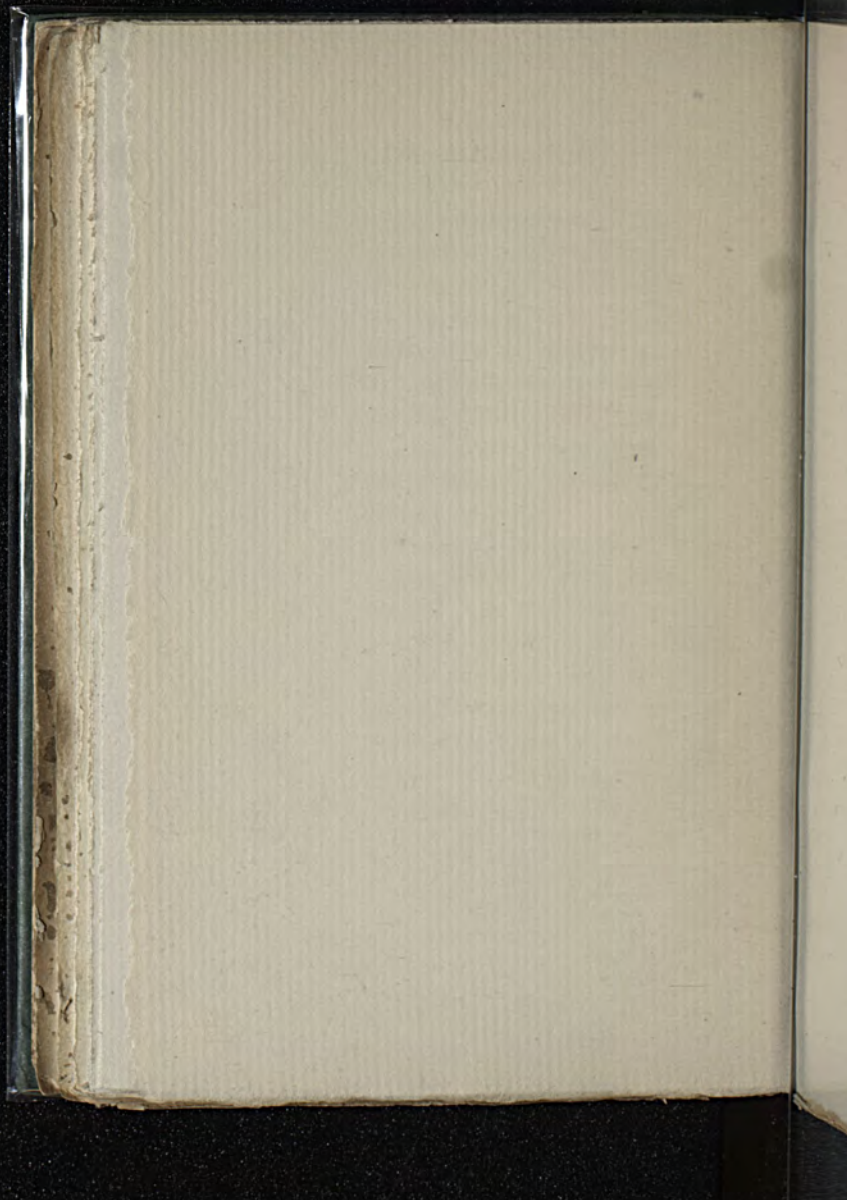
seen them together, so much one, so incommunicably alien. In that moment of farewell, all that was of mortal beauty passed into the starry eyes of the comrade who had forgotten the little infinite change. It was then, it was thus, I saw Eternity. That is why I write.

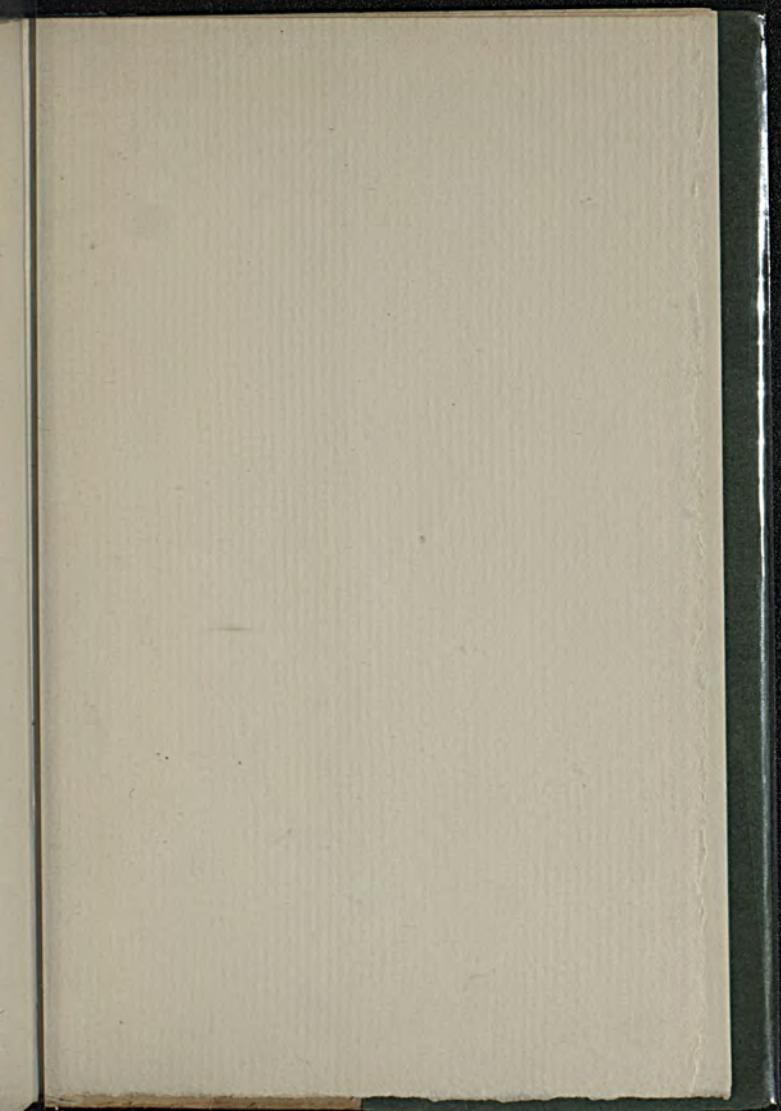
Then, as a film of blue smoke fades into the sky, what I had seen was not; and the old bewilderment was mine again, and I knew not which was the Shadow or which the Soul, or whether it was but the Wind which had thus ceased to be.

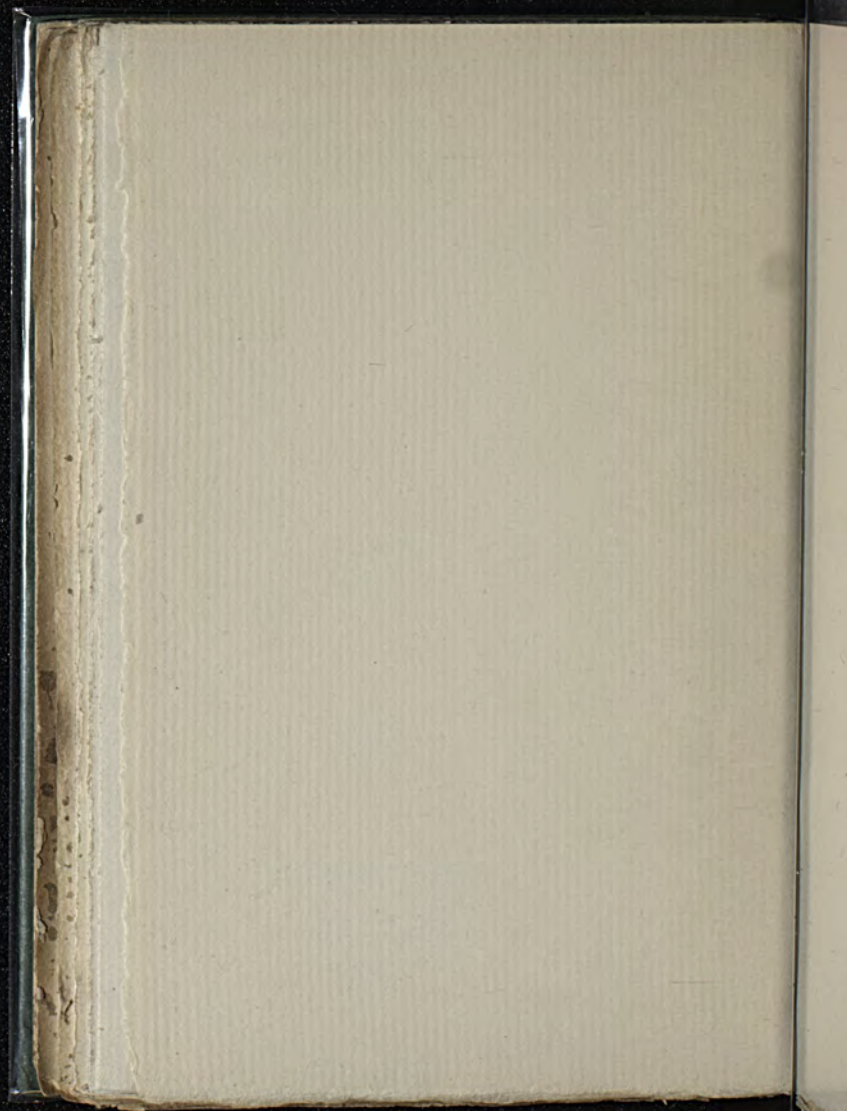


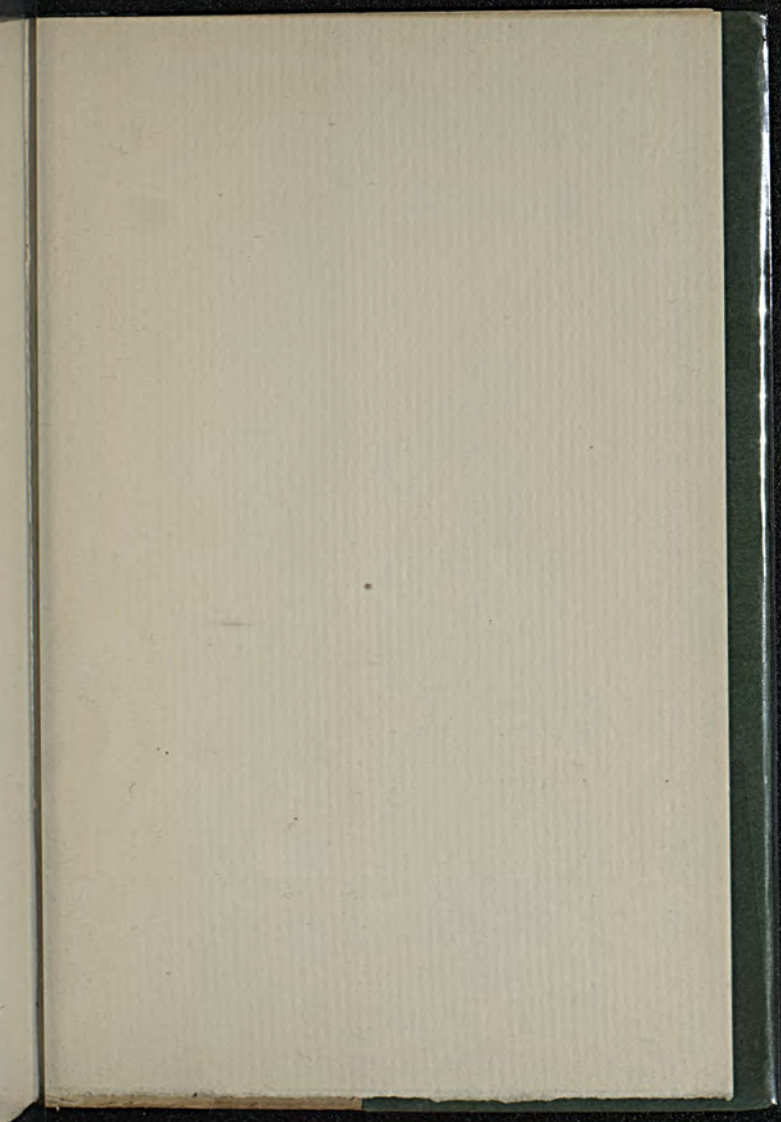


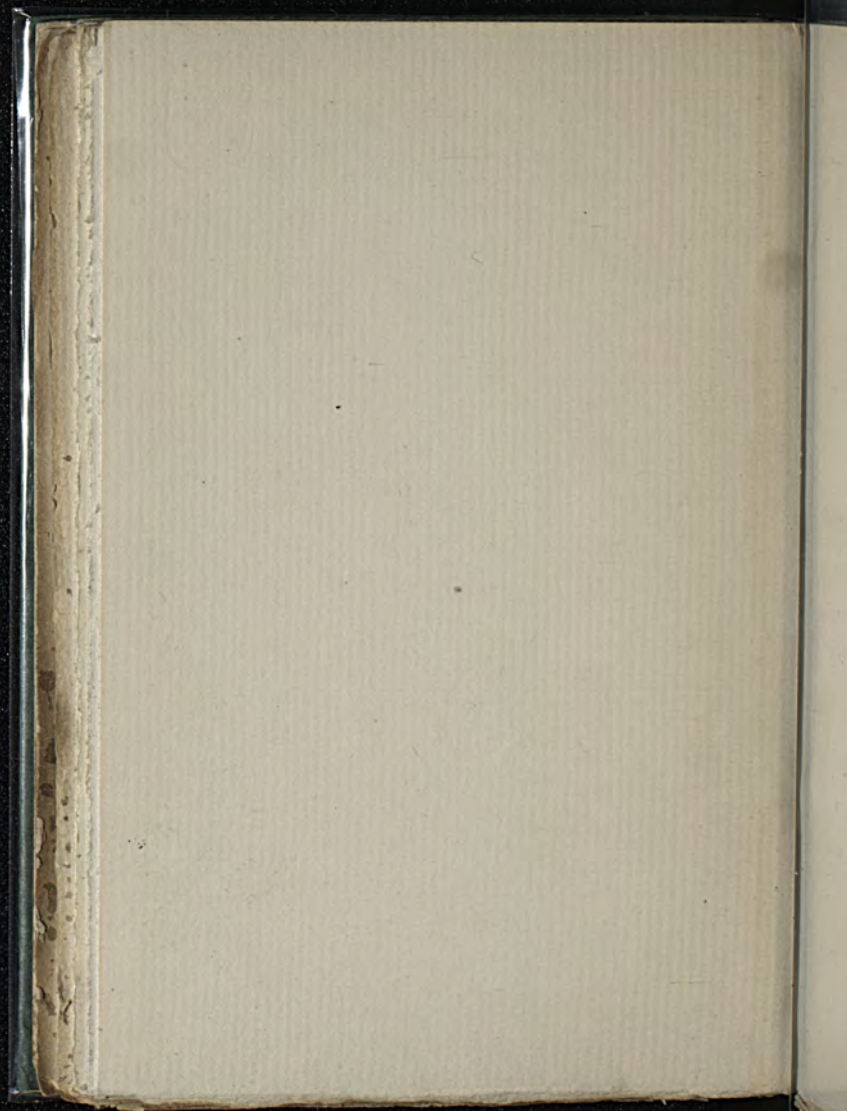


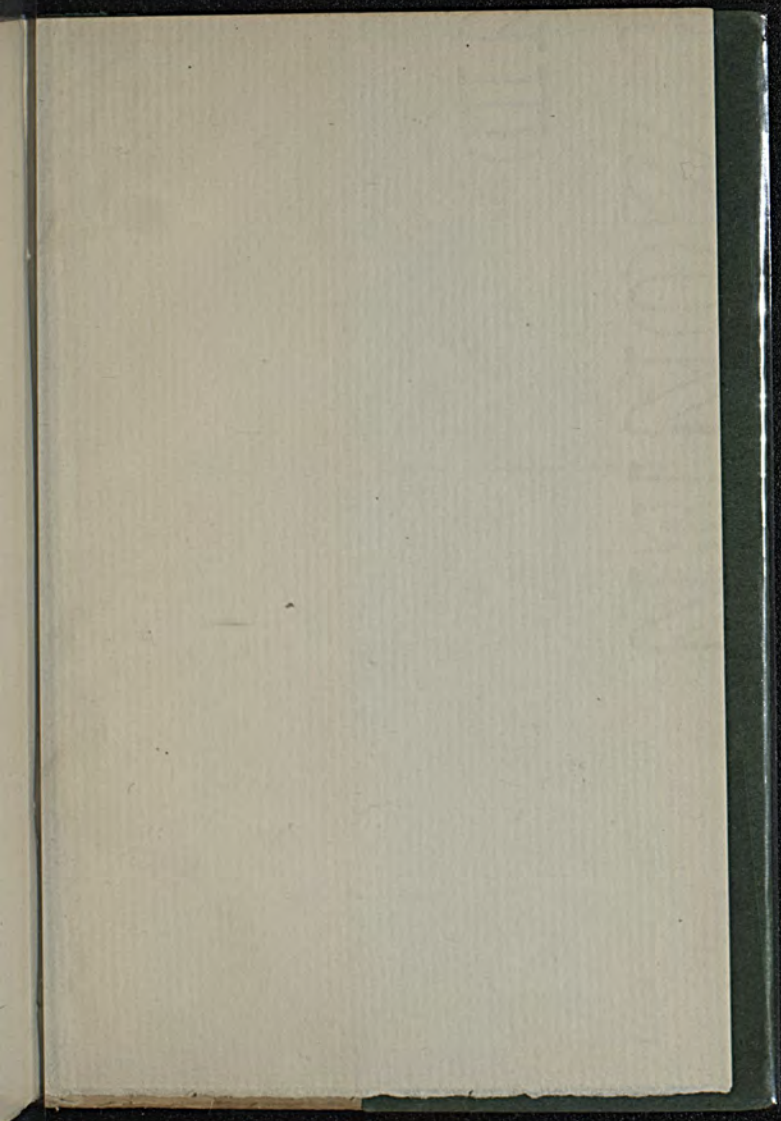












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