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HULDAH

A DAUGHTER OF THE REVOLUTION

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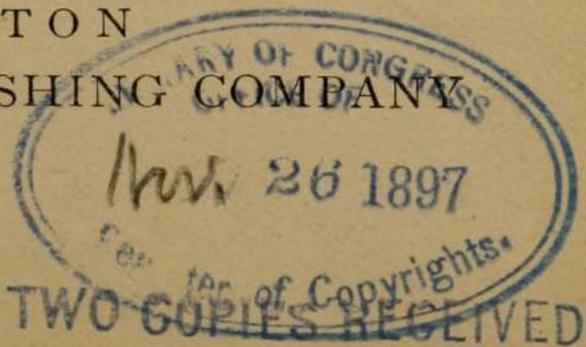
POEMS OF AMERICAN PATRIOTISM

BY

EMMA E. BROWN

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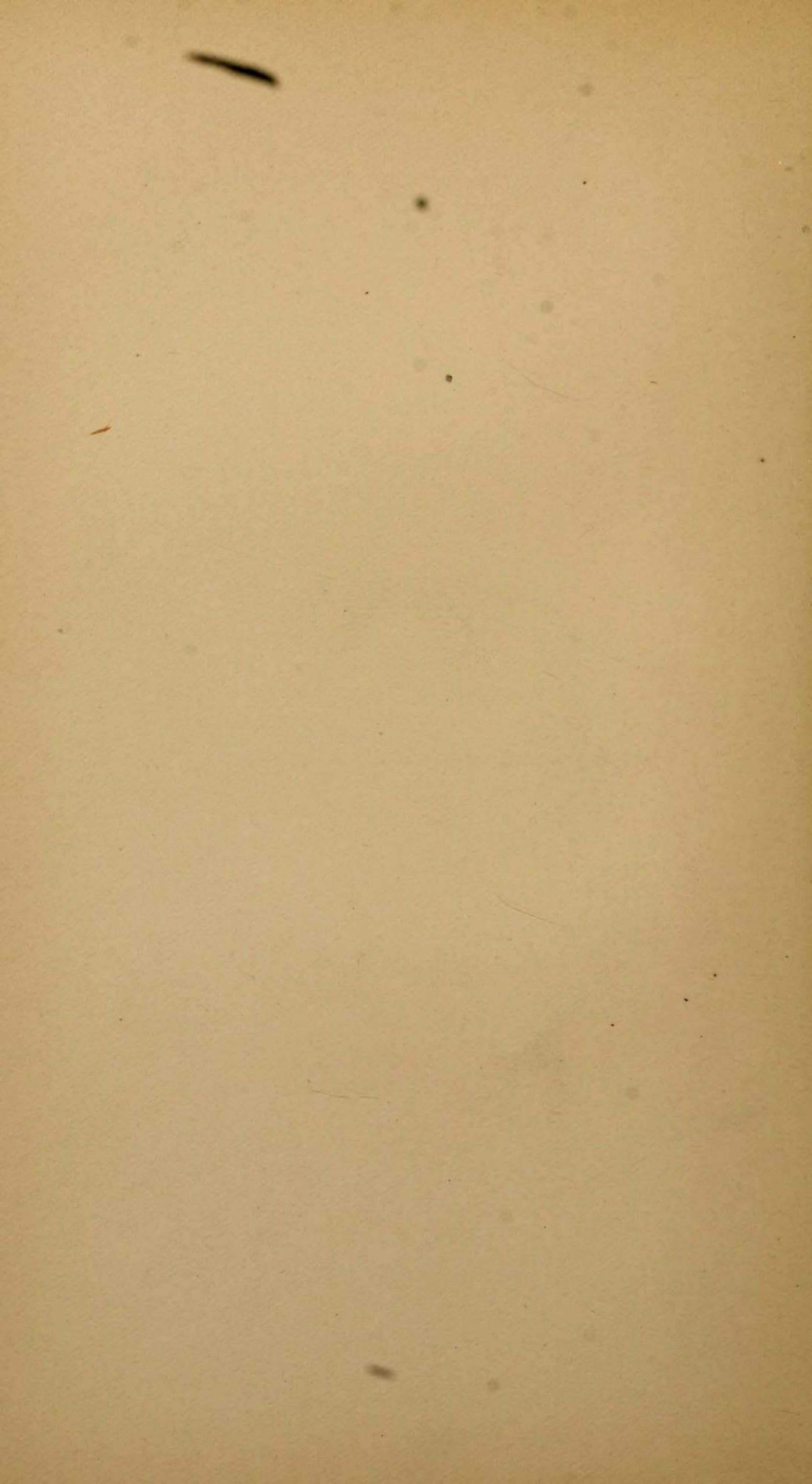
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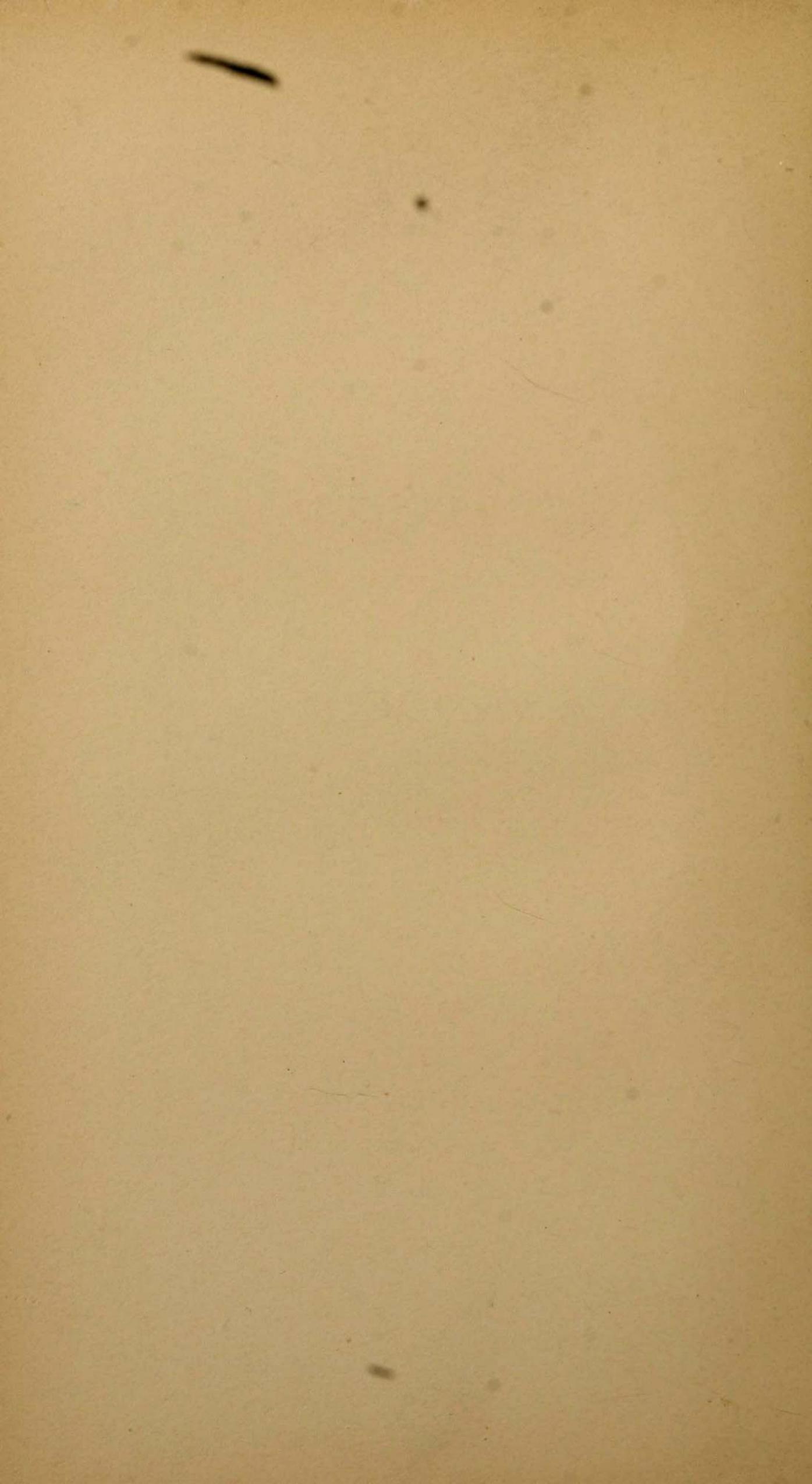
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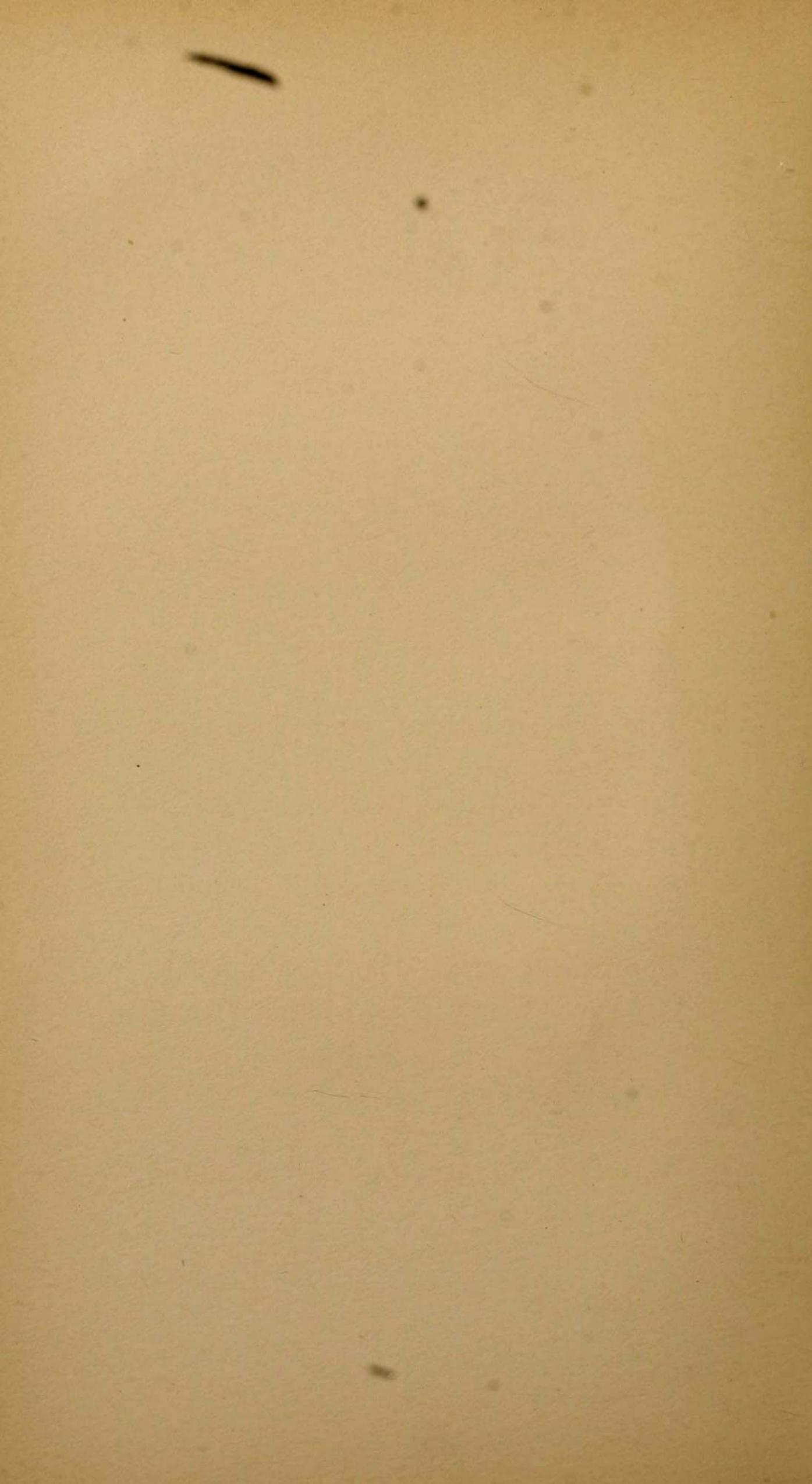


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HULDAH



HULDAH

A DAUGHTER OF THE REVOLUTION

Low, subtle whispers of summer-
tide,
Though fringes of snow still clung
beside
The jagged rocks, and with half-
dazed look —
Like a child just waked — lay the
sleepy brook.
Perchance 'twas the sunshine's length-
ened ray,
The lowing cattle, the haze that lay
On the Milton hills, or that strange
spell
In the robin's note — I cannot
tell —
But Huldah leaving her spinning,
knew
And felt the restlessness as she
threw

The bars of the lattice open. Cool
and sweet
As though from some pine wood's
deep retreat—
With a slow, coy tread, the fresh
winds crept
Through the sliding bars; on the
hearth, wing-swept,
Falls the startled log in a moulder-
ing heap,
While with playful touch the breezes
keep
The dried bouquets on the mantel-
shelves
In trembling rustle; like roguish elves
At hide and seek 'mongst the piles
of wool
Soft-carded, with sudden start they
pull
And twist the thread on the idle
wheel,
Tumble the curls of Huldah, and
steal
Across her cheeks to leave a flush,
Borrowed, it may be, from the blush
Of pink arbutus, anemones,
In their out-door work of mysteries.

Then, planning fresh mischief, the
rude winds stray

To the pantry where ('tis Saturday),
The brown bread moulding with busy
hands,

By her kneading-trough the mother
stands ;

Another gust — away flies her cap !
And tabby starts from a half-feigned
nap

When fragrant mints from the old
cross-beam

Drop into the pan of golden cream !

A merry laughing, while swift feet
run

To close the bars ere more harm is
done,

And yet by the lattice, a long time
still

The young girl lingers, as young
girls will

When the breath of Spring thrills
heart and brain

With a rapture — half akin to pain !

But green are the buds on the wil-
lows' bough,

And fragrant the sod where ox and
plough
The father, in home-spun suit of
blue,
Is guiding the broad, deep furrows
through.

A sudden rumble — a quick, bright
flash
In the April skies! But, closing
the sash,
Our little Huldah with happy smile
Has turned away, and merrily while
Her wheel is spinning, she sings a
strain
That seems of her own glad thoughts,
the refrain:

*A sunlit sky and a sunlit earth —
Blue hills and a bluer river, —
Cool forest depths where the springs
have birth,
Green fields where the grasses quiver!*

*A fair bright future — without and
within —
Glad Hope to my heart is bringing,*

*For a golden thread do the grim Fates
spin
When they hear — a red-breast sing-
ing!*

Another morning — just two hours
old —

A Sunday morning, clear and cold.
Without, the crest of a waning moon
Is slipping from brow of the Night;
for, soon,

Swift heralds of Dawn the east will
rend

And electric flash through the whole
land send!

Chill breezes from marsh and low-
lands creep,

Rustling the trees where dead leaves
sleep;

And, now and then, through the
woods is heard

The wandering note of some shiver-
ing bird.

In the little farm-house all is still
Save the tick of the clock, the shrill

Sharp chirp of cricket, or tramp of mice
'Twixt the loosened laths.

Hark! twice — ay, thrice!

And again it comes! Good God!
can it mean —

Nay — hush! there's a cry the swift
footsteps between, —

An echoing tread on the bridge be-
low, —

Another call! — and, like startled doe,
Half doubting still if she wakes or
sleeps

The little Huldah, a-tremble, creeps
Down the creaking stair-case, peers
without

The great hall door, and catching the
shout

Of the flying horseman, one dread
word,

“*The British!*” through all the house
is heard,

Till the old oak rafters themselves
are stirred!

To the upper loft the father springs
And forth from its hiding-place he
brings

The heavy musket that he bore
At Frontenac, long years before.
“The red-coats — ha! they shall not
say
With bullets we know but children’s
play!”
And with soldier-pride he soothes
the fears
Of wife and of daughter, kisses the
tears
Away from Huldah’s cheeks, and
then
Runs down to the green where the
“minute men”
Their quiet hamlet homes to save
Have gathered in phalanx stanch and
brave.

Ah — well-a-day! — you all have
heard
That Sabbath’s story, — word for
word —
How nobly they fought at Lexing-
ton, —
The short, sharp conflict farther on, —
The fierce bush fighting — then the
shout

Of victory; and the British rout,
As with broken ranks they turned
and fled —

The proud Lord Percy at their head!
Yet what is our knowledge — thine
or mine —

Of that one day — save the bare out-
line!

In Huldah's home — why! the long
hours crept

As if the very pendulum slept.

The cries of alarm, the gathering feet
Soon died away; but the quiet street,
The dead, dull silence everywhere,
Seemed harder than anything else to
bear!

For man may fight, but woman must
wait, —

And which — think you — is the
easier fate?

There were distant shots, and now
and then

The smell and the smoke of powder,
when

With chilling breath, and a wailing
sound

The fickle winds to the east veered
round ;

Snug, sheltered, and safe from rude
alarm

In its quiet nook, stood the hillside
farm,

Yet the mother and Huldah felt a
chill

As they looked and listened — a sud-
den thrill

Of quick, sharp pain — for dearer
far

Than our own poor lives, our loved
ones are !

And our very safety — when theirs,
we know,

In peril must be — is an added woe !

On the upper shelf, at close of day,

Still folded the Sunday garments lay ;

The catechism's dreaded task

The mother had quite forgotten to
ask,

And now the last red shaft in the
west

Had ended the hours of sacred rest

For the day was reckoned (as it begun

In the good old times) from sun to
sun!

And laying aside the Holy Book
Her half-knitted stocking the mother
took,

While little Huldah began to reel
Fresh skeins of yarn from her spin-
ning-wheel;

But dull and listless her fingers ply
The wonted stint, though she stands
close by

The lattice window where field and
brook

And bud and bough have the self-
same look

As yester-morn — yet the fairest
scene

Strange shadows may catch from —
a day between!

*A weeping sky and a mourning earth, —
Bleak hills and a bleaker river, —
Dark forest wilds where the storms
have birth, —
Brown fields where the dead leaves
shiver;*

A dim, gray future — within and without —

*Dread Fear to my heart is bringing,
For in the chill dusk, when truth is a
doubt,*

I heard — a whip-poor-will singing!

With weight of blossom — with fruit-
age now,

Droops the trailing vine and the
loaded bough, —

Through the gray old woods the
flowers have gone

In long procession, one by one;

The trembling snow-drop's pallid
face

Had hardly smiled ere it yielded
place

To violets, to twin-flower bells,

And the sweet claytonia that dwells

A hermit within its mossy nook;

And now, like lighted torch by the
brook,

Flames the cardinal-flower, while
golden rod

And the asters' deep rich purple, nod

In the meadows brown, as if the sun
And shadow were melted into one!

And all this time the tide of war
Whose sudden rise old Middlesex
saw,

That April morning — as in a
dream —

Has ebbed and flowed in one vast
stream

Throughout the land; their white
and red

The bright June roses scarce had shed,
When on Charlestown's height the
battle came

That gave to one hill a world-wide
fame!

Nor do Southern homes their heroes
lack;

For Patrick Henry echoes back
The same determined will that fired
Our bold Green Mountain boys —
inspired

Young Ethan Allen, when the "keys
Of Canada" he vowed to seize,
And at Ticonderoga show
How a true soldier meets the foe!

With smaller file, but fiercer heart —
(It may be that the touch, the smart
Of rifle-balls — like some wines make
Fresh thirst, that needs fresh draughts
to slake !)

Long weeks ago the “ minute-men ”
To Lexington returning, when
Their service, for the time, was
through, —

With eager, longing eyes the few
Thin ranks were scanned by one and
all

Whose homes had heard that “ morn-
ing call.”

And while, impatient, to the gate
Our little Huldah runs to wait,
The careful mother — ere it burn —
Her smoking “ fire-cake ” stops to
turn,

And lay upon the fresh-scoured deal,
Where waits the simple evening meal,
An extra spoon, knife, fork and
plate

For “ father,” for the hour is late,
And hungry, faint, she fears that
he

After the hard day’s march will be.

In long-drawn line the troops pass on,
Till now the scattered files have gone
Far down the road ; and all alone,
With altered step, with altered tone,
Poor Huldah turns, to meet half-way
The mother's sudden, sad dismay —
“ And yet 'tis likely we may find
He tarried, just a while, behind —
Or, mayhap, joined the troops that
lay

Around old Boston, for they said
With Washington now at their head
The ‘ Continentals ’ meant, ere long,
To enter in, with shout and song ! ”

So Huldah and the mother try
To cheer each other — drawing nigh
The dying embers, as they wait
To hear the footstep at the gate.
And still untouched the supper
stands

While steadily the old clock's hands
Are travelling on from hour to hour
As if they held some subtle power,
And knew our hopes, fears, life and
death

The while they number every breath !

With morning came fresh hope, fresh
plan —

By questioning each “minute-man”
The truth, of course, would soon be
shown,

And it were better all were known —
The very worst — than longer bear
This burden of suspense and care.

What did they learn? Well, one
man said

That he had seen him far ahead
Of rank and file that morning when
The call had come for “minute-
men”;

Another said, “He fought right
well —

A very hero — till he fell.”

“Fell?” Huldah’s lips grew white
with fear,

The mother gasped, “We did not
hear —

We did not know” — “Nay! don’t
mistake,”

The blunt lips added, “lines must
break

In fight, you know; we fall, we rise,

And I am sure these very eyes
Saw the brave man again, ere long
Right in the thickest of the throng !”
“ Yes ! Up and fighting !” said a
third,

“ He sprang as lightly as a bird
From that first wound.” But then
— what then ?

Well, really it was doubtful when
The fierce bush-fighting came, to tell
What happened — some ran on —
some fell —

And some had tarried to defend
The broken columns at the end ;
While others hid in ambush, more,
However, had pressed on before
To hasten the retreat ; blockade
The city — they themselves had
stayed

Most willingly, but calls at home
So urgent grew that they had come
To be “ at minute’s warning ” still
All ready — with a right good will !

With aching heart, word after word,
As in a dream, the mother heard ;
And Huldah, as she listened, grew —

(Such sudden change our grief and
 pain
Will sometimes work — like summer
 rain)
A woman, strong to bear, to do!

*Amethyst skies, and chrysoprase hills,
Where the lengthening sunbeam creepeth,
Murmur of South winds, babble of
 rills,
Whistling of orioles, bob-o-link trills,
Yet soundly the little bud sleepeth.*

*Dull, leaden skies where the heavy
 clouds lower,
Hills the glad sunshine forsaketh,
Raw, piercing winds and a chill,
 drenching shower,
Sobbing of pines where the bleating
 herds cower,
Yet, look you! the little bud waketh!*

O dreary winter! Just outside
The city still, the troops abide;

For though, weeks since, the frozen
bay

Temptations offered to essay
The promised, long-deferred attack,
Yet wise war councils held them back
A little longer still, till men,
Stores, ammunition came, and then
More confident the raid would be,
And crowned with surer victory ;
So reasoned Washington, and so
The patriots resolved to do.

Meanwhile, young Burr and Arnold
toil

Through pathless wilds of Maine, to
spoil

Quebec, and there unite, at length,
To give the New York troops fresh
strength.

And midst discouragements untold,
Montgomery, with ardor bold,
Showed how a strong will could
prevail

The "Heights of Abraham" to scale.

On leaden wings the months crept
on ;

The cold white drifts were almost
gone,
And through the lattice bars once
more
Came hints of summer days in store.
One hope, and only one, remained :
If entrance should, at last, be gained
Within the city — who could tell ?
The father might be there — 'tis well
To hope, and HulDAH tries to cheer
The mother, and allay her fear,
The while her busy fingers ply
Their daily tasks, and bravely try
By ready work of ready hand
To help the patriotic band.

A single night — and lo ! the sun
Next morning showed more labor
done

“Than my vast army, I believe,
In a whole month's time could
achieve !”

The British general exclaimed —
Of his own laggard troops ashamed.
Eleven days from that March night,
And Boston gloried in the sight
Of streets that knew no more the tread

Of Tory or the royal red !
And while the British fleet still lay
At anchor, just outside the bay,
A new, strange banner met their
 eyes
Of thirteen stripes against the skies !

From our own grief and misery
Springs the sweet balm of sympathy ;
And burdened souls, because they
 know

Life's bitterness, are quick to show
That Christian charity which is
So rare in such a world as this !
And when the thought had come,
 that he —

The lost one — 'mongst the sick
 might be,

Though never word, trace, sight or
 sound

Of their own loved one could be
 found,

Yet hearing there the piteous cries
Of one poor sufferer, who lies
Just at Death's door — what do they
 care

Though British uniform he wear ?

With soothing words, with gentle
touch

That to the sick one means so much,
The mother's tender, loving hand
His burning cheeks and forehead
fanned ;

Brought dainty bits from off her
shelf—

Delicious comfits she herself
From luscious fruits prepared as no
One else (the father said) could do !
And when the soldier, half awake,
(He came from Devonshire, it seemed,
And of his English home had
dreamed)

From long delirium cried, " Oh !
take

Me quick away ! I long to see
The sparkling brook, the old oak
tree,

The fresh green fields, the woods,
the pond,

And those blue mountains just be-
yond ! " —

The mother said, " Why ! let him
come

To us — we have a country home,

And room to spare — the change
might do
More for him than the doctors
knew !”

And so it happened, one bright day
Within their little guest-room, lay
A British soldier ! And the news
A wondrous zeal and fire infuse ;
But when the noble women hear
The innuendoes, taunt and jeer —
The epithets of “Tory,” “Spy,” —
To one and all they make reply,
“’Tis surely but a simple deed
Of charity, as, in his need,
We would some pitying heart and
true
For our belovèd one might do !”

*I had a message for my love,
Full tender, deep, and true ;
And yet, O waiting, white-winged dove
I could not give it you !*

*A fresh breeze kissed my cheek, —
It passed unto the South —*

*The land that all my longings seek —
Yet sealèd was my mouth.*

*The good ship touched the shore,
She sailed far out of ken,
And yet no messages she bore,
No words of tongue or pen.*

*Just then, across my path
A sudden shadow came,
One of God's poor, who hath
The blessing, "in His name,"*

*One for whom Jesu died
Had fallen by the road;
I could not turn aside —
I gave him raiment, food,*

*And words of friendly cheer —
Who could do less than this
For one, a fellow man, whose tear,
Whose smile reflecteth his?*

*Yet suddenly there shone
The light of a new day;
The message had passed on
In God's own blessèd way!*

*For Love is still the same —
 Whate'er we dream or think —
 Though bound to one fond name,
 Perchance, yet many a link*

*The magic chain must make,
 Ere heart can answer heart
 In perfect concord, and thus take
 Of heaven's own joy a part!*

Now at the North — now at the
 South —
 The demon War, with half-closed
 mouth,
 Had muttered challenges all through
 The Spring; and many knew
 The British Parliament had vowed
 "This rebel handful" should be
 cowed
 At once, if force of arms and men
 Could bring obedience back again.
 But when Sir Peter's boasted strength
 Before old Moultrie, quailed, at
 length;
 And Clinton's bold attempts were
 foiled

At Charleston, till his ships were
spoiled

Of colors, ammunition, stores —
Grave apprehensions filled the corps
Of “ British regulars ” ; and now
Though troops had come from Ad-
miral Howe,

And though the feeble patriot band
Was suffering loss, on sea, on land —
Behold ! a tremor shakes the throne
Of monarchs — wheresoever known,
As Declaration — loud and clear —
Of Independence, greets the ear !
And a new Nation takes her stand
United — heart and soul and hand.
A race full-grown, full-armed, in-
deed —

As in old classic lore we read
How the prolific brain of Zeus
A perfect Pallas could produce ;
And how a legion on the plain
Of Thebes arose, from dragon slain !

But ah ! not yet may conflict cease —
Since armor is for war, not peace —
And Liberty so dear, so rare,
The precious seal of blood must bear.

Now at Long Island — at White
Plains —

With many losses, many gains,
The contest rages fierce and strong,
While shouts of victory belong,
Now to the royal flag, and now
To bars and stars, whose colors show
The heavens above, the stripes below !

With eager ear that autumn day,
The British soldier as he lay
Half-sleeping, half-awake, had heard
The neighbors when they brought
the word

To Huldah — tarrying the while
To catch the sunshine of her smile.

A crow's sharp "caw," and plaintive
note

Of "pewee" through the still air float,
And from the purpling grapes, a
breath

(Like that the sweet day-lily hath)
Comes through the open sash ; and
now

A red leaf from the maple bough
Has dropped upon the sill ; a bee

All honey-laden, and a free
Bright butterfly flit in and out ;
And from the orchard comes the
 shout
Of children as they shake the loaded
 tree.

O rich, ingathering time ! The earth
In springtide, to maintain the birth
Of myriad buds, perforce must drain
The air of stimulus ; and brain,
Breath, muscle, feel in turn the need
Of life absorbed by germ and seed.
But autumn comes with garnered
 store, —
The teeming earth o'erflows once
 more, —
And clasping her full hand we take
The quick, magnetic thrills that make
It bliss to breathe — ay ! ecstasy
As in our childhood — just to be !

And so that bright October day
While listlessly the sick man lay
And let his thoughts in quiet rhythm
Blend with the scene — a sudden
 chrysm

Seemed falling on him as the dew,
 And every nerve, vein, fibre, knew
 The tide had turned — the open door
 Of life, not death, was his once more.
 He glanced about him, raised his head,
 And as he caught the busy tread
 Of feet below, and then the song
 Of Huldah at her work, a throng
 Of happy thoughts filled heart and
 brain
 And love of life crept back again.

SONG

*Only a brave old maple,
 Shorn of its scarlet and gold,
 And traced on the scroll of sunset
 As a hand-writing black and bold.*

*A low, wailing wind frets the branches ;
 The dead leaves start up in surprise,
 Till at length in the hush of the gloaming
 The dryad's sad monody dies.*

*O desolate tree in the meadow,
 With pleading hands stretched to the
 sky*

*Do you know the glad hopes of a spring-
tide*

Asleep in your folded arms lie?

*And that never a breath of the Storm
King,*

*And never a drift of the snow,
Can rattle the bud from its casket
Or loose the firm anchor below?*

*'Bide patiently, then, the bleak winter,
And change the sad wail to a song;
Bear up, for the robins and bluebirds
And South winds are coming, ere long!*

An empty room! what could it mean?
Nay! could it be that under screen
Of night, and, mayhap, from the
dread,

Of prison bars, that he had fled —
The British soldier? It is true
These convalescent weeks, they knew
How restlessly he paced the floor,
But then, they thought it nothing
more

Than, in impatience, anyone

Recovering slowly might have done.
Yet here upon the table lay
His watch and purse — a note to say
This strange departure he could
not

As yet, explain to any, but
Though words — deeds seemed in
truth too rude

To show his fervent gratitude —
A debt to their sweet charity
The life they saved henceforth should
be!

Silent and soft and white and slow —
On hill, stream, meadow — falls the
snow.

A hush without, a hush within,
A cold drear world where all has
been

So full of color, warmth, and glow ;
And Huldah — looking, listening —
feels

A new strange loneliness that steals
The dimpling smile, the song half-
way —

(As the bleak north winds chide and
stay

With chilling breath and frowning
look

The rippling laughter of the brook !)

And still with many a turn and phase
The fierce war spirit stirs and sways
The land that waits while Freedom's
breath

Seems wavering 'twixt life and death.

The battles on the Jersey shore

And, now and then, the cannon's roar

From fleet and fort still keep alive

The patriot's hope, while bravely
strive

The poor starved troops with Wash-
ington —

A host himself! — to spur them on.

Old Valley Forge — the story yet
Comes with fresh thrill, and eyes are
wet

With tears unbid — what time we
read

Of bitter suffering, bitter need,

All borne so uncomplainingly

By those whose eyes might never see

The boon they bought us — Liberty !

'Midst disappointment, ills untold —
 Tories at home, and traitors bold,
 With massacre at Wyoming
 An added horror yet to bring!
 Still, Burgoyne's late surrender fanned
 To flame again hope's dying brand,
 A flame that bright and brighter grew
 When in Manhattan's harbor lay
 At anchor, one glad summer day,
 With pennons red and white and blue,
 The long-expected, brave French fleet,
 And Count D'Estaing commanding it.

O glad bright morning on the bay!
 O sad, white dawning, as one ray —
 One only — pierced the narrow slip
 Of window, in the prison-ship —
 The "*Jersey*" — worst of all through-
 out

The waters of the Wallabout!
 Stifled and starved the prisoners lie
 A wailing mass of misery,
 And living sufferers envy those
 Whose eyes are first in death to close.
 O righteous Heaven! one day will
 show
 Full justice to all men, we know;

But while the good still suffer wrong,
And weak hands writhe beneath the
strong,
The cry must rise, "How long —
how long!"

Among the prisoners, one man
Creeps to the light, and dim eyes
scan

With wistful look the harbor and
The long, low line of sea-girt land;
How strange the bright blue water
seems! —

How cheerily the sunlight gleams
On snow-white sail, on sandy shore,
And fresh green turf where never-
more

His feet may tread — and though
the trace

Of suffering has aged his face,
It is — ah yes! we know it now,
The kindling eye, the thoughtful
brow

That Huldah kissed the morning
when

The call had come for "minute-
men."

Alas! how dim, how far away
It seems — that one short April day
When, hand to hand, he fought until
There came the sense of something
chill

On hand and foot — a blank — and
then

The British ambulances when
He woke and heard the questioning
jeer,

“Why! how came such a rebel here?”

“We found him wounded in the road
And took him, since the ‘red coat’
showed

Our own, we thought — but, ‘buff
and blue’

A sturdier rebel never knew!”

“Ah well! they tried in vain to make
Me compromise, or base oath take!
And when they could not as a spy
Make use of me, they thought to try
Fresh cruelties and quite subdue

Me — but they little knew

The patriotic blood that flowed
Within my throbbing veins, and
showed

The father, grandsire, who in strife
Of other days had yielded life
With hero spirit! — Well — ah well!
They did their best, but could not
quell

My rebel ardor — years of pain,
Imprisonment — and what the gain?
To fall were glorious on the field,
But this is pitiful — to yield
One's life by slow degrees, and know
That it is naught to friend or foe!
And yet if I could only see
The dear home faces, willingly
With my poor comrades they might
lay

Me down to rest — this very day!"
So thought the prisoner as he heard,
"Bring out your dead!" the morn-
ing word.

A hand upon the outer latch —
A closer crowding through the
hatch —
Who was it? Some one else to
share
Their woe? But no! — the tall
form there —

“ Good God ! it is the very face
I fought with in that narrow place
Beside the road ! ” and then he
turned

To find conviction — all — con-
firmed,

As pressing through the wailing
crowd

The British soldier spoke aloud
His name, and grasping then his
hand,

Without a greeting, said : “ We
stand —

Though in a very different place —
Once more, brave foe, face close to
face !

We fought right well that April day,
But fiercest enemies, they say,

Make firmest friends — so may it be
Henceforward, Sir, with you and me !

For life itself, and far above
This breath of ours, the fire of
love ! —

For all the sweetness of your home
A debtor to you I have come !

Yet never words of mine can tell
What bitter, bitter sorrow fell

That day when thinking of the face
I covered in that dreary place
With my own cloak, the knowledge
came —

(It may have been the likeness there
In your sweet Huldah's brow and
hair)

My foe — their loved one — 'tis the
same!

Long months since then, now here,
now there,

I've sought "the lost one" every-
where,

For signed, you see, by our good
king,

Your pardon and release I bring!"

Five times the winter snows had lain
On field and river, upland, plain;
Now here, now there, the tide of war
North, South, East, West, alternate
saw,

But hearts grew strong when helping
hands

Were stretched from far-off foreign
strands.

Pulaski, noble La Fayette,
And Kosciusko — even yet
Upon their generous deeds we dwell
And to our eager children tell.

Success, defeat — it was the same
Old tale — with just a change of
name,
Until, one bright October morn
An unexpected joy was born;
And to its depths each patriot soul
Is stirred, while swift the tidings roll,
“Cornwallis has surrendered! Ring
The bells in every town, and bring
The good news into every home —
To you and yours sweet Peace has
come!”

And, ere the echoes die away,
Let us one short, swift moment stray
To Middlesex where field and brook —
The very farm yard — have a look
As if some sudden joy had come
To nestle in the hill-side home.
A sudden gust of wind that steals
The curtain from its place reveals,
Within the little “keeping room,”

(Most often doomed to cold and
gloom!)

A lily here, a rosebud there,
Arranged with dainty thought and
care,

And in their Sunday garments clad,
The merry lass, the bashful lad,
The dame with cap-box in her hand,
Come up the path, and now they
stand

In quiet groups within; while two,
(A manly form with English face,
A girlish figure full of grace,
Yet freedom too, as if she knew
Her birthright!) joining hands re-
peat

The promises, the pledges sweet —
“To love, to cherish — heart for
heart —

In sickness, health — till Death us
part!”

*Up from the meadows, down from the
hills,*

*Snatched by the breezes, caught by the
rills —*

Hark! to the wonderful chorus!

*Warfare has ended in white truce of
peace.*

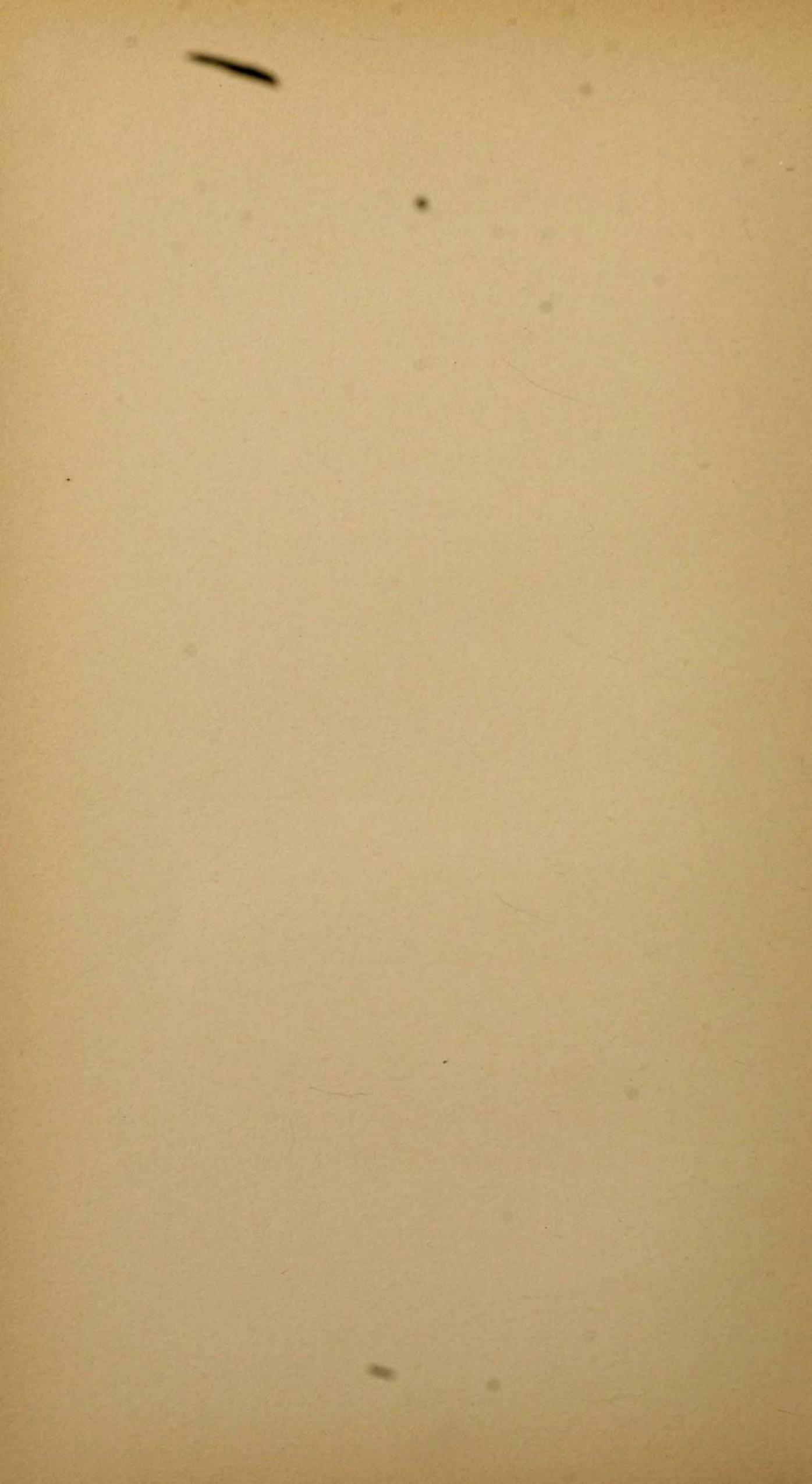
*Jealousies, hatred, rivalries cease
When Love her elixir breathes o'er
us!*

*And still as the years with their
changes roll by,
Breaking each barrier — strengthening
each tie,*

*Union grows stronger and stronger;
Nation to nation is drawing more
nigh —*

*And since of one language, aim, an-
cestry, — why
Should we cherish old enmities longer?*

*ESTHER'S DEFENCE
OF THE FORT*



ESTHER'S DEFENCE OF THE FORT

A STORY OF ONE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE'S
DAUGHTERS

SINCE those far-off days when Mason
came —
And Fernando Gorges of world-wide
fame —
To found on Piscataqua's rockbound
shore
A "Royal Province" (not only in
name!)
With its sure, safe harbor and boun-
teous store
Of nature's wealth in fish and game, —
New Hampshire's Daughters, stanch
and strong,
Have left their record in story and
song.

And those valiant deeds of the days
of old —
We never tire to hear them told,
When dangers threatened on every
hand
The lives and homes of that little
band
Of pioneers ! brave, patient, strong —
Unfading laurels to those belong
Who pushed their way through the
pathless wood,
Undaunted in faith and fortitude,
Till among the Granite Hills at
length
Rose their noble State in beauty and
strength !
And, helping always — a tireless
band ! —
Through the bye-gone years we see
them stand —
New Hampshire's Daughters, stanch
and strong,
Leaving their record in story and
song.

Brave Hannah Dustin ! — a shudder
and chill

Run through our frames and our
eyelids fill
As we read of her capture — the
dreadful fate
That awaited herself and her child
— the hate
Of the cruel, treacherous Indian
band
That at length lay slain by her own
right hand.

There was Mary Neff — there was
Molly Stark —
And many another of shining mark,
But among the names that are
handed down
From sire to son with their wide
renown,
Among the many I think of one
Who faced the enemy all alone!
A frail and slender woman, they said,
Was this Esther Jones with her clear,
wise head,
But she always knew what was best
to do —
That rare, fine gift bestowed on the
few.

And to Esther it was, that every
man
In the garrison came for the wisest
plan
Of guiding the colony day by day
And keeping the savage tribes at
bay —
For whatever she said they always
knew
Was the best and the safest thing
to do.

The planting, one spring, had been
long delayed
Because of a treacherous Indian
raid,
And when, at last, it could safely be
done
If they worked together till set of
the sun,
She bade all go and leave her on
guard
In the garrison fort, well bolted and
barred.
So, with loaded guns they had gone
away —

Man, woman, and child from the
fort that day, —
And Esther alone in the garrison
stood,
Surrounded each side by the dense
pine wood ;
The nearest house was a mile away
And the savage tribes in ambush
lay
Near the forest path, but she knew
no fear —
This dauntless Esther who waited
here.

The long, long day was nearing its
close
When, suddenly, out on the still air
rose
A wild war-whoop! —
Poor Esther knows
The wily foe at length have guessed
How weak is the fort! She must
do her best —
She must rally all her wits to the
front
For 'tis she alone who must bear the
brunt

Of this savage horde. They are
coming fast
And she knows each moment may
be her last!

But, undismayed, she challenges all
The murderous host, and her figure
tall
Arrayed in her husband's coat and
hat
Looks now from this loop-hole, now
from that,
While with gun in hand they can
hear her call
To Peter, to John, to Henry, to
Paul,
And a host of others, as if there
stood
Beside her a stalwart brotherhood
Of valiant warriors!

With puzzled mien
The Indians pause — and while they
wait
As if hypnotized there by the gate
A troop of well-armed men is seen
Hemming them in on every side

While a panic seizes them far and
wide.

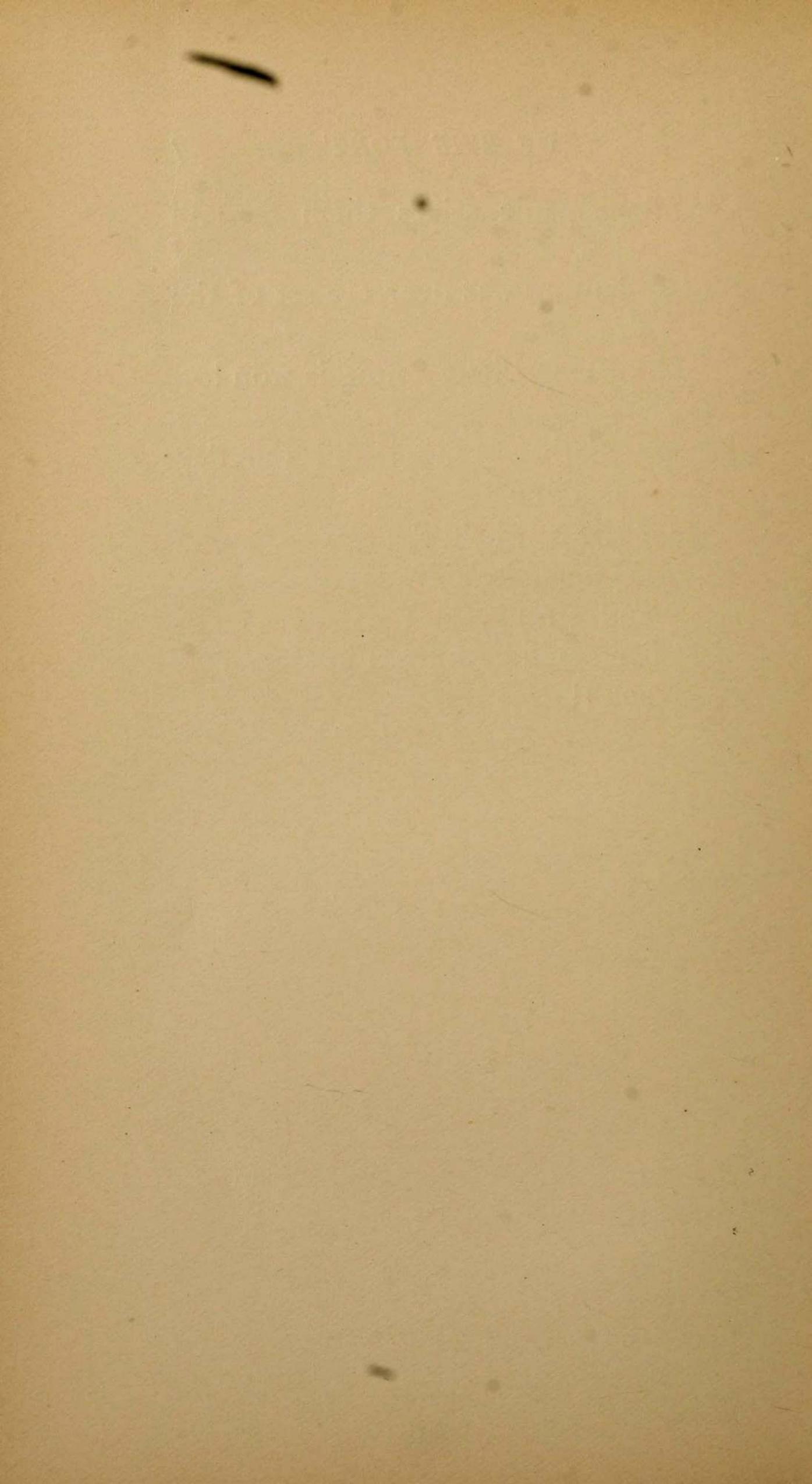
The planting was over ere set of the
sun

And an easy victory now is won!

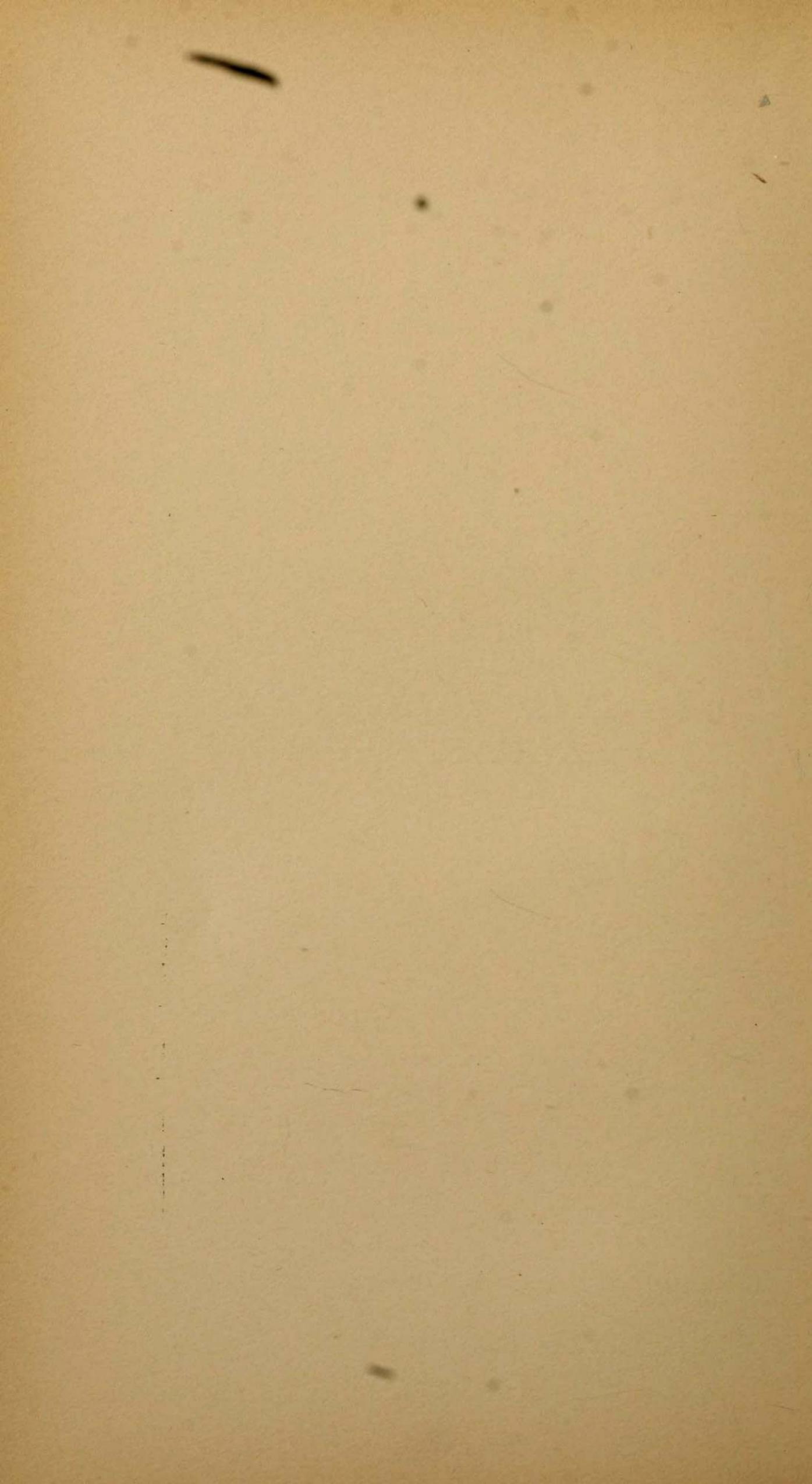
Brave Esther Jones! Till the day
was done

Alone she had held the fort— among
New Hampshire's Daughters, stanch
and strong,

Let her name be known in story and
song!



*MADAM HANCOCK'S
RECEPTION*



MADAM HANCOCK'S RECEPTION

A HUNDRED years and more ago —
When haughty England was our
foe —

In Boston harbor one bright day,
The brave French fleet at anchor lay.

And timely aid they gave us then —
The Count d'Estaing and all his
men;

When hope from every heart had
fled

And victories crowned the royal red.

“Now, ere to France they sail away,”
Said Hancock to his wife that day,
“For these good friends, so tried
and true

In time of need — what can we do?”

Fair Dorothy with courtesy
 And old-time hospitality,
 Agreed at once to do her part
 With ready hand and loyal heart: —

“For Count d’Estaing’s brave staff,”
 she said,

“A fine French breakfast I will
 spread ;

A hearty welcome, right good cheer
 Our generous allies shall find here!”

.
 For thirty guests her board was laid
 When suddenly, she saw — dis-
 mayed —

The officers of *all* the fleet —
 Eight-score and more, come down
 the street !

But with rare tact she swiftly threw
 Her doors wide open, and none
 knew

Of all that crowd of gallant men
 The lady’s consternation when
 She wondered how her larder’s store
 For *thirty* guests could feed *eight-*
score !

Then came a sudden happy thought
As through the open door she caught
A glimpse of green where, in those
days,

The neighbors' cows were wont to
graze

On Boston Common; "Milk them
all!"

(She bade her servants) "and then
call

At every house on Beacon Street
For food to feed our honored fleet."

And so it was that all were fed
Most sumptuously; and each one
said

That Madam with her gracious mien,
Had entertained them like a queen!

Then Count d'Estaing who would
not be

Outdone in hospitality,
Begged Madam to invite some day
Her friends to meet them down the
bay;

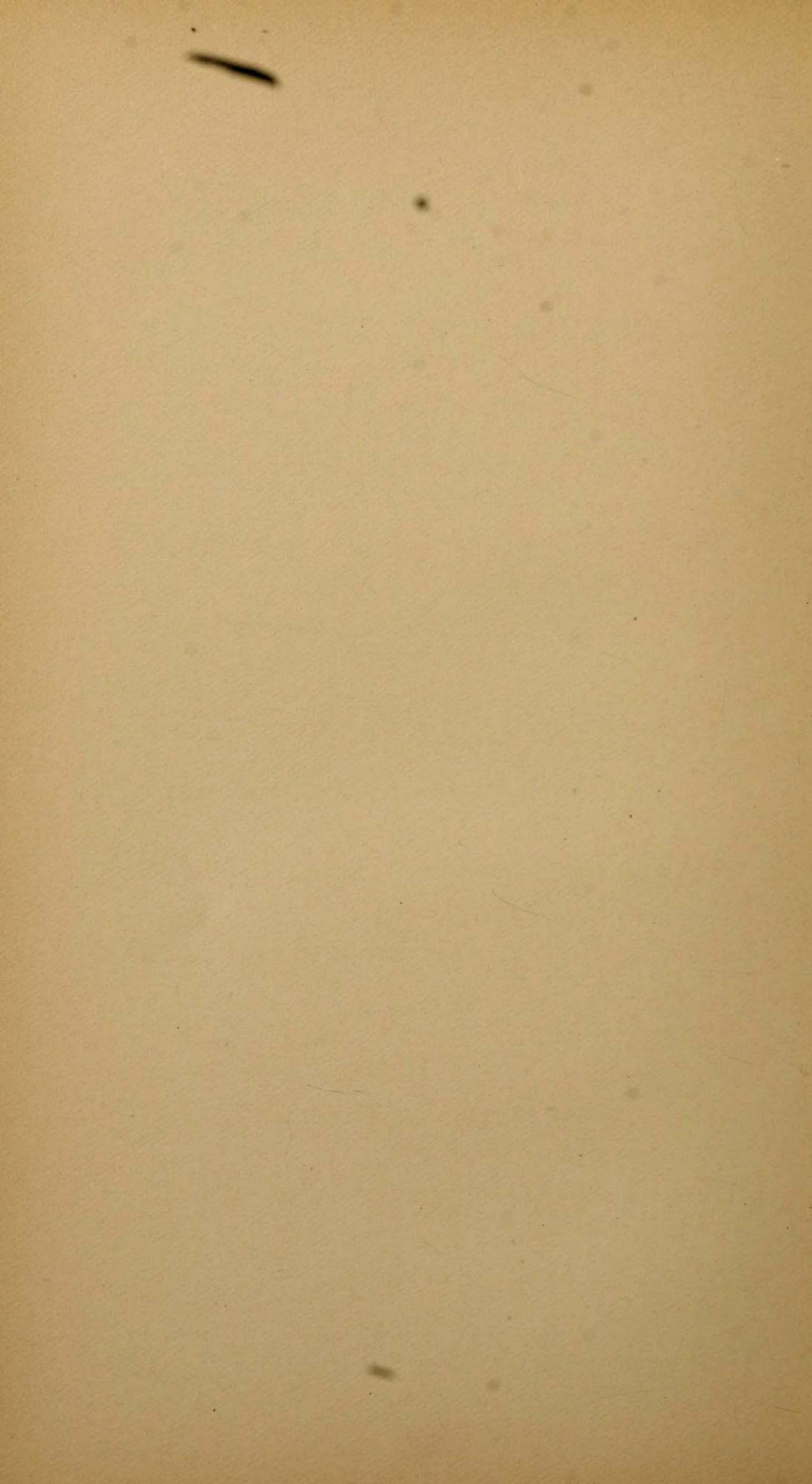
And Madam (if the tale be true)
Invited all the friends she knew,

Till, in astonishment, the fleet
Five hundred Boston ladies greet!

But Count d'Estaing with beaming
face

Received them all with courtly grace,
While *feu-de-joie* and cannonade
Old Boston Bay a fête-day made.

DORA



D O R A

ALL Nature seemed awaking from her
winter nap ;
The trees, though leafless, felt the
rising sap
Stir in their veins ; the robin's clarion
call
Rang out upon the morning air, and
all
The strange, sweet restlessness of
Spring seemed given
Within the blue-bird's note ; bright
smiled the heaven,
And, patiently, the fresh-ploughed
earth beneath
Was waiting Nature's miracle ; a
wreath
Of curling smoke from briar and
brushwood rose
To be again incarnate — but who
knows
In what new form of life ?

Beside the door —
The open door that looks o'er
wood and moor —
Dora, the farmer's daughter, stands
that day ;
And blushes with the merry dimples
play
Upon her cheeks, as, suddenly, she
sees
A hurrying form among the orchard
trees ;
And now within the door young
Ezra stands —
Ezra, the neighbor's son, whose sun-
burnt hands
Are filled with flowers ; arbutus
buds he brings,
Hepaticas, anemones — the Spring's
First gifts, and as he lets them fall
Into her hands, he whispers in her
ear —
(Fond lover's words for no one else
to hear) —
That she is fairer, sweeter than them
all ! —
But now there comes a quick, excited
call,

“Hist! Dora, Ezra! ere to-morrow’s
sun

The red-coats will be here from Lex-
ington!”

Aud Dora’s father bids them swift
conceal

In fresh-ploughed earth, in barrels,
bags of meal,

The ammunition he had brought the
day

Before, from neighboring towns to
store away

For future need.

And then, to Dora, came

A sudden inspiration, as a flame
Of patriot ardor fired her breast —

One place there was the British in
their quest

Would never think to search, or if
they did

The bullets and the powder could be
hid

Securely ’neath the linen in her
chest —

The wedding chest where she had
laid away

'Mongst bags of fragrant lavender
that day
Her homespun outfit, for no foreign
gown
Was worn by maid or matron in the
town
Of "red-hot" rebel fame!
The very name
Of buying English taffeta, a
shame —
A "tory" act was deemed, and for
their tea
They dried the raspberry leaves that
all might see
How odious was the "Stamp" of
tyranny!

So, Dora's wedding garments, every
one
Was made from wool and flax her
hands had spun,
And woven on the home-made wheel
and loom,
And laid within the coffer in her
room —
The quaint, carved oaken coffer, worn
and brown,

Through many generations, handed
down
Yet strong as any miser's chest.

Meanwhile,
From Lincoln, Acton, Chelmsford
and Carlisle,
And all the neighboring towns came
minute-men —
Plain, sturdy farmers, but brave
fighters when
The conflict came, as every school-
boy knows!

Within the woods, in hay-lofts, fields,
they chose
The safest places they could find to
hide
Their precious ammunition; far and
wide
They scattered it throughout old
Concord town
Before the British red-coats had
come down
From Lexington; but spite of all
their care

✓

Five hundred pounds of balls were
captured where
They thought them most secure.

To Dora's home
By seven o'clock a hungry band had
come,
And mindful how in Holy Writ we
read
That even our worst foes we still
should feed,
The mother, like a Christian, opened
wide
Her larder doors, but when the
British tried
To make some payment, "Nay!"
she proudly cried,
"Take back your price of blood!"
With rude haste, then,
The house was searched and sacked
throughout; but when
Sweet Dora's room was reached, the
red-coats said —
(An insolent young captain at their
head!)

"Give us a kiss, my pretty maid,
and we

Will not disturb your wedding
finery !”

Then, furious at her cold, disdainful
mien,

The soldiers broke the quaint, old
carven chest

And slashed the dainty garments in
their quest,

But ere they found the bullets hid
between,

A sudden shot upon the bridge was
heard.

And hurriedly they seized — each
man — his sword

And gun, and hastened at their cap-
tain’s word

To hold the entrance of the old
North bridge,

For minute-men were seen upon the
ridge

And messengers were at the door to
tell

How, there, the two rash red-coat
troopers fell !

Ah ! what a strange, uncanny day it
seemed ! —

Poor Dora walked about as one who
dreamed ;
Her wedding garments ruined past
repair
She put again within the coffer
where
The powder and the bullets still lay
hid ;
When Ezra came to say good-bye,
she bid
Him " God-speed " with a calm,
strong face
That of her aching heart showed not
a trace,
" It is a glorious cause for which you
fight
To-day," she said, " I would we
women might
Do more than wish you well, but we
alas !
Can only wait and pray while slowly
pass
The long, long weary hours ! " and
Dora saw
As in a vision how the tide of war
Which rose that April day would
sweep ere long

Through all the land with current
fierce and strong,
And claim, as sacrifice, full many a
life
Ere victory, at last, might crown the
strife.

But Ezra, thinking of the wedding
day,
With all a lover's hopefulness could
say,
“'Tis only for a little while, dear
heart, —
Surely I shall be back again ere
long,
And you, sweet one, so steadfast,
brave and strong
Will not despond although to-day
we part.”
And so with kiss and clasp they said
good-bye
And Ezra hastened down the road
to try
The rusty flint-lock that his grand-
sire bore
In French and Indian wars, long
years before.

.

“A little while?” Six times the
flowers of May
Had bloomed and faded since that
parting day.

Six, long, heroic years of bitter strife
had passed

Before sweet Liberty was won at
last.

“Peace — Liberty, at last!” the hap-
py bells ring on

Until they reach the home where
Dora spun

And wove her wedding garments
long ago —

Fair wedding garments white as
driven snow.

Through door, through window
streams the autumn sun

And from the maple bough that
sweeps the sill,

Blood-red the leaves have fallen.

Grave and still

Yet holding in her eyes a wondrous
light —

As if she saw some far-off radiant
sight —

A black-robed woman gathers up the
leaves

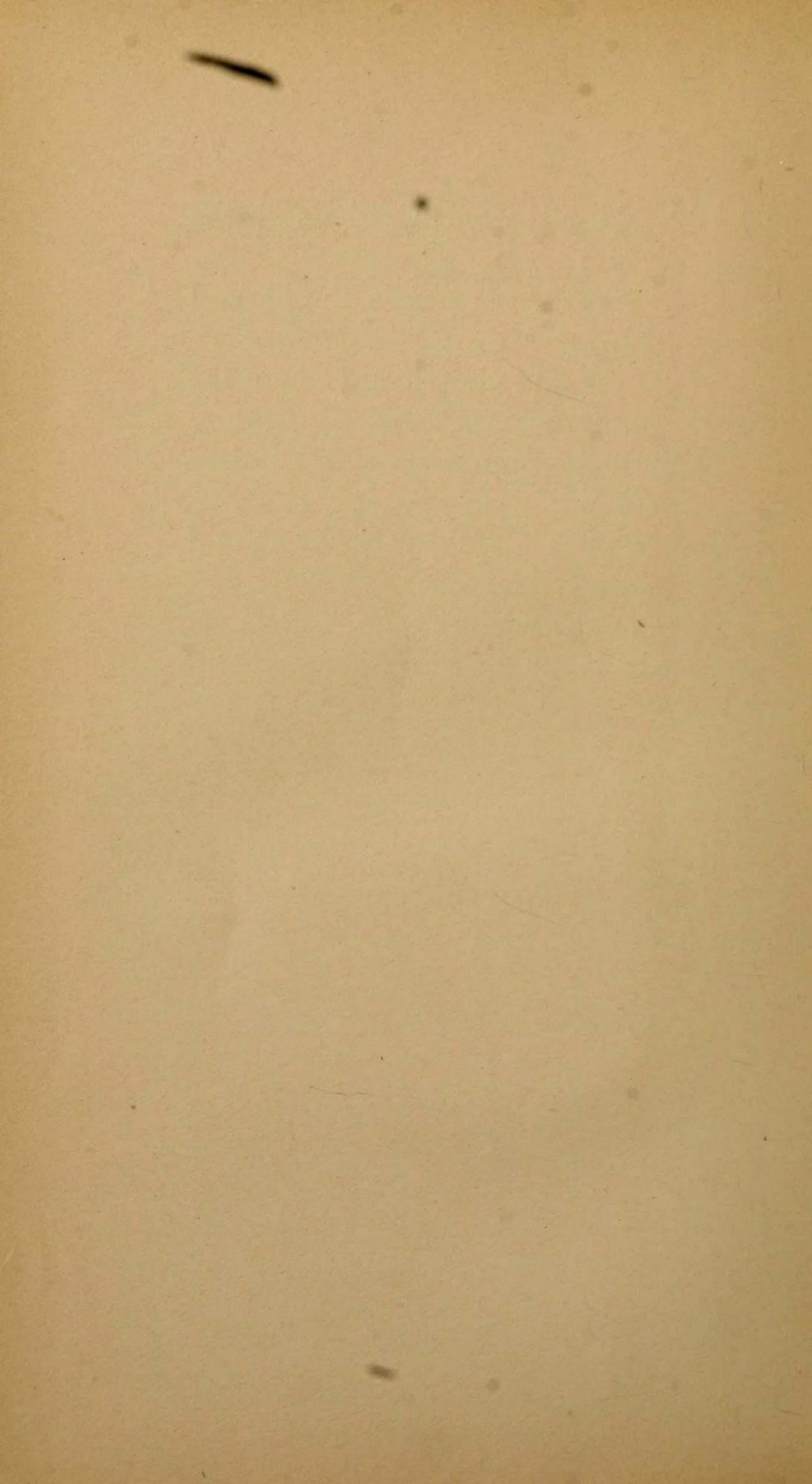
And looks far out across the harvest
sheaves

To church and churchyard where the
sunbeams cast

Long shadows on a grassy mound —
the last

Low bivouac! — and yet, why should
she weep?

Sweet is the victory won, and sweet
the victor's sleep!





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