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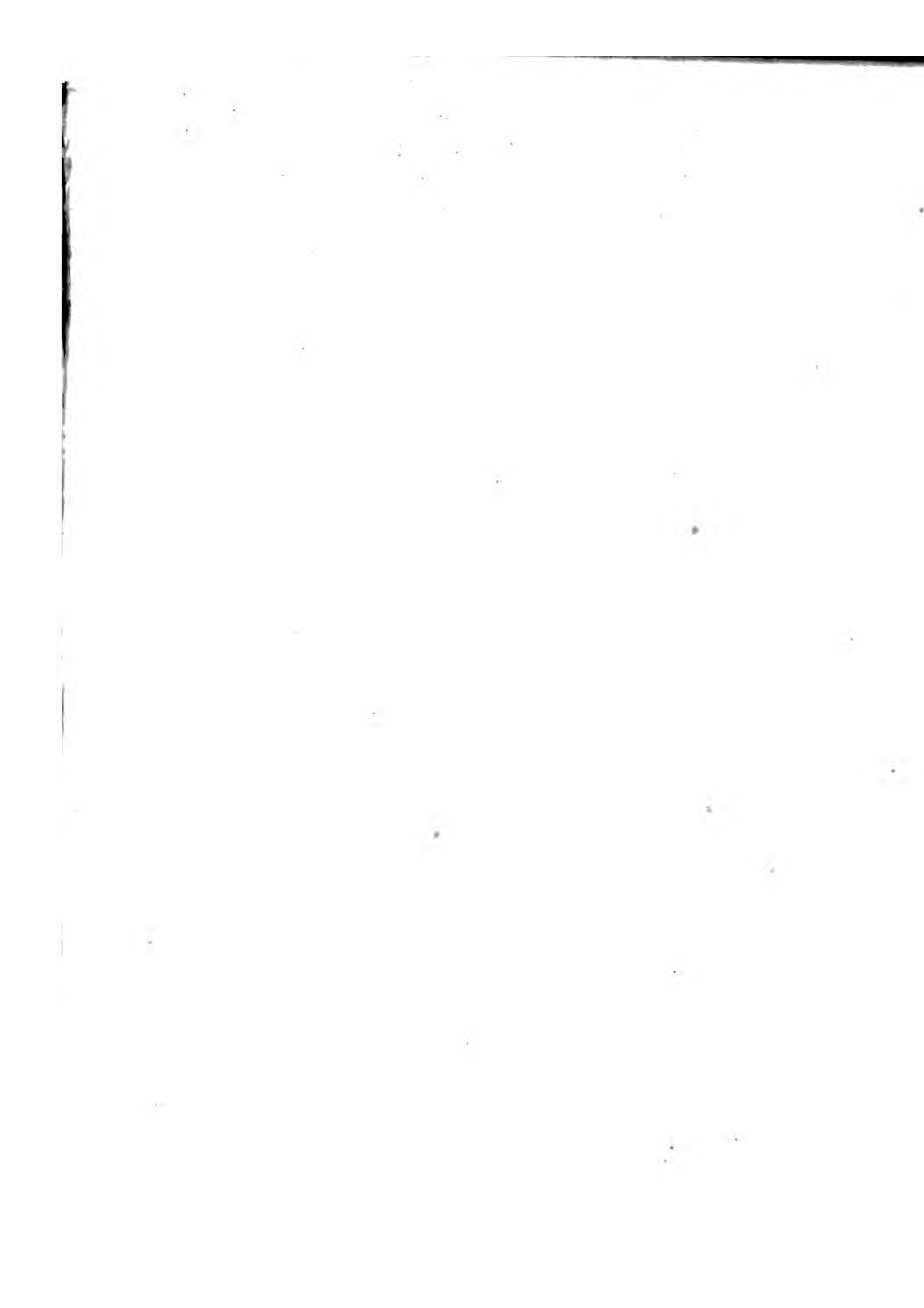
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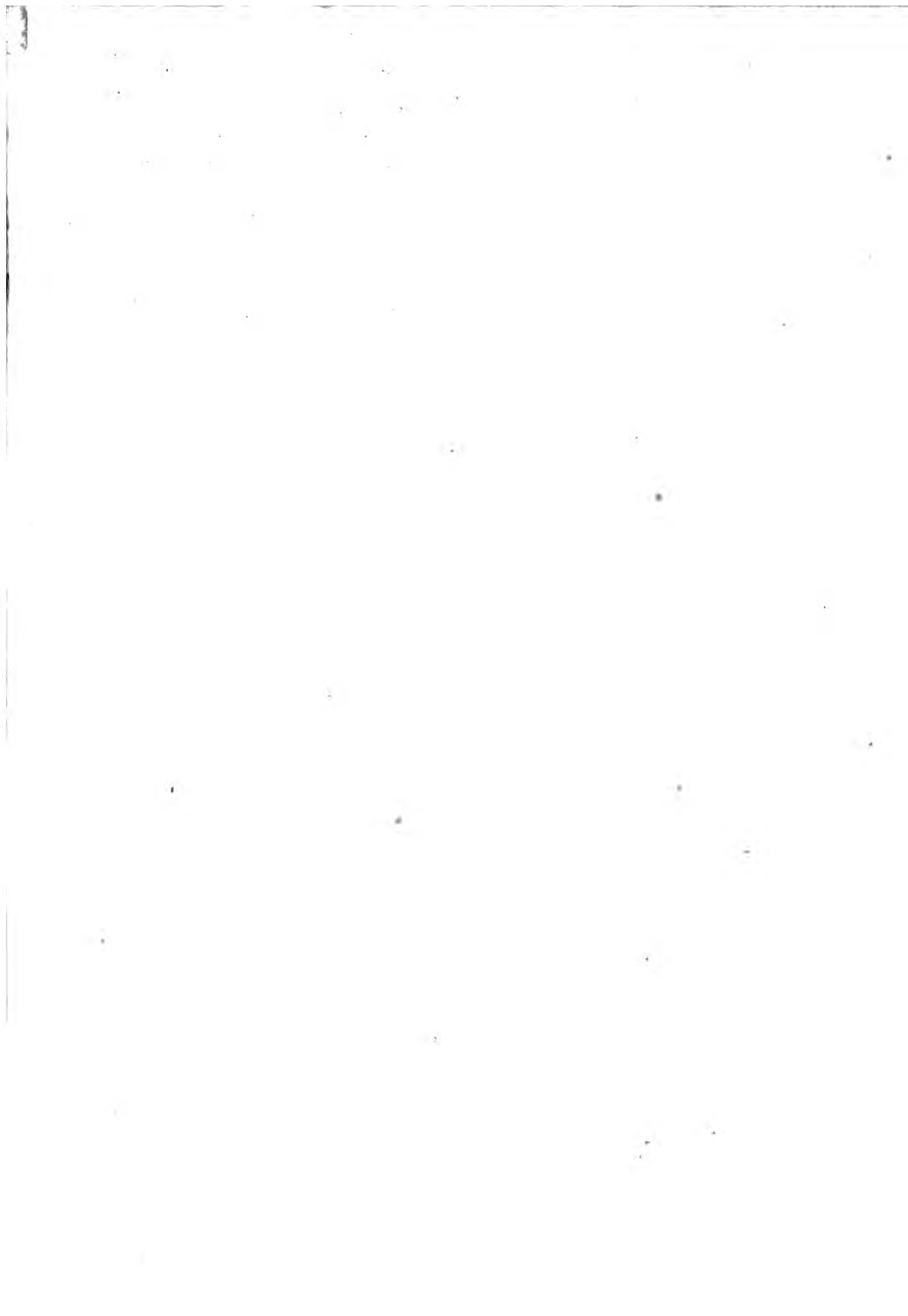
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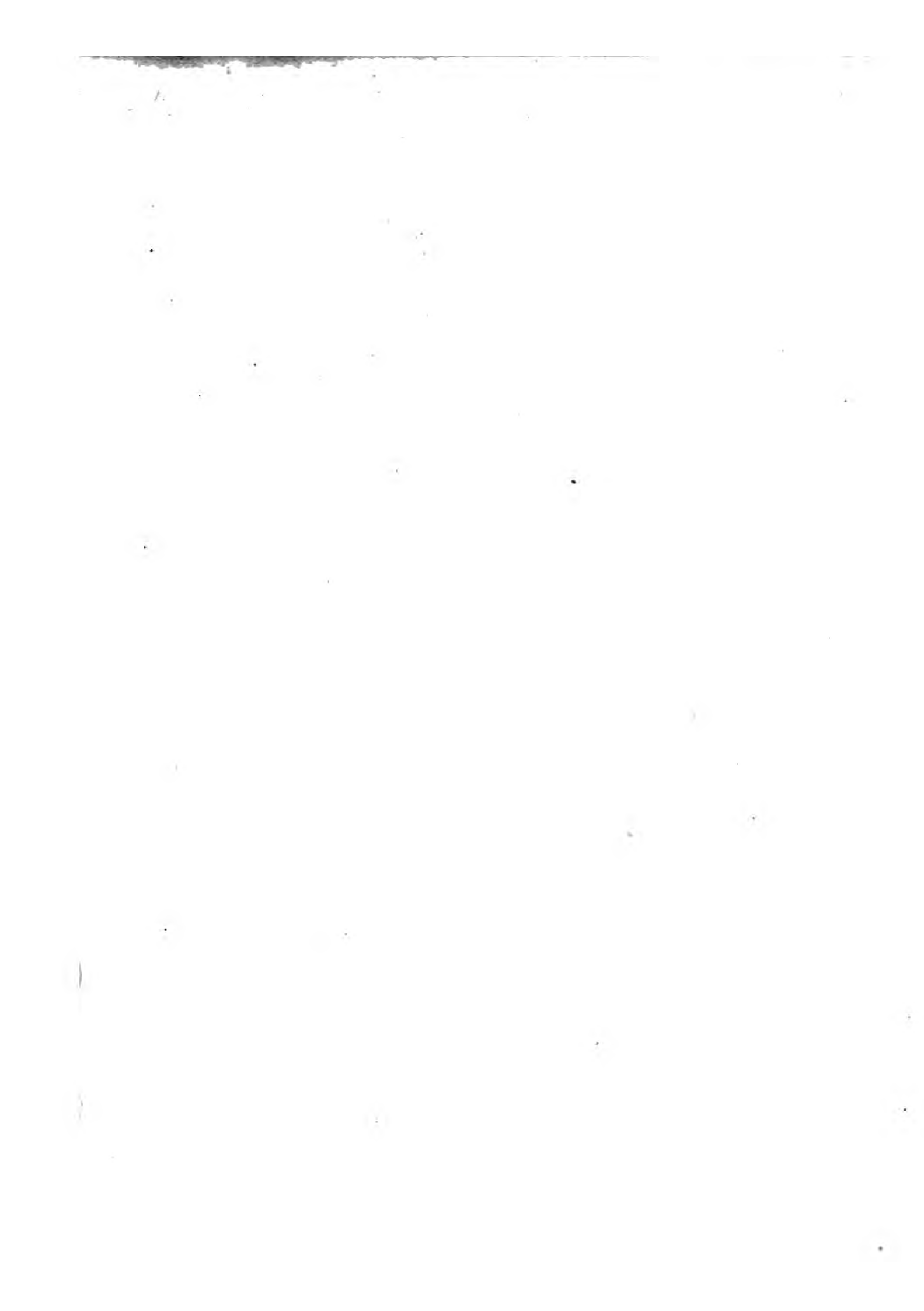


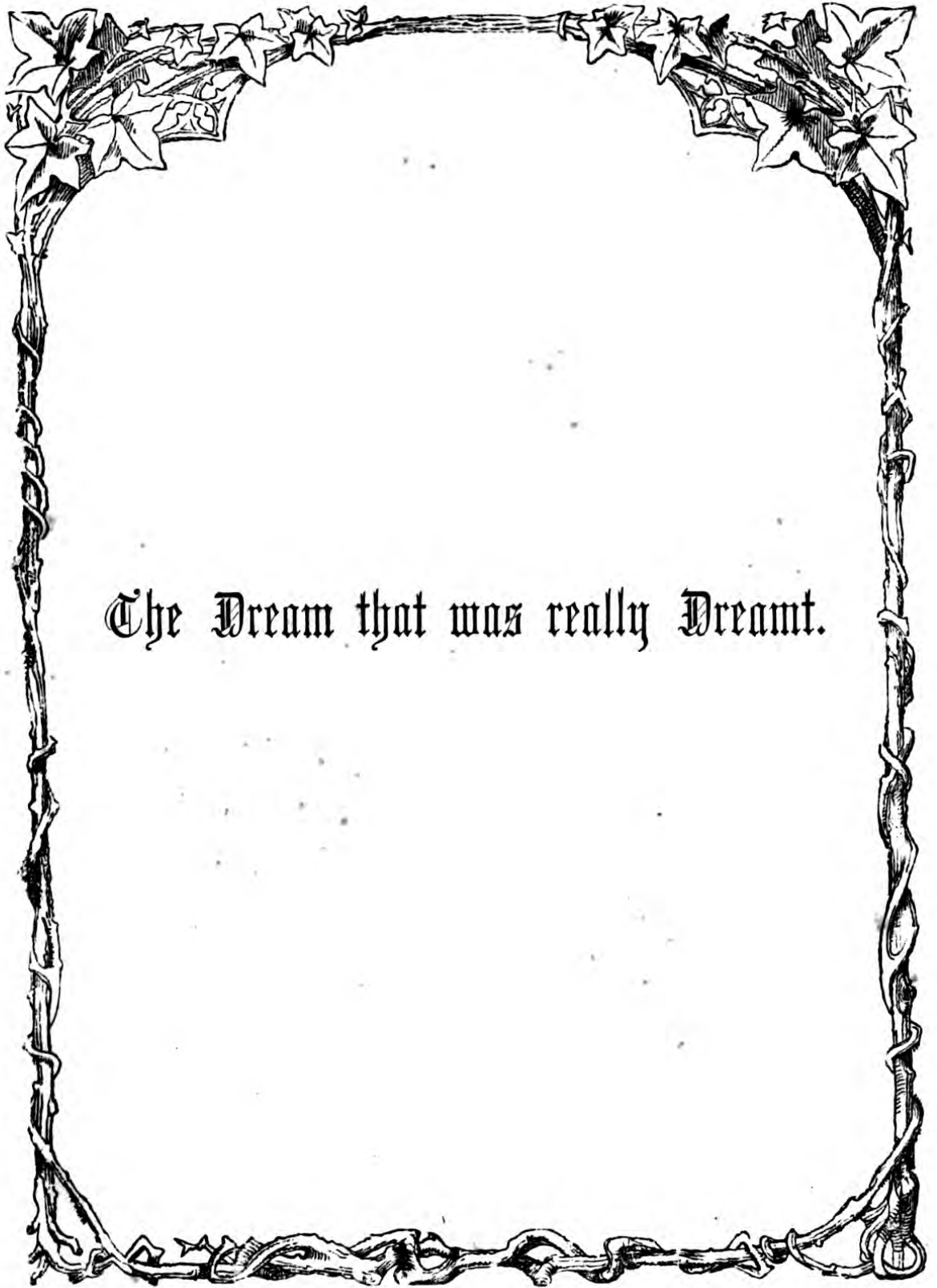


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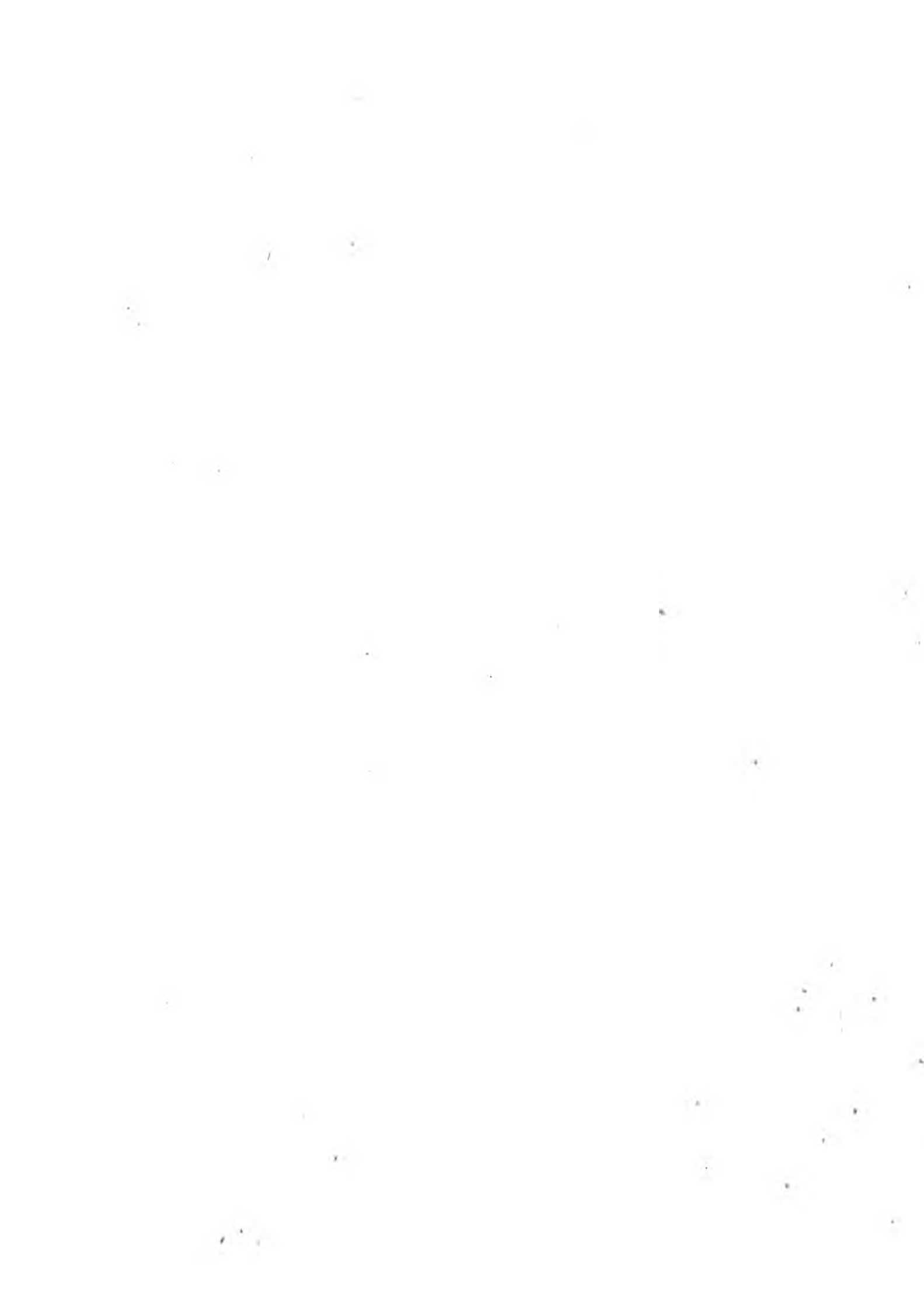








The Dream that was really Dreamt.



The Dream

THAT WAS REALLY DREAMT.

“Like a sad vision told for joy at morn,
for joy that we have wak'd, and found it but a dream.”



Joseph Masters London.

mdeccli.

270. C. 94.



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The Dream

that was really Dreamt.

THE dream, which I am about to relate, I really dreamt. And its details remained with such a vivid impression and colouring upon my mind, that on my awaking and meditating upon them, they gradually arranged themselves into something like order and meaning. Accordingly I committed my thoughts to paper, and I am now going to venture on committing them to print, with the hope that if what I shall send forth comes into the hands of any stray reader, the shadow of my dream may be the means of

reflecting some substance of truth, although from the broken and wavering surface of a vision of the night.

I shall relate the several details of my dream precisely as they presented themselves to my mind, instead of deviating from any of them, where I might otherwise have been tempted to do so. I have wished rather that my narrative should be strictly that which its title imports—**THE DREAM THAT WAS REALLY DREAMT.**

I dreamt that I was upon a journey. I do not recollect my setting out upon it ; nor how long a time I had spent upon the road ; nor whither I was going. But that I was upon a journey I felt conscious by a kind of unbidden determination of purpose which led me forward not as uncertainly, not as one knowing not whether there were any spot for which he was bound, and where he would be. I did not stop, nor loiter, but hastened forward for some understood end and place which I seemed to myself desirous of

reaching, although I knew not definitely what it was I sought, or whither I would go. Moreover, I must have been some considerable time on the road; for the sun had advanced a long distance on his daily course, and I therefore must have been likewise on mine for some time, since none but a very unwise person would delay the commencement of a journey until the day had advanced; and the sun gained strength; and the delay must be made up, if possible, with double toil.

As I journeyed, I passed along a fair country, through a deep and narrow dell. At my feet, on each side, numberless wild flowers studded the green sloping banks, cheering the eye, and teaching it to gaze upward from the lowliest place, while cleaving to the dust; and raising an odour of a sweet smell, seen or unseen alike. Above me, on one side, rose a vast towering rock, now scarce peeping through the living waves of foliage which heaved and fell in the passing breeze; now

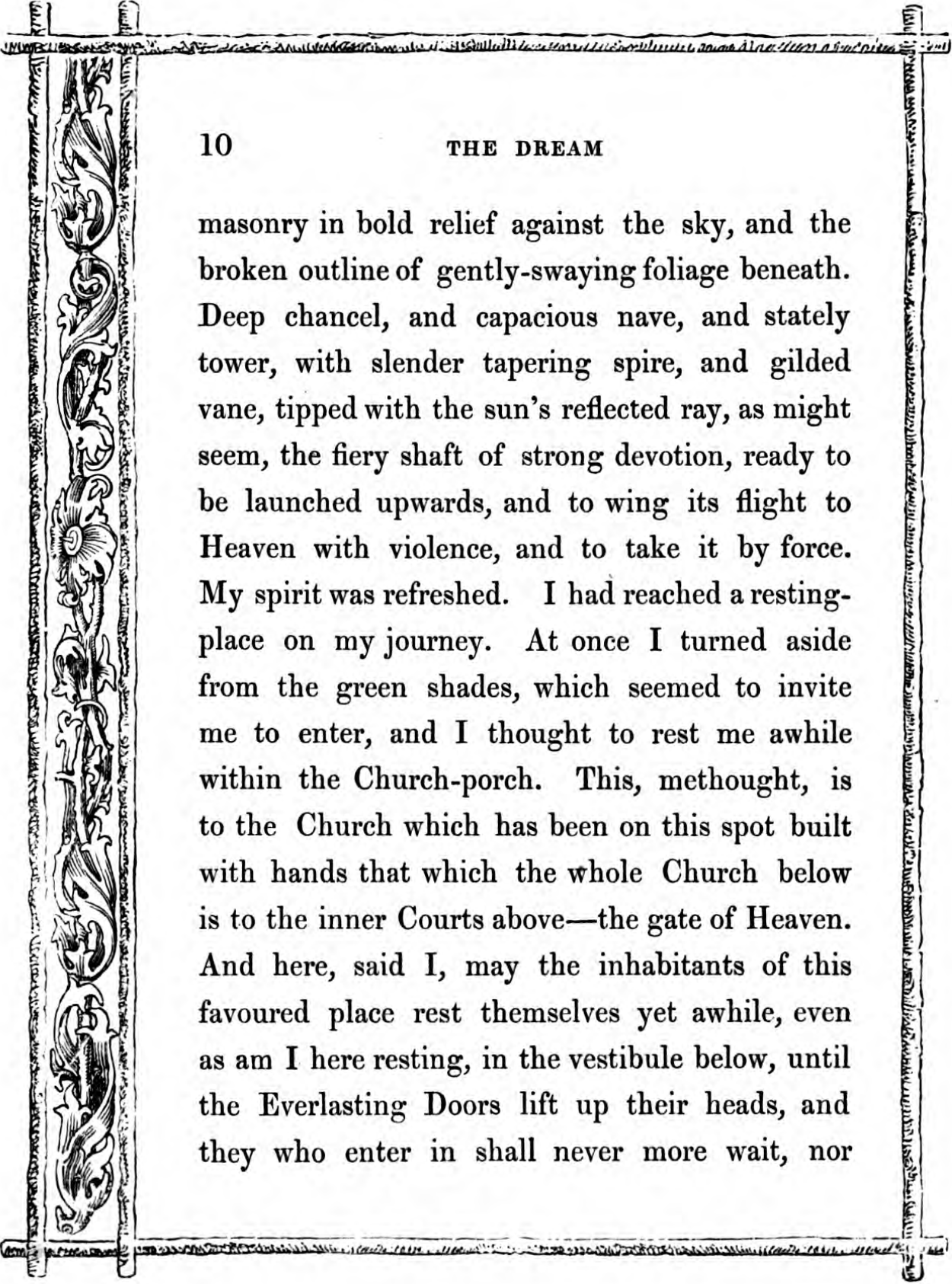
starting into sight with rugged crest, or precipitous cliff. And so equal, so full and fair, did the light of the glorious sun fall upon all and each of the objects in this calm and joyous spot, that the gnarled and knotty trunks of decaying trees reflected a beauty as wondrous as that which shone forth from the sturdy stems and unscathed foliage of the trees yet standing in their strength, or the mild glories of infant flowers, or opening blossoms, fresh sparkling with the dews from above. But the illumination of all was very glorious to look upon. The fresh rays of tender plants, and opening flowers; the settled dignity of spreading trees full of sap; the mellowed radiance of branches and trunks, awaiting their decline upon the earth out of which they came at the first;

“Reposing in decay serene,
Like weary men, when age is done.”

Even the roughest and gloomiest crag, when it

caught the genial fire of Heaven, seemed perforce to give back the smile which had been imparted to it, and to appear even comely and cheerful of aspect. And the very shades themselves which slept along the hill-side, or the narrow dale, though their light was not clear nor dark, were of so chastened and subdued a character, that to me they seemed rather as an ineffable brightness, seen through a glass darkly.

At length I arrived at a sudden turn in the road. A gentle eminence extended itself before me, covered with short and thick turf. And here the road divided. On the one side, at no great distance, I saw a wood. The unsteady flickerings of the sun-beams were playing among the rustling leaves, and showers of precarious light and shade were falling thick and fast on stems and roots, and bristling underwood, and on patches of the green sward beneath. On the other side I beheld a Church. There it stood, a glorious pile of red stone, rearing its aerial quarries of richly carved



masonry in bold relief against the sky, and the broken outline of gently-swaying foliage beneath. Deep chancel, and capacious nave, and stately tower, with slender tapering spire, and gilded vane, tipped with the sun's reflected ray, as might seem, the fiery shaft of strong devotion, ready to be launched upwards, and to wing its flight to Heaven with violence, and to take it by force. My spirit was refreshed. I had reached a resting-place on my journey. At once I turned aside from the green shades, which seemed to invite me to enter, and I thought to rest me awhile within the Church-porch. This, methought, is to the Church which has been on this spot built with hands that which the whole Church below is to the inner Courts above—the gate of Heaven. And here, said I, may the inhabitants of this favoured place rest themselves yet awhile, even as am I here resting, in the vestibule below, until the Everlasting Doors lift up their heads, and they who enter in shall never more wait, nor

watch, nor be weary ; never more long to appear before the Presence of God.

But, on my nearer approach, I was very agreeably surprised at finding that the door was but partially closed ; so that I might freely enter. It at once occurred to me that I had arrived at the sacred abode while the little flock were engaged in acknowledging their sins before God ; rendering thanks for His benefits ; setting forth His praises ; hearing His Word ; and asking the things requisite for body and soul. And I was glad when I said within myself, I shall go into the House of the LORD. And I thought, this shall be the rock, beneath the shadow of which I may find a shelter from the burden and heat of the day : this the brook in the way, of which I may drink : this the bread, to strengthen my heart. So will I depart, and go on my way rejoicing.

Then entered I the desired courts. But no sooner had I entered than I was filled with

amazement at the strange scenes which met my view. At first I could not at all comprehend the confusion of objects around me: but after a time I was enabled to survey them separately and attentively, and to endeavour to understand them.

Now, at my first entrance, the place appeared spacious and lofty; and the eye was lost in the dim distance of a vast shadowy dome expanded over-head. But after I had gazed into it for a little time, it appeared to contract its dimensions, imperceptibly and gradually, until it soon was reduced to dimensions sufficiently insignificant. Then was I filled with something of disappointment at seeing that which had promised so fair and majestic suddenly made to appear so mean and contemptible. And as I looked upon the huge vault, so quickly shrunk and dwindled, I could not help bethinking me that it is even so—that the all-encircling, all-embracing height of the Blessed TRINITY'S Love itself may become vile in Man's eyes; that with all its soaring privileges,

and exalted glories, with all the firmament of its power, in Churches, and in individuals who severally compose them, it must needs shrink and contract, according to the measure of Man's love ; and that

“ Of his narrowing heart each year
Heaven less and less will fill.”

Then, as I recalled to mind those once Holy Churches of old which, in their day, seemed like our own in this day, as though they could never wane away, I said, Be it far from us, O LORD, that the exceeding exalted Abode of the Blessed TRINITY, in which we were re-born, should from its high and vast dignity dwindle down, and be as a thing of nought. Be it far from me, O LORD, that through the wilfulness or wanderings of me, and such as me, THY glory should be turned into shame, and THY Name brought to reproach. Be it far from me that I should cause THEE to remove from me or others our

privileges, or to suffer us to retain them with our heart's eye blinded, so that we cannot see afar off with our once cleansed and strengthened vision. O that we may lack neither privileges, nor spiritual eye-sight wherewith to discern them !

I now began to look around me for the sacred objects which are the seals and pledges of the Church's hidden grace and strength in her LORD. And now fresh sources of sad astonishment presented themselves to my imagination. I could see neither Font, nor Altar ; nor Lectern, nor Pulpit ; nor Priest, nor worshippers. Yet was not the place empty. In my disturbed fancy I saw none other than a number of deformed, uncouth creatures, in the midst of this temple. They were all, as seemed, carved out of solid stone, yet moving and living withal, and I felt, with an instinctive awe, and thrill of astonishment, that if these were less than Man, yet were they more than beasts. And I feared exceedingly

to behold such as these, grovelling with their heads along the dry, hard pavement, seeking, as seemed, food out of desolate places, and finding none, neither perceiving that the place whereon they sought their food was, like themselves, barren, sterile stone. And I wondered the more, when I saw that the windows of this strange place stretched from the roof to the ground, and poured forth a full blaze of day-light on the floor, along which the glances of these hideous creatures roamed ; yet meanwhile seeing they saw not, nor perceived, nor understood.

Furthermore, I observed that they all turned this way and that, each as each chose. None seemed to join himself unto another. Each seemed to be, and to live, in his living death, for himself. All in solitary selfishness went about, running here and there for meat, and grudging, since they were not satisfied. Yet all was still. It was not the stillness of a calm and hallowed repose ; but the brooding silence as of the storm

or earthquake, filling the heart with heavy apprehension, and gloomy fear.

So I pondered these things, and wondered much how they could be. And at length I thought within myself, following up my train of ideas into which I had entered at my first coming in, Such is that Church which hath a name to live, and is dead. Such must become that Church, wheresoever it be found, which refuseth to strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; which careth not that her deficiencies be supplied. Never, never may the day come, when, little by little, the Holy Church of CHRIST which lives, and moves, and hath her being in HIM throughout this land, shall forget and forfeit the vital deposit of Divine truth, and no more bear witness thereto even with an outward acknowledgment. When her Font and her Altar shall be removed out of sight; and the Word of God be put away; and her Priests fail; and her worshippers be no where found. Alas!

who shall live, when GOD doeth this? Who shall not remain a spiritual petrification, his heart dead within him, and himself become as a stone, in the absence of HIM WHO is our life? If HE look coldly upon any, who is able to abide HIS frost? O most fearful day! May it be seen of none of us or our children, save, as now, in the prudent forecastings, and the watchful anxieties of a jealous love. For how should the spirit of Man, seated in its rugged case of stone, be re-created after the Image of the SPIRIT, and so re-mould the whole Man, of the earth, earthy, when its natural hardness and impenitence hath never been worn away by the continual drippings from the Side of the Rock which for him was smitten in this world's wilderness, at Calvary? How should they do less than want bread and water, and be astonied one with another, and consume away for their iniquity, who put away from them the Table of the LORD as polluted, and the fruit thereof, even HIS meat, as contemp-

tible? How should they be fat and well-liking, who put away from God's Church the daily portion, the daily food of His Holy Word, whereby Man must live? Or how should they but receive for bread a stone, and break their teeth with gravel-stones, who ask not, and therefore have not? Nor needed I wonder any longer that they saw not the more clearly even in the full flood of light which streamed before and around them; for I remembered, that to live without having been admitted at all into the Light of His kingdom, or, having been admitted, to hate the Light, is blindness of heart; that the light of nature, without the SUN of Righteousness, can never be a sufficient light unto Man's paths; nor even the Sunshine of Divine Revelation itself, streaming down through the windows of God's Holy Church, perforce enlighten the wilfully blind. I remembered, that when the light that is in Man is darkness, so great is that darkness that the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness

comprehendeth it not. The light of this world is the only light in which they strive to have light; the very brightness of which dazzles and confounds; beguiles and bewilders; while the true Light shines upon them in vain, showing but the more plainly, from its very fulness, how they err and stray in a self-chosen, self-created darkness. And I bethought me that it must be at such a time that Man discerns least of his own self, and his own condition, when the unsubdued sunshine of a fiery, feverish, intellectual day bursts forth upon him; when

“ An age of light,
Light without love, glares on the aching sight.”

No wonder that such as these should turn every one to his own way, having none to search or seek after them, doing every one that which was right in their own eyes: professing uniformity enough to retain them within one pale, but actuated by no real bond of union.

No wonder that these should not be a people who knew the joyful sound—the sound as of many waters—thanksgiving, and the voice of melody; the bold profession, and the lowly supplication; the deep response, and the loud Amen; firm-hearted Manhood, praising HIM in the sound of the trumpet; and gentle Childhood, upon the lute and harp. Their affections were set on the earth, from which they had been taken; and their tongues mute as the grave, into which they were about to return.

Very terrible was it, methought, to dwell on these sights, and to know that this was indeed the day of God's Vengeance on HIS Church below, which had left her first love. And I sorrowfully turned mine eyes towards the door, not purposing to continue very much longer amid scenes so melancholy. And when I saw the space beside the entrance empty, wherein should have been standing the Laver of Regeneration, I said, Man indeed hath opened for himself a

door; but he hath taken away the key of the kingdom of Heaven. He hath devised for himself a more compendious road; and hath lost HIM WHO IS THE WAY: he hath followed false doctrines, which earthly teaching supplied; and hath not found THE TRUTH: he hath harboured the corruption of his nature; and hath not been united to THE LIFE. And I exclaimed, Woe unto them who think to open a door, or to make a way, otherwise than as their LORD willeth.

And as I mused thus, I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, in the stead of a Font, a large picture suspended against the wall. It represented a fair landscape, melting away into the blending distance of blue mountain and sky: while in the foreground of green refreshing turf, and quivering clouds of leaves, and flowers of many hues, I beheld reclining two life-size figures, a man, and a dog beside him. And I doubted much what these might be, and pondered long, and was

at a loss to know what lesson was to be learnt from this sight ; and at length I said within myself, Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee : for the dog knoweth his owner, and is faithful to his master's house, but Israel doth not know, God's people doth not consider. And I said, Shall that beast, even the price of which might not be brought into God's House, himself find a place wherein he may rest ? Shall they who are to be excluded from the Courts above, the dogs, as the sorcerers, and murderers, and idolaters, and liars, shall they be admitted to His Sanctuary on earth ? Then made I answer to myself, Such may be the warning sent to a sinful nation, while yet the truth abideth with them. A little while, and the truth despised may depart. To them hath been delivered the inestimable truth of Man's birth in CHRIST : and they may hand it down to their children's children, or suffer it to perish from among them. Before Man is life and death ; and whether him

liketh shall be given unto him. The clean may become unclean. The unclean may be cleansed. Man, professing himself to be wise, may become brutish in knowledge. Man, to become wise, may confess himself even as it were a beast before God. The saint may return to his uncleanness again. The sinner may return to pick up the crumbs which fall from his Master's table. And thus thinking I turned again to behold the doleful creatures which were roaming behind me, and I said, O that, even in this their day, they might lift up their eyes unto Heaven, that their understanding might return unto them, and that a Man's heart might be given unto them, and that from being even below the beasts that perish, they might be made anew, higher than the Angels ; transformed into the Image of the Man, CHRIST JESUS. That they might again, as their forefathers, receive the truth, and be washed, and made clean, and having been cleansed daily proceed in all virtue, and godliness of living. Then



might infants, and their parents, young men, and maidens, old men, and children, praise the Name of the LORD. The infants, conceived and born in sin, become sanctified, and live the rest of their lives according to that beginning. The holy be holy still; the backslider return from sin. Then might the brutishness of Man depart from him. Then might the leopard change his spots. The drunkard cease to be one of the swine. The furious man be no more a lion. The cunning continue no longer a fox. The cruel not remain a wolf. The malicious cease to be a serpent. All things might become new-created by admission through the Baptismal Gate; and all things continue to be daily renewed through the HOLY SPIRIT.

But now I deemed that I had tarried long enough, and perhaps too long, in such a melancholy scene. And I prepared to quit it. But as I approached the door, I, for the first time, perceived two female figures, standing beside the

portal. And I at once understood from their manner and gesture that it was the custom for those who had visited this sad spectacle to pay a pecuniary return. But I thought, surely not to these should the offering be made, if made at all. Surely if any price be paid for visiting God's Abodes here, much more for the sorrowful pageant of a desecrated and desolated Sanctuary, in the balances of the Sanctuary let it be weighed, and cast into the Treasury. So I turned to see if there might not be an Alms-Box, into which I might give unto the LORD of all, with the prayer that HE would cause HIS Face to shine on HIS Sanctuary thus desolate. One of the two attendants motioned to me, and, with seeming solemnity, pointed out a very small kind of glass vase, suspended in a conspicuous place against the wall. It was formed of a peculiarly bright and clear substance, and was richly cut and carved. I was struck with the singularity of the circumstance, for I was made to under-

stand that this was intended for the reception of gifts and offerings. Nevertheless, seeing that I had looked in vain for the Alms-Box, I reluctantly availed myself of the mode thus indicated to me, and I dropped into the vase a few pieces of coin ; but I was soon covered with confusion, for immediately I perceived that the vase had been constructed for the purpose of containing but very little, yet gorgeously colouring whatsoever might be cast into it, and to invite those who passed by

“ To bow before the little drop of light

Which dim-eyed men call praise and glory here.”

And yet the artifice was but a sorry one at best. All its glory was seen in a moment of time, and for a moment. Even while I looked, I perceived that the vase was a cracked and broken one. The coins slipped through. They fell, as water spilt on the ground. And I saw that works done to be seen of men cannot abide, but must fall to the earth. And that true Charity doeth all things unto our FATHER WHICH seeth in secret.

“ For ever where such grace is given
It fears in open day to shine.”

Then I quickly departed, and hastened on my journey, full of many thoughts on the things which I had seen. Again and again did I fear for others. And I feared for myself. And I feared for the Holy Church of God. And I trembled to think that we, who have been made partakers of the Divine Nature, and have had our abiding-place fixed in the House of the LORD, may notwithstanding hold communion with the Evil One, and make our abode with him. I trembled to think that we, who are fellow-builders with God, may mar and ruin His work, and set up the abomination that maketh desolate in His Sanctuary. And I said to myself,

“ 'Tis sad—but yet 'tis well, be sure,
We on the sight should muse awhile :
Nor deem our shelter all secure,
Even in the Church's holiest aisle.”

Then I awoke : and lo ! it was a dream. Yet still the impression remains that I am on a journey ; bound for a country which I would fain behold ; though I am still like unto them that dream when I would have mine eyes see, or mine ears hear, or my heart understand, whither I am journeying ; and what is prepared for me in the end. And ever and anon, when the sun is high, and the heat strikes down, and I feel faint and weary, I think that, if I will, I have but to take a few steps out of the world's highway of daily cares and travail, through which God hath appointed our journey, and I shall at no time fail to find a resting-place and shadow from the heat, a great and glorious Sanctuary, where nothing is lacking — where Angels and Archangels join the Church throughout the world in worship—and where all things live and love in the ever present Light of God's Countenance.





