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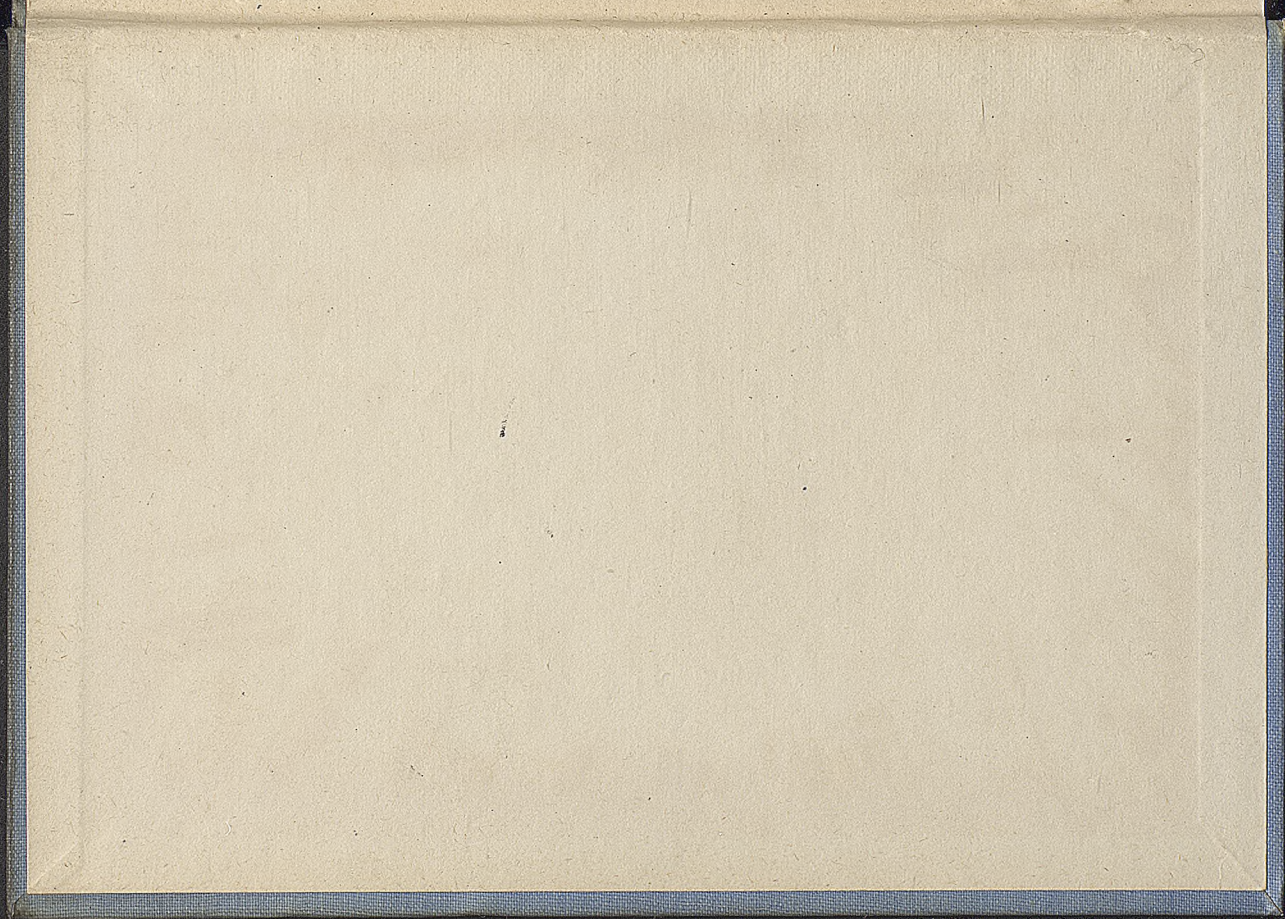
# MAYFLOWER PILGRIMS

*KATE T. SIZER.*

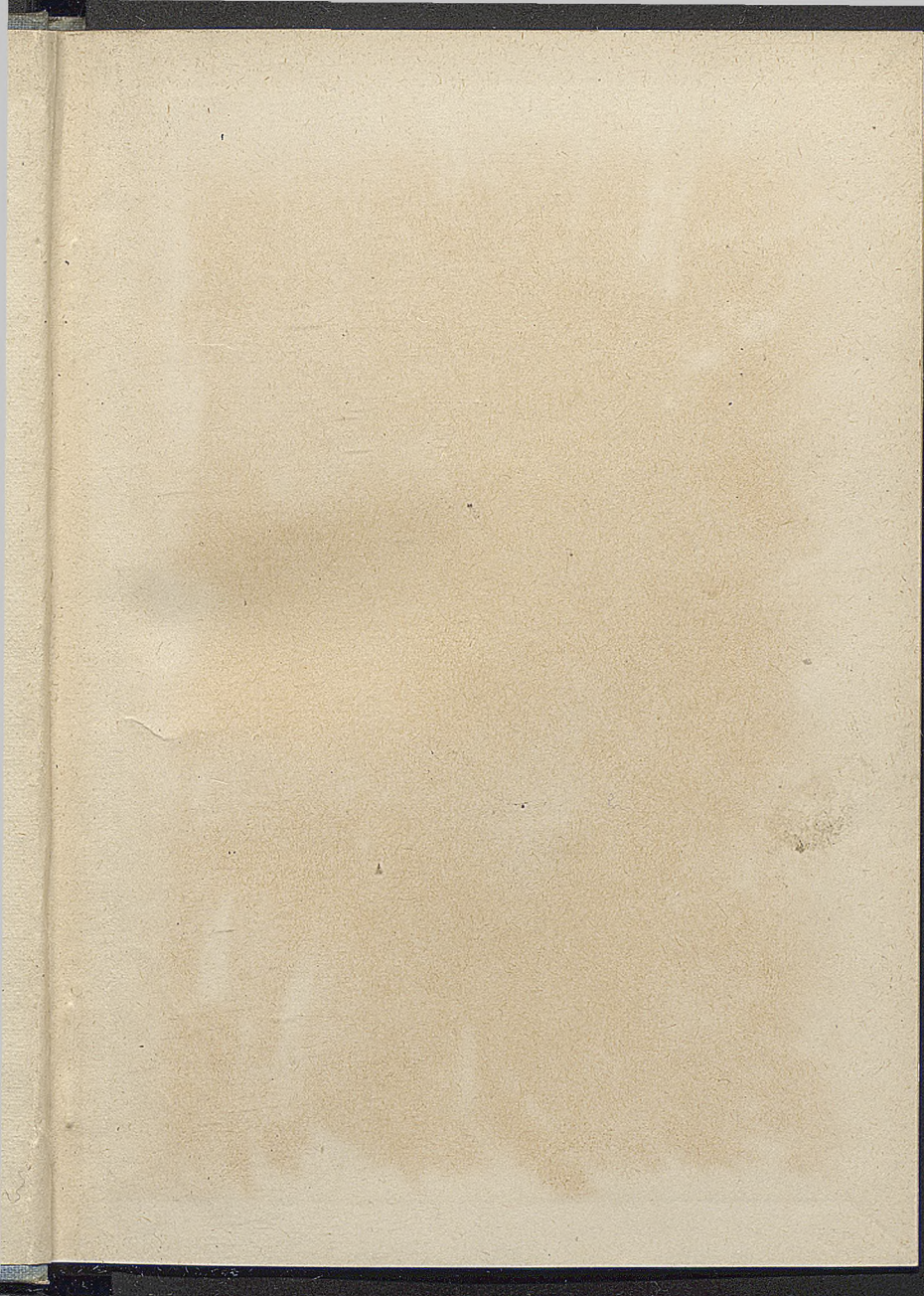
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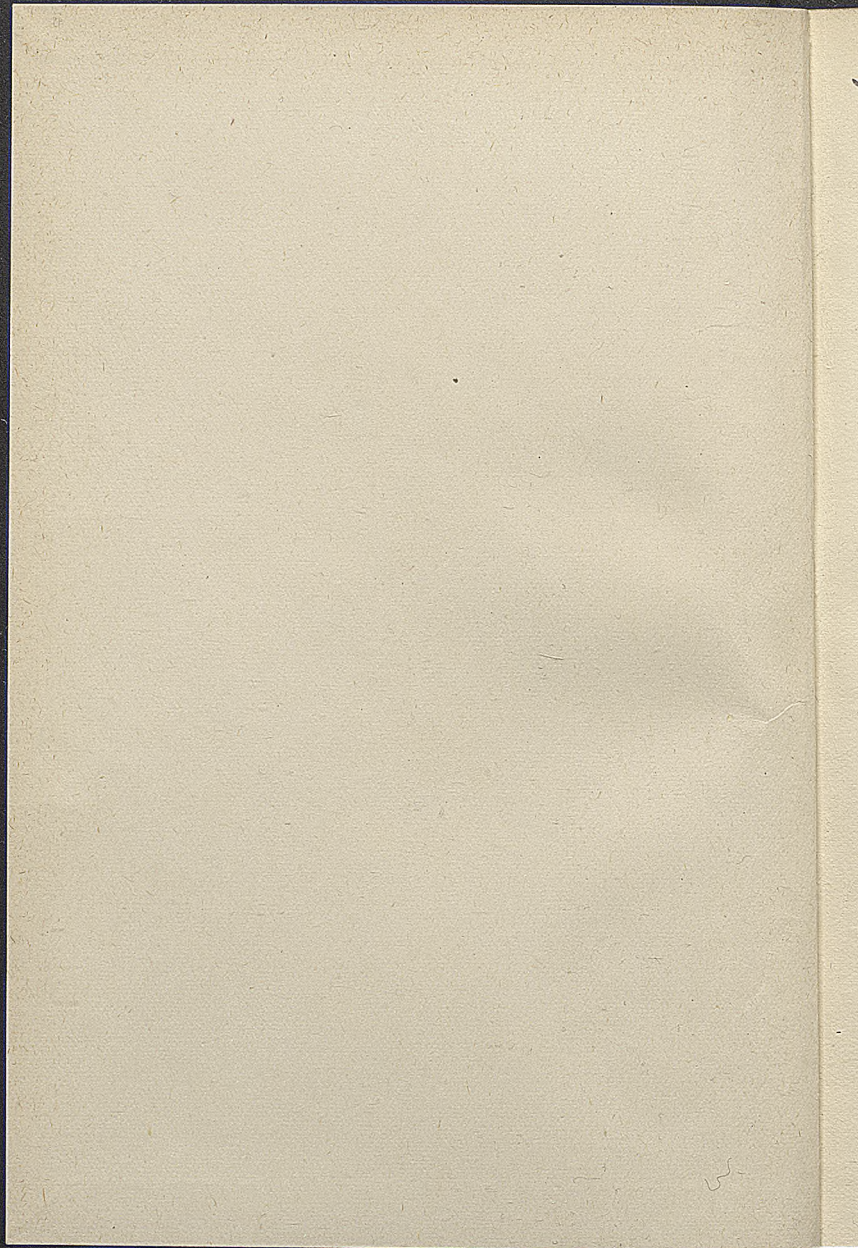










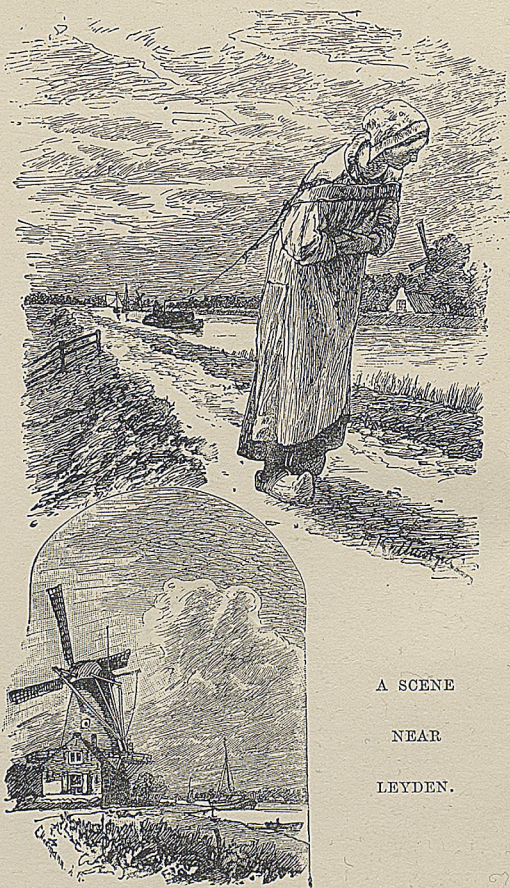




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A SCENE

NEAR

LEYDEN.



# "MAYFLOWER" PILGRIMS

BY

KATE THOMPSON SIZER

London:

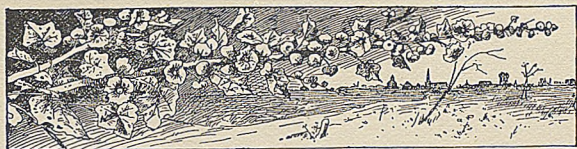
CHARLES H. KELLY

2, CASTLE ST., CITY RD.; AND 26, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.









## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE HOME THEY LEFT . . . . .	7
II. THE HOME THEY FOUND . . . . .	16
III. HOW CHILDREN CAN HELP . . . . .	25
IV. DANGER NEAR . . . . .	36
V. HUNGER-BITTEN . . . . .	45
VI. PLEASURE IN THE WOODS . . . . .	54



“What sought they thus afar?—  
Bright jewels of the mine?  
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—  
They sought a faith's pure shrine!”

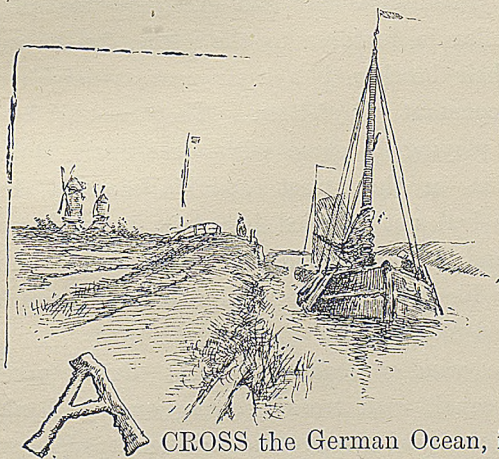
MRS. HEMANS.



# "MAYFLOWER" PILGRIMS

## CHAPTER I

### THE HOME THEY LEFT



**A** CROSS the German Ocean, in the brave little country of Holland, stands the ancient and famous town called Leyden. Fifty canals of clear water run through



its streets, and many bridges cross them. Quaint houses with high gables look down on the canals, and from their windows pleasant sights may be seen. So, at least, thought three children, who on a summer afternoon, in the year A.D. 1631, sat together on a window-seat looking out.

The two girls, Grace and Annis, were twins, and very much alike, with blue eyes and fair hair neatly hidden under small caps. Arthur, the boy, had dark hair and eyes, and was quite dissimilar in features to the girls; for he was not their brother, but their nearest neighbour and constant playfellow. They would have been playing a game with some little Dutch children in the street at this moment, but Annis had not finished her daily task of sewing, and Arthur would not leave her; while Grace liked the quiet window-corner quite as well as the street.

The window looked straight down on a wide canal, with trees growing on the banks. Between these trees came sailing broad, heavy barges, laden with many different cargoes. Some barges held cattle, some were heaped with hay, while on some stood white-capped



peasant women, with market-baskets filled with butter on their arms.

The children chattered to each other in English, but they could understand perfectly the Dutch words spoken by the bargemen and the peasants. Eleven years—longer, that is, than they could remember—they had lived in Leyden. Grace and Annis were only babes, and Arthur a toddling boy, when their parents left England. James I., the king whose name is in all our Bibles, was ruling then, and though he was in some ways a good king, and wished all his people to be religious, yet he made the mistake of wanting them to be religious only in his way. Those who would not be so he punished. To escape this punishment, the children's parents, and many other good men and women, came to Holland and settled in Leyden.

"How slow you are, Annis!" said Grace, the elder twin, in her quiet voice, as she watched her sister at her task.

"There! my cotton has broken and my needle come unthreaded again," answered Annis impatiently. "Grace, you have not quite done yours, have you?"



Grace nodded. She had folded her work neatly some time before, and put the thimble and needle in a little case in her pocket.

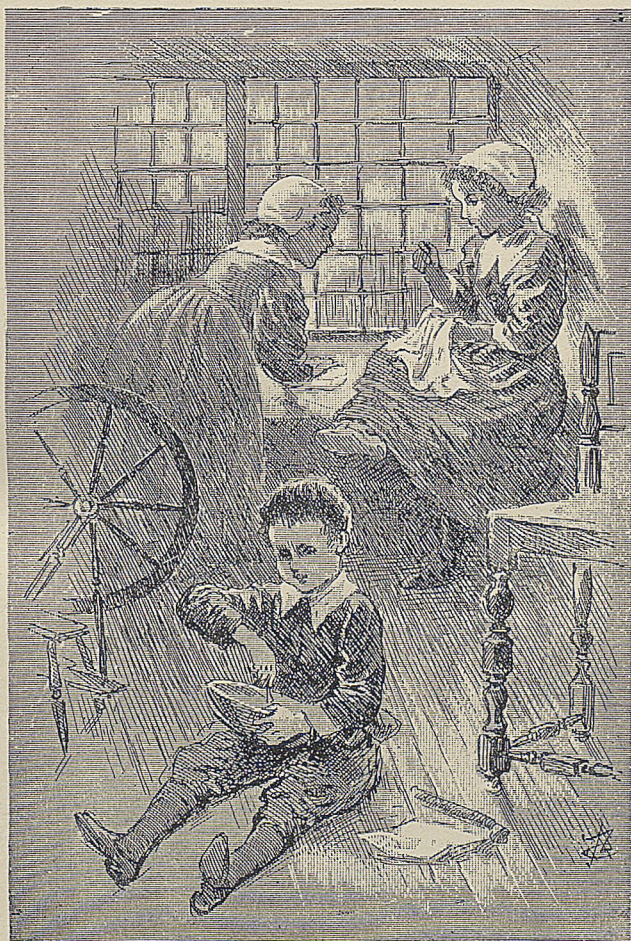
"Do make haste," said Arthur; "our tame stork is waiting by the canal to be fed, and the afternoon will soon be over."

"I *can't* sew to-day!" cried poor Annis despairingly. She did not love needlework as her sister did, and in her efforts to be quick the needle totally refused to thread, and the cotton, fingered by hot little hands, went into hopeless knots.

"You will only have bread for supper if you don't take care," suggested Grace, who was rather a Job's comforter. "There comes mother now."

The door opened, and their mother came into the room more quickly than was her usual manner. Generally she was quiet and self-composed like Grace, but to-day her face was flushed and her eyes excited. To Annis's great relief she never noticed the unfinished sewing, but she pointed out of the window to a passing barge, and said, "Children, how would you like to sail away like that in a ship?"





"I CAN'T SEW TO-DAY!" CRIED POOR ANNIS.







The children were so surprised at the question and at her manner that they did not answer directly. Then Grace said, "Sail back to England, where you used to live, mother?"

"Oh no, not there," said the mother, her eyes filling with tears as she thought of the old friends and neighbours whom she would have so liked to see again. "No, not back to England, because the English laws are still cruel for us Puritans; but away to a strange, new country, called America, where we can worship God as we will."

"America?" said Arthur, looking excited. "I have heard the sailors on the barges speak sometimes of that. Wild Indians live in the woods there, and bears and strange beasts. Oh, I should like to go!"

"Do *you* like to go, mother?" asked Annis, who had been watching her mother's face, and wondering if it looked glad or sorry.

"I am willing," said Mistress Hutton, pressing her lips together and trying to seem brave. "Yes, if the cross is laid on me, I will try to bear it."

The children were used to hearing their



parents use Bible words, and they knew that bearing the cross meant doing some hard duty.

"Shall we go alone, mother?" asked Grace, who had looked frightened ever since the mention of the wild Indians.

"Oh no; our friends here have long been talking of this, and many will go with us. Deacon Carver and Deacon Fuller, Arthur's father, and many more."

"And Pastor Robinson?" asked Annis, naming the good minister who preached to them every Sunday.

"No, he will stay here; for so has it been decided. But he will pray for us while we go. My children, you are not yet old enough to understand fully why we go; but when you are older, you will know how precious a thing faith is. It is so precious to your parents that we were willing to leave our English friends and home for it, and now for its sake we are ready to travel across the wide ocean to an unknown land. Dear children, you will be brave and good, and do your part to help in the trial, will you not?" asked the mother, looking anxiously at the little faces before her.



"I shall be afraid of the Indians," answered Grace, shaking her head doubtfully.

"Oh, I am not afraid at all!" cried Arthur, his boy-nature all afire with delight at the prospect. "To sail so far in a ship will be splendid; and, Grace, if the Indians frighten you, I will fight them."

"Father and mother will be there, Grace," said Annis, looking trustfully in her mother's face. "I am not afraid to go anywhere with them."

"And God will take care of us all," said Mistress Hutton, smiling through her tears at Annis's loving words.

She kissed the children and left them, and I fear the poor tame stork waited long by the canal for his supper that afternoon. The little friends who usually fed him were so busy indoors talking over the wonderful tidings, that the afternoon was gone before they knew.





## CHAPTER II

### THE HOME THEY FOUND

MANY months after that summer afternoon in Leyden, one lonely ship lay at anchor in a little harbour on the shores of New England. The *Mayflower's* long and dangerous voyage was over, and she had anchored in the harbour of Plymouth, a name for ever after famous in American history. On deck stood many of the emigrants, taking eager looks at their new home, and among them, full of interest and curiosity, were our three little pilgrims, Grace, Annis, and Arthur.

The cold winter wind whistled round them, making the two girls pull their hoods closer. Deep snows lay on hillside and woods. The bare, solitary sea stretched behind them, and on





THE MAYFLOWER'S LONG AND DANGEROUS VOYAGE WAS OVER.







the land where they gazed there was no house-roof nor church spire, no field nor garden, nothing to tell of man's presence. Grace turned round to the others with almost a sob.

"I did not think America would be such a lonely place."

"It won't seem lonely when we get ashore," answered cheery little Annis. "Think of all the people on our ship—more than a hundred of us. We shall be a town when we all get settled there."

"And I mean to help build the town," said Arthur confidently. "I have a hatchet, all my own, and we men are going to land to-day, and cut down wood and look round the country."

"I wonder where our home will be," said Annis, looking up at the snowy slopes of Cole's Hill and Duxbury Hill, as the places were hereafter called.

"Somewhere near mine, I hope," answered Arthur. "I'll tell you all I know when I come back." And then, seeing the men jump ashore with their saws and axes, he followed them eagerly, waving his hand to the two sisters as he scrambled to land and ran up the hill



"I wish I were a boy and could go too," sighed Annis.

"But you are a girl with a heap of darning to do," answered her sister. "Come down into the cabin and begin to work."

Annis was going to refuse, for Grace was very fond of issuing these orders, and Annis, though obedient enough to proper authority, only laughed at her sister's prim little attempts to rule. But she remembered that her mother might indeed want her, so she followed Grace down the cabin stairs.

While the men were on shore cutting timber with which to build their future homes the women on board found plenty to do. More than three months had passed since they left Europe, and their voyage had been long and hard. Many of the travellers were ill, and all had to bear the cold of the bitter winter. So while some were busy nursing the sick, others were making new warm garments and mending the old. The Pilgrim Fathers of America were not like the ancient pilgrims of Israel, whose clothes were kept miraculously whole while they journeyed. Annis found to her dismay that she



must sew quite as much in her new home as in the old.

"My good, industrious girl!" said Mistress Hutton, as she saw her little daughter sit down patiently to the work she did not like.

"Mother!" said Annis, answering with a smile the words of praise. And the work seemed much easier after. Love can lighten the hardest tasks.

Grace had seated herself at the spinning-wheel, for, young as she was, she could turn it nimbly, and she was spinning yarn for a new coat for her father. Mrs. Hutton neither spun nor mended; she was pale and thin with all the fatigues of the long voyage, and as Annis looked at her the terrible fear would sometimes come whether her mother would ever bear the cold winters and rough life of the new country.

The day passed quietly in the cabin, and the early winter twilight began to fall.

"I cannot see to sew longer. Mother, is that clouted enough?" asked Annis, holding up a garment of Arthur's which she had adorned with many patches or clouts, as they were then called.



"Quite enough," said Arthur's own voice behind her. The men had come back, and the boy was eager to tell his adventures.

"Oh, what have you seen? Tell us," cried Grace and Annis, dropping their work and running to him.

"I saw woods full of high, tall trees," answered Arthur. "We have cut some down already to build our houses. And I saw a pretty little brook, near which I hope our homes will be. The brook is frozen now, but there are rushes peeping up through the snow, and I am sure we shall like to sit by it in spring."

"Shall we have as nice a house as in Holland?" asked Grace anxiously.

"I don't know," said the boy gravely; "we must not mind if things are a little rough at first. We are pilgrims, you know, Grace."

Grace put up her lips pettishly at this remark. She liked well enough to preach little sermons herself, but she did not care to listen to any. Good-natured Arthur saw her look, and changed the subject.

"I have brought you a present from the



shore," he said. "See what I found when we cut down a hollow tree."

As he spoke he pulled out of his pocket a small, grey, furry - coated squirrel. It looked round with bright, frightened eyes, and pressed its bushy tail against Arthur's arm.

"Oh, how pretty! We will keep it and make it tame, as we did our stork," cried Annis, enchanted with this first product of America.

"Hush!" said Grace, who had been watching the grown-up talkers as well as listening to Arthur. "They have finished speaking, and Mr. Brewster is going to pray."

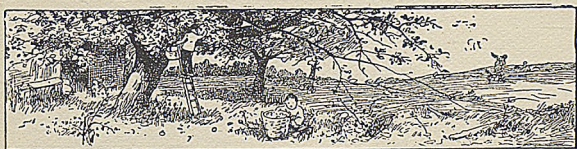
They never forgot the prayer they heard that night. Though but children, and unable to enter into half the doubts and fears of their elders, yet Annis and Arthur, and Grace too, knew that for a handful of men and women to cross the wide ocean, and plant themselves on the edge of a wilderness, was a daring and perilous deed. But as they listened to the good man who gave thanks for the refuge they had reached, and praised God that here they could serve Him in peace, even the children felt how



real and true was the trust in God that had brought them there.

The wind swept over the lonely seas, and howled in the woods on shore, but the pilgrims slept calmly that night in their tossing, ill-built ship. They knew God's love was over them, close and safe as brooding wings.





## CHAPTER III

### HOW CHILDREN CAN HELP



T is not half so nice as Holland," said Grace, looking about her with disappointed eyes.

"Don't you like it?" cried Arthur, quite crestfallen.

They stood in Grace and Annis's new home, a wooden hut erected with much toil. Since the first day on shore Arthur had begged to take his part in the work of the settlement almost as if he were a man, and the services of the strong, willing boy had been of much use. Especially had he wished to help in the building of his playfellows' house, and many a plank in the walls had been fashioned by his brown hands. He had thought the two girls would be delighted with the result of his labour.



But Grace stood in the middle of the floor with nothing but disapproval in her face. And the little hut, strewn with the goods they had brought from the ship, certainly did look untidy and forlorn.

"But I do like having a place of our own, after being crowded up so long in the ship's cabin," put in Annis cheerily.

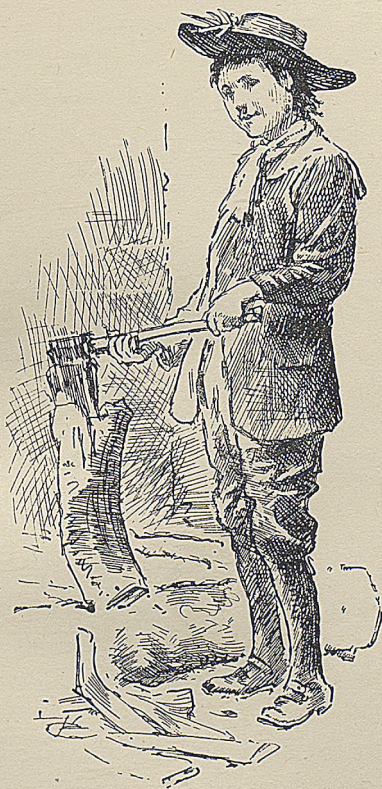
"A house with only one room in it never can be comfortable," pronounced Grace discouragingly.

"Even the deacons have not better houses yet," pleaded Arthur. "Oh, Grace, I did think you would be pleased. See, I found those stones, and built the hearth with them myself; and I put up those shelves, and outside I have marked out a garden for you."

"Oh, what useful shelves! How clever you are, Arthur!" cried Annis, running up to inspect them. "Look, Grace, we can put our plates and mugs on them that we brought from Holland. And what a nice corner by the hearth for mother's arm-chair to stand in!"

"There is not space enough on the shelves for half our things," complained Grace; but





HELPED IN THE BUILDING OF HIS PLAYFELLOWS' HOUSE.







Annis's cheerful words were raising her spirits in spite of herself, while Arthur's face looked considerably brighter for them. Perhaps the trials of the new life did press hardest on Grace. She was a born little housewife, and the trim, thrifty ways of her Dutch neighbours in Leyden had suited her exactly. It did seem a grief to her to have to make her home in a corner of a wilderness, and in a one-roomed wooden hut. They were real hardships that the Pilgrim Fathers — and the Pilgrim Children — had to face.

"Then I'll make you more shelves," began Arthur, in answer to Grace's speech; but Annis interrupted him brightly.

"There is plenty of room, dear Arthur. We will manage capitally. Only help us now to make a fire, and put the house straight before mother comes."

The two girls had all the care of the new home on their shoulders. Their mother had not grown better, but worse, during these winter months. She was not the only sufferer in the settlement. In the small houses that had begun to spring up under the elm boughs of the



little town of Plymouth many lay ill. There were few comforts and little help for the sick; the settlers were poor, and could not bring much with them from Europe. Even food was beginning to run short; and while some of the colonists built on shore, others went to fish in the sea for food, and others searched the woods for game with which to feed their starving families. Thus it was that the three children stood in the new hut alone, planning as best they could to put it in order.

"Oh, that is pleasant!" cried Grace, as Arthur brought in an armful of logs and chips, and flames from the new-kindled fire went dancing up from the hearthstone. "Now, Annis, we can begin our part of the work."

Annis had already been patiently unwrapping the coverings from the household possessions that had travelled with them across the sea. The kind hands of neighbours had carried them up from the ship; they were not many in number. An arm-chair with a cushion for their mother, some bright-coloured Dutch mugs and plates, and a pot or two for cooking; this was





BACK FROM HIS DAY'S HUNTING.







all, except the greatest family treasure, the big English Bible. When these were set out by the young housekeepers the room still looked bare and empty, but Arthur had a surprise ready. From a hiding-place in the woods he brought a wooden table and some rough-made wooden stools. He had been at work on them secretly for weeks, and Annis fairly jumped for joy when she saw them. She put the table in the middle of the room, and ranged the stools round the fire. There were seats for all the family, and even Grace looked pleased at last.

"It seems like a home now," said she.

"Children, have you done all this?" said their father's voice behind them. He had come back from his day's hunting, and was standing in the doorway.

"Does it look nice now, nice enough for mother?" cried Annis, running to him and clasping her small hand round his big rough one.

"I will go and bring her," said the father, laying down his gun and the game he had shot.

"Mother will be glad when she sees what her



good little maidens and kind Arthur have done for her."

They watched him go down the hill through the snow to the neighbour's house that had sheltered them while their own was building. Grace had rather a look of shame on her face.

"I haven't been very good, if father only knew it," said she. "I am afraid I complain very often and wish myself back in Holland."

"But we must try not to complain," said Annis softly, "because it grieves father and mother."

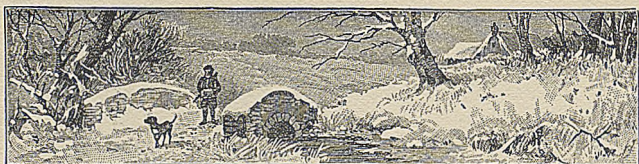
"And besides," put in Arthur thoughtfully, "we children can do our part to help. We don't quite understand — we are not old enough yet—all the reasons why we came to America. But the older people tell us it was to please God and serve Him. If so, we must not grumble at a few hard things to bear. If God is pleased with the grown-up people for leaving their homes and friends for His sake, then He will be pleased with us children for doing our part; and that



is to be brave and obedient, and not to grumble."

"I will try," answered Grace penitently; and then they saw their mother coming up the hill on their father's arm, and ran to welcome her.





## CHAPTER IV

### DANGER NEAR

**O**NCE, some weeks after their home-coming, Annis lay awake at night in her little bed. Grace's sleeping head was on the pillow beside her, and in the bed in the opposite corner of the hut lay her sick mother. Her father was away from home. The good elders of Plymouth thought that some of their number ought to search the woods around and find out what rivers and hills lay beyond. Annis's father was strong and brave, so he was chosen for the work; though he went with a heavy heart, leaving his delicate wife and girl-children alone.

But Arthur's father had built his hut near by, and he promised to guard his neighbour's house-



hold as best he could. And Arthur himself was across almost every hour to help. He had no mother nor sisters, so he looked on Grace and Annis almost as sisters, and their mother's kind words were very sweet to him. He loved to do little services for them all, and every morning he chopped wood and drew water for their house as well as his own. In return for his kindness Grace was spinning hard at some new shirts for him, while Annis, who liked knitting best of all feminine arts, was making him some thick new stockings.

They all needed warm clothes, for bitter, bitter was the first winter after the landing of the *Mayflower* Pilgrims. The deep snows lay like a white blanket on the little settlement, and morning after morning they woke to find the north wind blowing, and the snowflakes driving in through wooden shutters and the crevices in the roughly-built walls. Before that terrible winter was over half of the Pilgrims lay sleeping in the little burial-ground on Cole's Hill, victims of cold and hardship.

Such sad events made the children wise and brave before their time; and Annis, as she lay

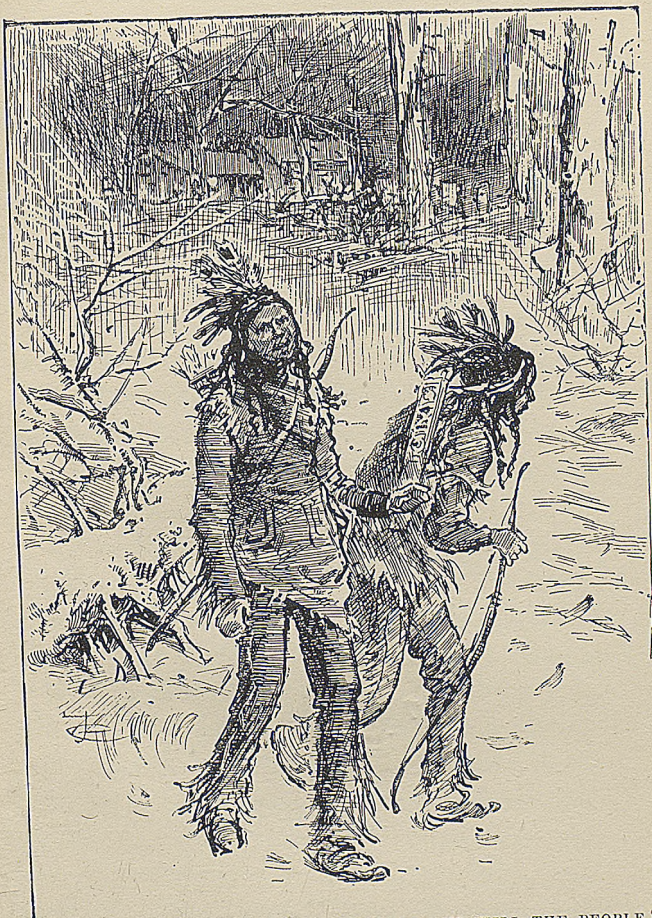


awake, was praying earnestly that God would soon make her mother well, and would bring her father back safe from his journey. Faintly across the snow came the sound of voices. Arthur and his father were singing their evening psalm. Annis listened, and the sound comforted her. She rose quietly and put another log on the fire to keep the room warm for her mother, then she nestled close to Grace and fell asleep.

She did not know how long it was before she woke again. She always slept more lightly than Grace, and some sound, though a soft one, woke her now. She crept to the wooden shutter at the window, and looked out through the chinks. In the dark, still sky stars were shining, and their faint light showed what had roused her. Up the village street, over the snow, some dark forms were silently stealing. There were feathers waving in their twisted hair, there were sheafs of arrows by their side—they were Indians, come from the woods to survey the village while the white men slept.

Annis's heart stood still with fear. She had





HAD THEY COME TO BURN THE VILLAGE AND KILL THE PEOPLE ?







only seen Indians once or twice before, but she knew that they were wild and fierce, and that they were angry at the coming of the white settlers. Why were they here to-night? Had they come to burn the village and kill the people? And what could she, poor little maid, do to protect her mother and Grace, who lay calmly sleeping on their pillows, little dreaming of the danger so near? Should she wake them? Grace would perhaps scream and call the attention of the Indians, and the fright might make her mother very ill. No, she would wait and watch alone.

Brave little heart! How did the Pilgrims' children bear such dangers, which, in the lonely, unprotected little colony, must have happened almost daily? They knew that their parents trusted in God, and believed that He was an Almighty Father, always at their side to help them, though unseen. This, no doubt, made even the children strong and brave. Annis was shaking in every limb with terror, but she grasped the window-shutter tightly with both hands to keep herself from shrieking out, while over and over in her heart rose up the



silent cry: "O God, take care of mother and Grace and me. Take care of us and all the village."

While she prayed she watched, and she saw the Indians glide silently, one behind the other, down the village street, stopping a moment at every door. Then they halted and appeared to consult a while. Turning at last, they struck across the cleared land and entered the woods. They were only scouts sent out to glean some information, and meant no harm this time to the village. Annis watched and waited, but they came no more.

With a great sigh of relief she let go the window-shutter. Her limbs felt faint and weak with the long watching and terror. Without knowing it she fell asleep where she was, and when she woke in the dim morning light she was still crouching near the window.

A loud knocking roused her. Arthur had come, bringing their firewood for the day. Hastily dressing herself, Annis ran out and told him the night's story, speaking low, lest her mother and Grace should hear.

"And you did not even scream nor wake



your mother! Annis, you were brave!" cried Arthur.

"God took care of us," said Annis simply.

The boy looked at his little friend almost reverently. He saw she meant the words, and coming from his fair-haired playfellow they impressed him more than when the grown-up people in meeting talked about faith in God. But he saw that Annis looked pale, though brave, and he knew that she had been through a real danger.

"You must not be frightened so again, Annis," he said. "Deacon Carver says he means to build walls round the town by and by, to keep the Indians out. I wish they were built now."

"I wish so too," said Annis, shivering as she remembered that the peril she had undergone last night might come again and again.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," cried Arthur, struck with a bright new thought. "See, the space between our houses is very narrow. I will fix a cord to go through your window-shutter and ours, with a wooden rattle at our end. Shake the cord if ever you are frightened



in the night again, and father and I will be sure to come."

This primitive kind of telegraph was put up that very day, and Annis slept with the cord in her hand at nights, feeling safe and happy.





## CHAPTER V

### HUNGER-BITTEN

AS

SPRING came on, a danger even worse than Indian enemies threatened the new-founded colony of Plymouth.

Cold and disease had thinned the numbers of the Pilgrim Fathers, and as their supplies of food ran short, famine came among them to claim fresh victims. "We are stepping-stones for others," said the brave Pilgrims as they died; and when we read of their faith and courage, we feel they were sowing noble seed. All that is best and truest in America to-day can be traced to the brave little band who, on Plymouth shores, suffered such terrible hardships.

"Grace," said Annis to her sister one March



morning, "is there any food left in the house for us?"

Their father had come home once from his search expedition, but the governor had sent him away again. Their mother was still ill, and the two little girls, even with the kind help of neighbours, were often puzzled to know how to provide for the daily household wants.

"There is nothing," answered Grace, shaking her head sadly, "except the partridge Arthur snared in the woods and brought us yesterday. We must keep that to make broth for mother; and, Annis, *do* you run down to Deacon Fuller's, and ask if they can spare us a bit of fish."

Annis put on her hood and cloak, both much worn by the hard winter's service, and set out. As she ran down the snow-covered track, which at present served Plymouth as a road, a keen north-west wind was blowing. She pulled her hood far over her face to shield herself from its icy breath, but a white line of snowflakes was on her head and shoulders when she stood before the good deacon's door.

"Can you lend us any food? Grace and I have





"CAN YOU LEND US ANY FOOD?"







none," she asked eagerly, as kind Deacon Fuller appeared at the door in answer to her knock. The good man looked sorrowfully at her.

"Little maid, we are in the same case ourselves. No morsel of food has passed our lips to-day. But one we know has gone fishing. If he catch anything in the sea we will share what he brings with you."

"You are very good." Annis could say no more. Tears were in her eyes as she thought of taking such news home to Grace.

"Is your mother worse?" asked the kind deacon, who was the doctor of the little colony.

"Not worse, but no better," replied Annis sadly.

"Take care of her, and keep up heart yourself, my child," said the deacon pityingly. "'Tis hard lines, I know, for little maidens to suffer want. But the good Lord, who brought us safely over the wide sea, will care for us in this need. But go home now, for the north wind is keen. I will bring you help if I can by and by."



Annis thanked him and turned homewards. The chill winds beat against her as she struggled up the street, and the drifts grew thicker each minute, for the snowstorm was increasing. "Oh, when will the spring come?" thought Annis, as her weary feet bore her on. Grace met her at the door.

"What have you brought?" she asked anxiously.

"Nothing," was the answer, and both little faces looked at each other in despair.

"There is nothing in Arthur's house either," said Grace. "We must take a spoonful or two of mother's broth, just to keep us from being too hungry; and perhaps—perhaps something may come. Is it snowing again?"

"Yes," said Annis. "Let us shut the door tight, Grace, or the snow will drift in to mother."

Flake on flake fell the snow, cold and heavy and white. The air was full of the whirling white things; they could not even see the walls of Arthur's cottage. He had been to them that morning, and had piled up a heap of chopped wood in the corner of the room, enough



to last them for a day or two. They built up a big fire, and kneeling by it the two hungry little girls spread their hands to the blaze, and tried to make warmth do instead of food.

Their mother was almost too ill to notice what was happening, and from time to time the good children fed her with spoonfuls of the broth they could willingly have eaten themselves.

"I wonder if Deacon Fuller has had the fish," said Grace, as the day passed on.

"I'm sure he would have brought us some if he had," returned Annis. "I expect the snow drove the fishermen home from the sea."

"Let us sleep by the fire," proposed Grace, as night came and it grew dark. "We shall be cold as well as hungry in our bed by the wall. Oh, Annis, if the snow lasts and no food comes, shall we die? It is dreadful to be starved."

She burst into tears as she spoke, and poor little Annis broke down too and cried with her. The sick mother, happily, was sleeping, and the two children cried in each other's arms till sleep at last put an end to their troubles. The storm beat upon the little hut and woke them once or twice during the night, and they built up the



fire again. Towards morning, however, the wind dropped, and the children fell into a deeper sleep.

Knock! knock! thump! thump! It was broad day when they woke and heard these sounds. The snow had ceased, and a bright March sun was shining in through the cracks of the window-shutter. Arthur's voice was calling—

"Grace! Annis! Wake up and see who has come."

They opened the door quickly. A tall man stood outside, with snow on his hair and beard, but such a loving light in his eyes.

"Oh, father, father, is it you?" cried the girls together, and flung their arms round him, feeling as if the very touch of his strong brown hand brought them safety.

"All the search-party have come back," proclaimed Arthur joyfully. "They would have reached us yesterday, but the storm stopped them. And see what they have found!" pointing to a large dark object lying in the snow. "They have killed a deer. There is food for us all to-day."



It was true; their long fast was over. And before want and hunger visited them again spring began to come, and hope revived in the hearts of the much-tried little band of pilgrims.



## CHAPTER VI

### PLEASURE IN THE WOODS



HAVE you finished your work yet?" asked Arthur, as he came up to his neighbours' door one lovely afternoon in May.

"Almost done," answered Grace, nodding to him brightly. "Here is your knitting, mother



dear, and a little stool for your feet. Now, are you quite sure that you do not mind being left alone for a few hours?"

"Put the big Bible in my reach and then you may go," said the mother kindly. "You all need play after your winter of hard work."

"I am so glad you are better, dear mother," said Annis, kissing her as she put the Bible on the table near her mother's hand. "You look almost as well as you used to in Holland."

The door of the little hut stood open, and the sick woman sat in her arm-chair, with the soft spring sunshine falling over her and the sweet spring airs blowing in. The long winter was over at last, and health was coming back to the sick and hope to the despairing among the settlers of Plymouth. In the waste grounds near the village the men were breaking up little plots of earth, and sowing them with the seeds they had brought with them from Europe. A few cattle were grazing on the marshes by the sea, and in the little town a new and more happy stir of life had begun.



The two girls put their hut as neat and clean as hands could make it—the supper of broiled fish was all ready to be cooked when they returned—and then with loving good-byes to their mother, away they went for their first holiday in the new country.

"I want to show you our garden—yours and mine," said Arthur proudly, leading the way to a bit of fenced-in ground, where he had been at work for days past.

"Oh, Arthur, what a pretty place you have chosen!" cried Annis, as they reached the spot. Tall elm trees grew on one side and made a natural wall for the garden. To the south the ground lay open, and the warm sun shone on neat little beds of freshly-turned earth, in which green seed-leaves were already peeping.

"There are radishes in this bed—they will be my first crop," said Arthur; "and there are turnips and pumpkins."

"And what is in this great bed?" asked Grace curiously.





A FRIENDLY OLD INDIAN GAVE HIM THE SEEDS.







"Maize," answered Arthur. "A friendly old Indian gave me the seeds. He says it will grow up tall and green, and in the autumn it will bear long pods full of yellow corn. We shall have bread of our own growing then. We shall not starve next winter."

"Oh, I don't think such dreadful times can ever come again," cried Annis hopefully.

"Look at that robin sitting on the tree fence," said Grace.

"It has a blue breast — not a red breast. How funny, and pretty!" exclaimed Annis, as the bird flitted past them up into the sunny air and dived into the depths of the neighbouring woods.

"Let us follow the pretty bird," suggested Arthur.

"Yes," laughed Grace. "We will make it our guide, and go wherever it goes."

It proved a merry game. The dim old woods which they entered had most likely never rung to such shrieks of laughter as echoed among them now. The blue-breasted robin did not know, of course, what part in the



game he was taking, but if he had known he could not have done better. He flew into a little glade where the birches were blossoming, and sat down to rest on an old tree stump. Down sat the three children who followed him, and waited to see what would happen.

"Will he ever move?" asked Arthur, after five minutes had gone by in silent expectation.

"I don't want him to go yet. Don't speak to startle him," said Annis softly. "Look at these flowers."

All sorts of lovely wild blossoms were growing in the grass beside them—violets, purple and white, trailing pink arbutus, tall white Solomon's seal. Grace and Annis picked their laps full, and still thousands of starry petals were covering the ground of the little glade with beauty. The children looked and exclaimed in their delight, and the little robin watched them with his bright eyes, and finally concluded to leave such noisy company.

"Now he's going—he's off!" cried Arthur



excitedly. "Put your flowers down, girls, and see where he will take us."

They laid their flowers down at the foot of a hoary old cedar, where it would be easy to find them again, and started off. They had to run, for the robin was flying quickly, and could make his way faster among the tree stems than they could over the briar-grown path below.

"We have lost him. I can't see him," said Arthur, disappointed.

"I can; he is on that maple bough," cried Annis. "And oh, see! look what is here—a nest of grey squirrels like the one you brought us on the ship, Arthur!"

They followed the blue bird in a merry chase all the afternoon, finding fresh treasures as they went. Gay little squirrels chirped at them from the tree boughs, more robins were flitting about, building their nest in safe corners, and wild flowers grew everywhere. With their hands full of leaves and blossoms, and with a long story to tell of the afternoon's adventures, they reached the edge of the wood again; and when



they looked towards their hut, they saw their mother sitting in the doorway, while the evening sun shone on her quiet face and on the big Bible in her lap.

"America seems home now," said Grace, as they looked at the peaceful picture.

It seemed a dearer and better home still to the little pilgrims as time went on. Every year brought something to improve their lot. The savage Indians made friends with the little colony after a while, and let them dwell in peace. More emigrants came from England, and the hills and woods that were so lonely when Grace and Annis first looked at them from the deck of the *Mayflower* became peopled with many happy homes. When they heard from these new-comers that in England the Puritans were still persecuted, when stories reached them of Bunyan's eleven long years' imprisonment, and of good men like Richard Baxter dragged in old age and sickness before harsh judges because of their religion, then they thanked God that they lived in a free land where they could serve Him as they would.



Brave Pilgrims of the *Mayflower*! We are not called as they were to give up our homes and live in a wilderness country for God's sake; but let us learn from their story that faith in God is worth any sacrifice.

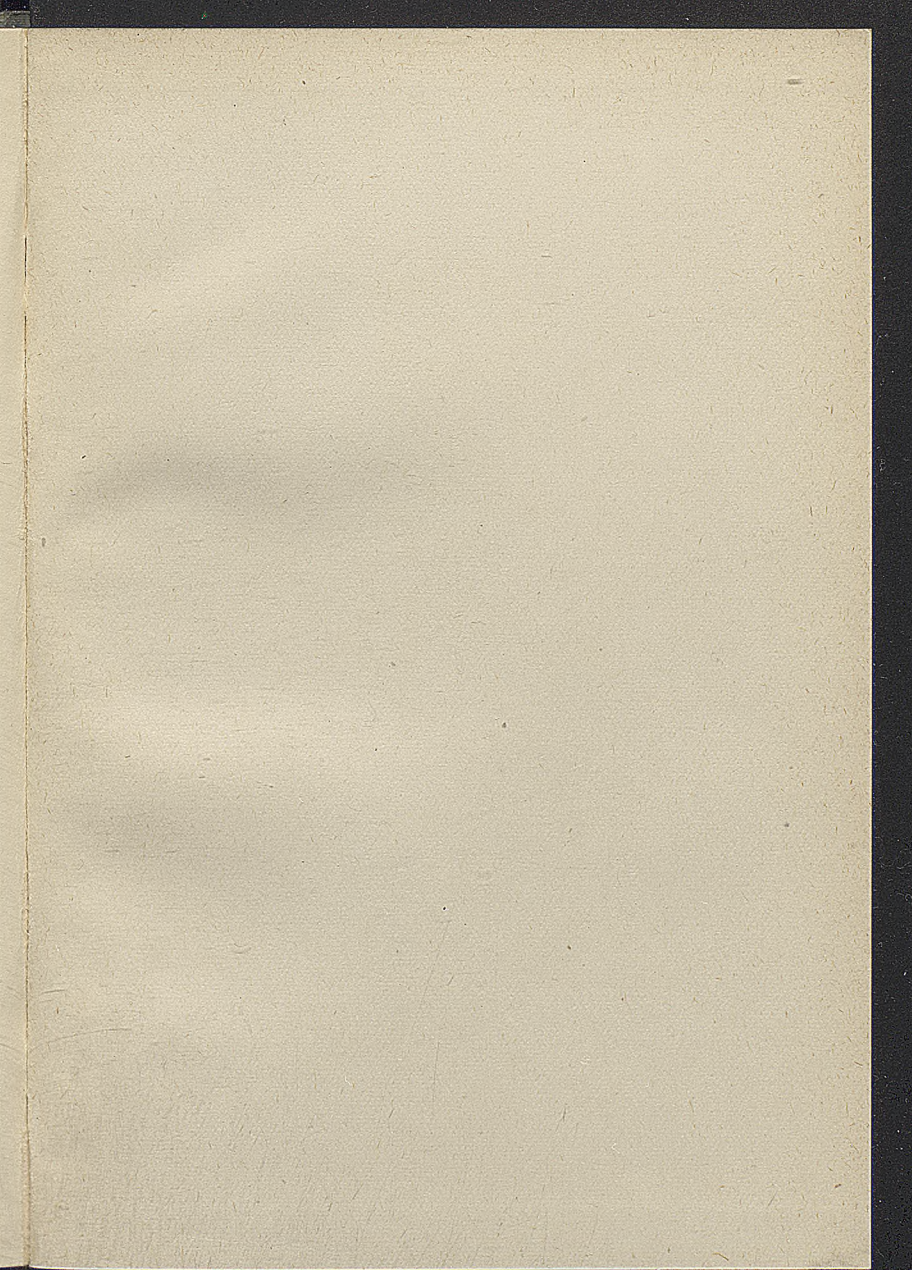
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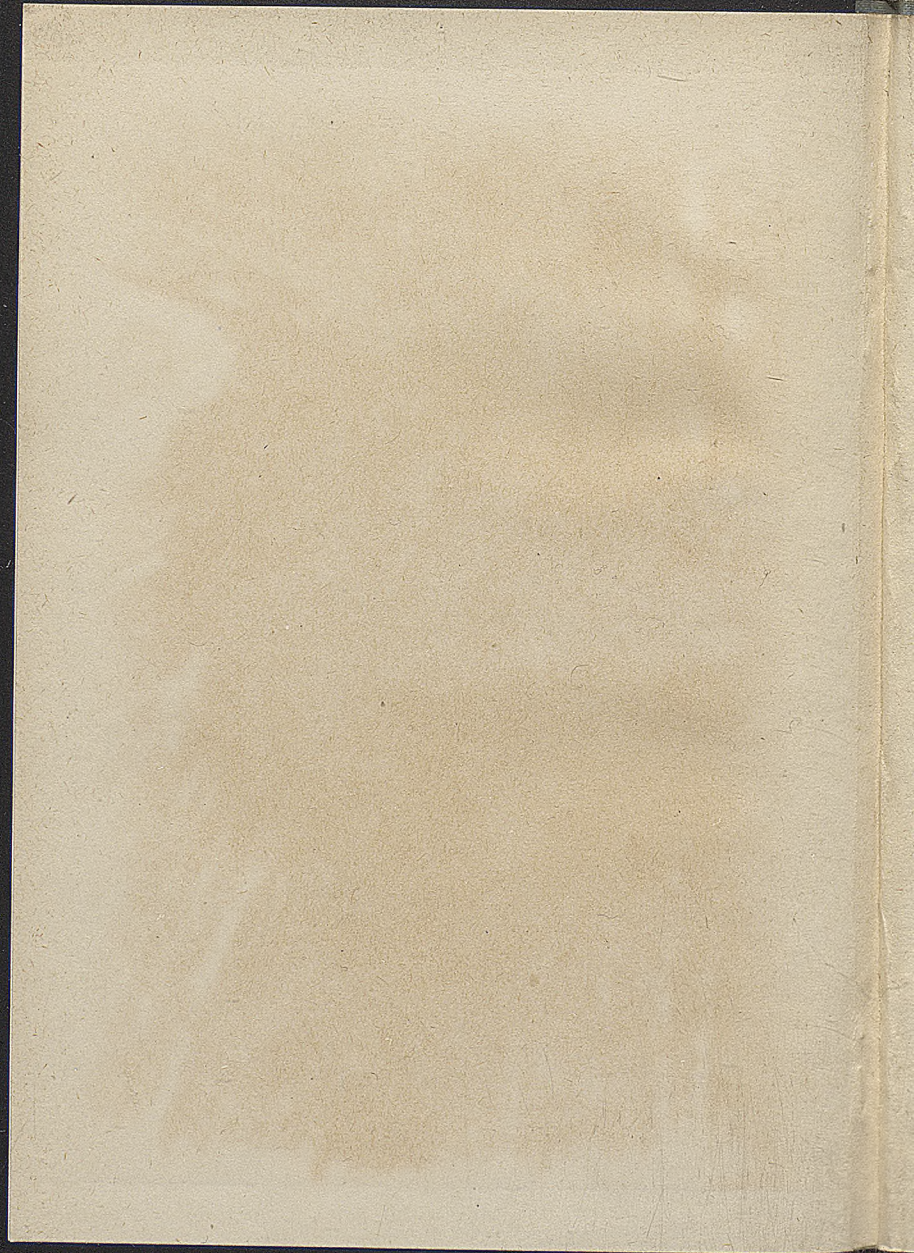


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