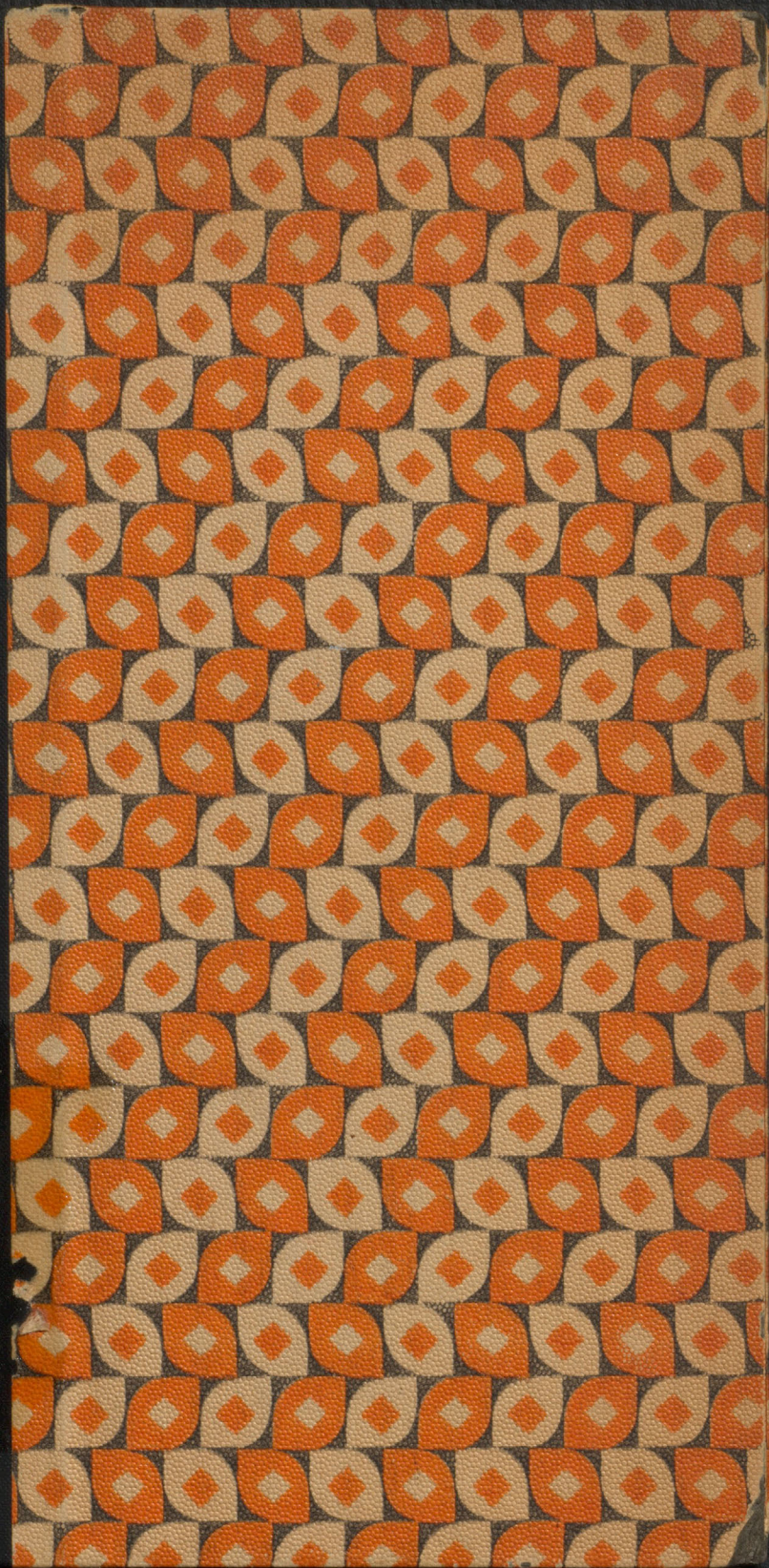


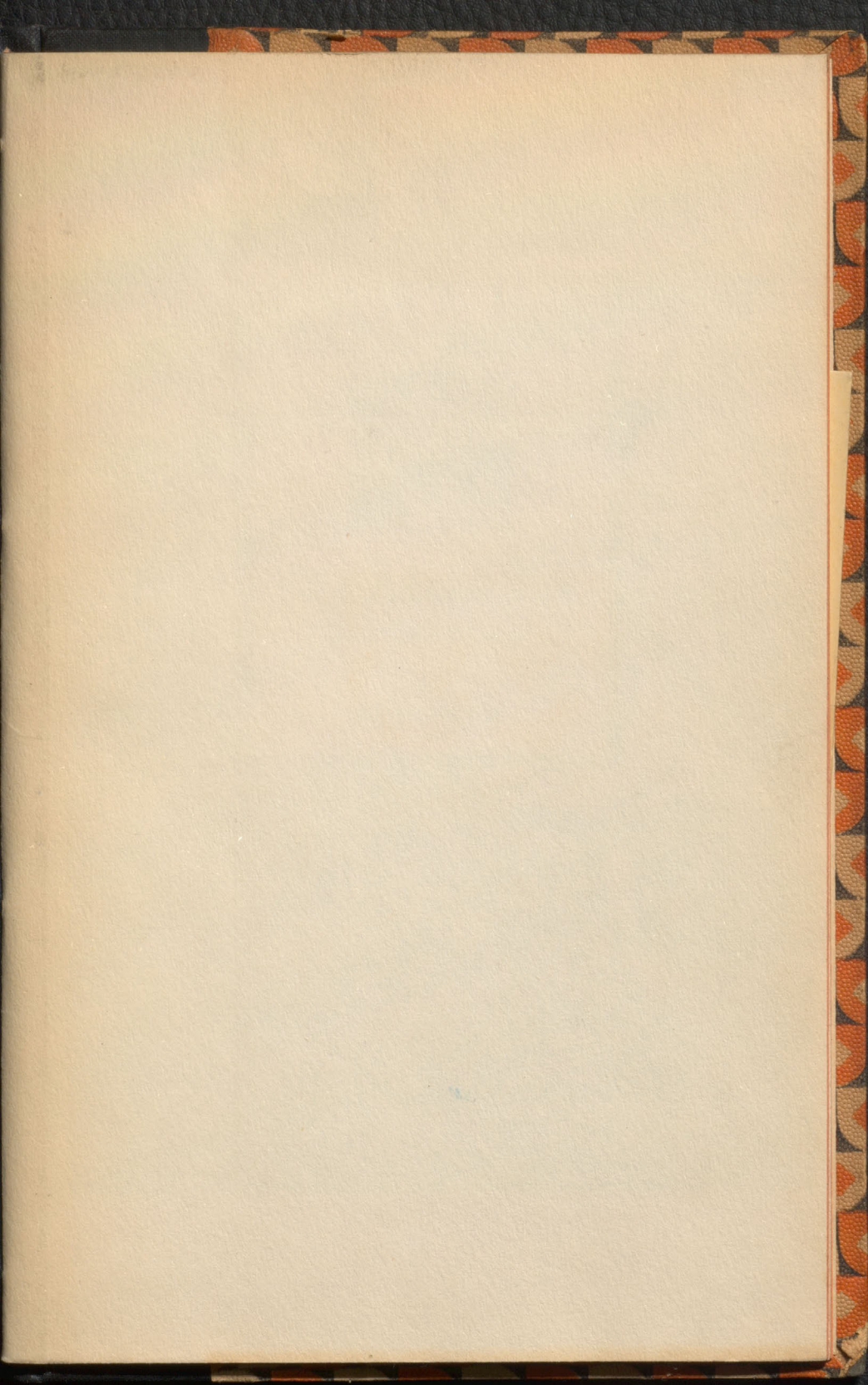
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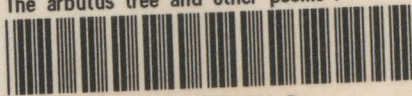
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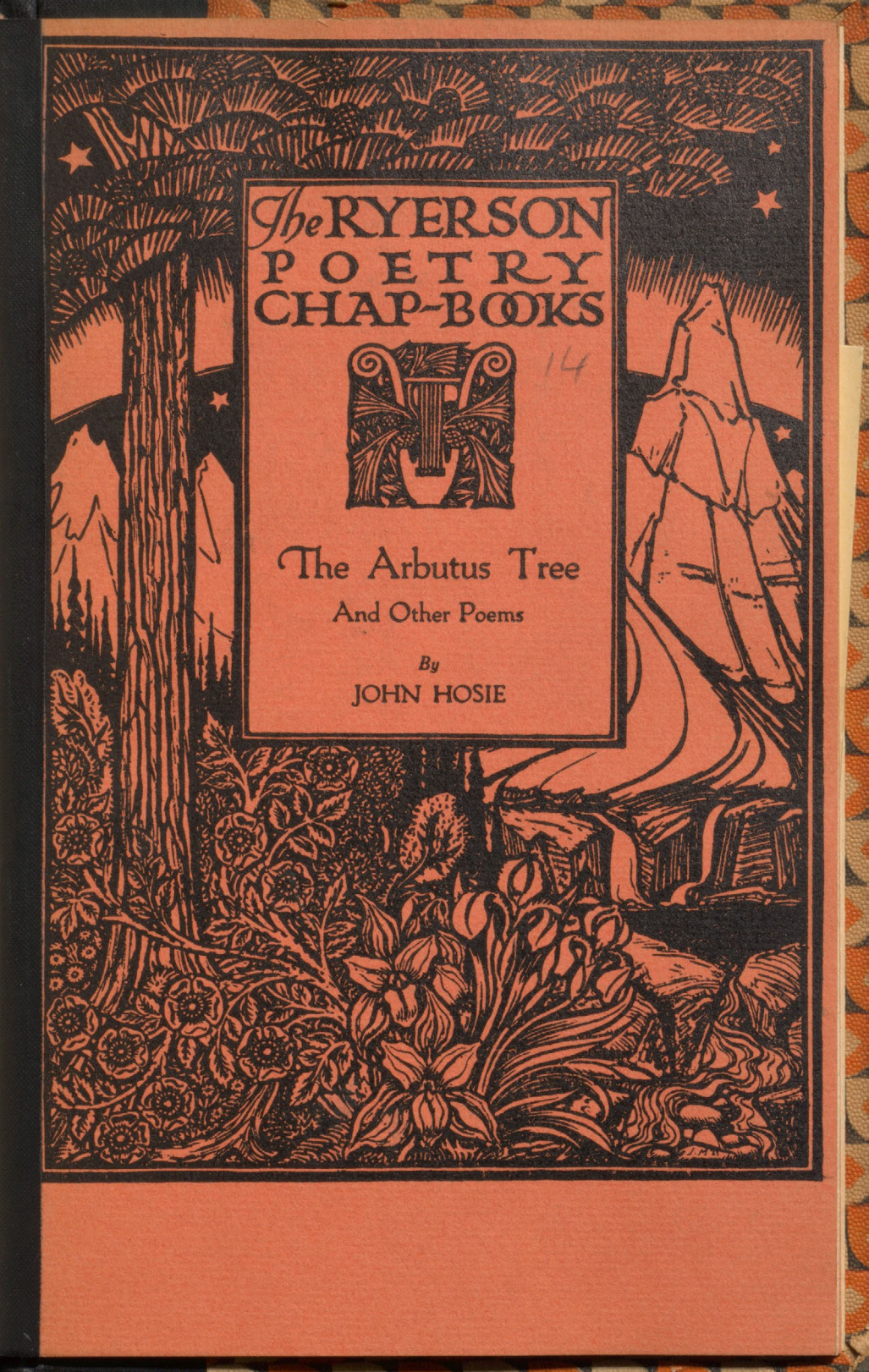
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The arbutus tree and other poems /



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The Arbutus Tree

And Other Poems

By

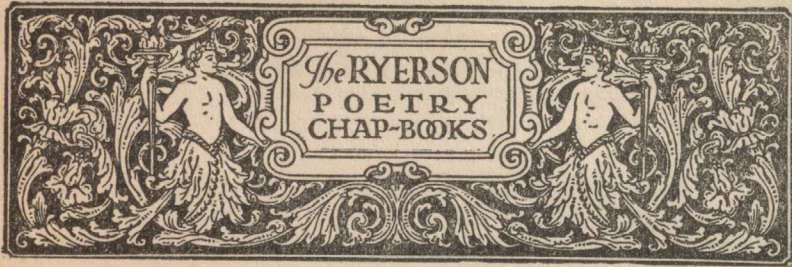
JOHN HOSIE

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John Hosie, Provincial Librarian and Archivist of British Columbia, resides at Victoria, B.C. From his old-world garden he enjoys extensive views inland from Victoria over the rugged Sooke Hills. The little poem herein, entitled "God's Tapestries," is woven around one of the magnificent spreading oaks on his lawn. As a Nature lover Mr. Hosie has written many prose articles and occasional verses. Mr. Hosie recently edited *The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island*, and has made several contributions to the proceedings of the British Columbia Historical Association and to magazines and newspapers.



The Arbutus Tree

(Dedicated to the Hon. Walter Cameron Nichol)



GOD, when He made thee, beauteous tree,
Exhausted Nature's alchemy.
The rarest elements He sought,
And in His crucible He wrought
The miracle that gave thee birth,
And brought thee pristine from the earth,
In shining loveliness to be
The darkling woods' embroidery.

Thy limbs as polished pillars are
Of bronze o'erlaid with cinnabar,
Or, dim within the temple green,
Of burnished gold or tangerine.
Thy plummy blossoms, honey-sweet,
Distil in high midsummer's heat
Ambrosial perfume, and the bees
Forget their toil in lotus ease,
Finding some precious anodyne
In thy rich nectar's potent wine.

But most I love thee, when at last,
Thy poms of Summer overpast,
Thou holdst aloft a plenitude
Of fruitage soft-vermilion hued,
Like hanging lamps to light the bier
Of Autumn desolate and sere.

One

O tree! that midst the changing scene
Art ever comely and serene,
Beloved, protected of the gods
Through parching heat or wintry odds,—
I love thee passing well, O tree,
Whose benediction covers me!



THE OLD CABIN ON THE OLD TRAIL

IT'S the Spring, and the May-fly is out, and there's an old
cabin yonder,
In a fold of the hills in shuttered-up darkness waiting for me,
And the dogwood's in bloom by the trails where my friends, the
shy deer, wander,
And there's a burgeoning loveliness abroad for all men to see.

And the river sings there, under the misty green rain of the
willows,
And shadowy trout in alder-fringed pools are darting and
stealing,
And legions of lilies star the forest floor's soft mossy pillows,
And the thought of it all is a balm and delight for heart's
healing.

And the cabin dreams in the sun, of flown years halcyon and
golden,
Of warmth and cheer and laughter and song, and the firelight
on the wall,
Of vanished friendly faces in the days now overpast and olden,
And of one living but faithless, who comes no more, no more
at all.

Nay! let me go; let me shoulder my pack and be gone; I am weary.
Let me follow the old trail again to the Horseshoe Cabin Bend.
O cabin mine, deserted, lonesome, disconsolate and dreary,
I am coming to thee, mute and patient standing at the long
trail's end.

THE UNKNOWN BIRD

O MY HEART is full of joy, for the south wind blows to-day,
And wood and mead are vocal with a melody new-born;
And I'm thinking of a hillside ten thousand miles away,
Where I know the thristle's singing on a spike of budding
thorn.

O rapture of the thristle o'er all the April land!
O ecstasy unfathomed by any human mind!
A very balm of comfort to those who understand,
Yea, passing sweet and potent and magical and kind!

This day I heard an unknown bird at hush of golden dawn.
Out in the holly thicket he piped a song for me,
And it took me to a dingle hard by a northern lawn,
And all the day was mellow with an ancient memory.

And now at eve, while burns the sun low o'er the tinted bay,
To vesper notes he turns for me the matins of the morn;
And I'm thinking of a hillside ten thousand miles away,
Where I know the thristle's singing on a spike of budding
thorn.



GOD'S TAPESTRIES

(Sunset, January 31, 1926)

M Y OAK'S a frieze against the evening sky,
For me to see all Heaven by:
A rood-screen risen from the parent sod,
To glorify the face of God;
To frame, like windows in a chancel grey,
The pictures of the dying day;
To hold and focus for my feeble eyes
The sunset's flaming tapestries,
God's far-flung gallery of matchless art,
That fills with ecstasy the heart,
That draws the soul in transport and in prayer,
To visions of that Otherwhere,
Whose gates emblazoned seem to stand
Enshrined in yonder sunset-land.

SINGING EXILE

(The English skylark on Vancouver Island)

HEARKEN to the singing exile, soaring o'er the Saanich
plain!
Singing in the blue infinity of space;
Spilling music, sweet, ecstatic, free and lovely as the rain,
Pouring benediction on your upturned face!

Shut your eyes and listen! Listen to his rhapsody of joy!
Not a hint of longing in it or of rue;
But back upon a Sussex down you stand, a rapt, entranced boy,
Listening to a skylark trilling in the blue.

Yea, from an English mead he came to these rolling uplands fair,
Following his People to new lands afar,
To sing and mate and love, and rear his fledgling brood to share
This new-found kingdom where his People are.

O blest missionary of ancient peace and dear enduring things!
Thy only task to sanctify and consecrate
These virgin fields, this blithesome land which no poet sings
Save thee, O wingèd spirit passionate!



BIRD IN THE MIST

WHITHER, O bird, in the night and the mist art thou flying,
High through the uncharted blackness crying,
Piercing the night with thy cries in the distance dying?

O lone traveler, that wingest thy way without knowing,
Wherefore these cries and the pain of thy going,
Filling my heart to a bitter and poignant o'erflowing?

Tarriedst thou late and aware, the immanent urge resisting,
Scorning the waning days and the ominous misting,
Defying the common call to the flocking migrants' trysting?

Calamity fills the skies, thy frenzied notes repeating
Hither and yon, like a lost lamb's bleating,
With never an answering hail to give thee greeting.

O, ever the same the loiterer's fate who dallies and delays,
Who mocks at elder Wisdom's words and ways,
Who pays the price in the swift, ineluctable days !

Yet may the gods be kind, to-morrow's grey dawn bringing
Thee far on thy errant flight sure winging,
Thy goal in sight, thy heart at rest, exultant singing.



INNOCENCE

NO BIRD that sings but speaks to me
Of God and love and purity;
Of artless happiness confessed,
Of joy by mortals unexpressed;
Of ecstasy, unbidden, free,
That lifts the gloomy soul of me
Out of the fretting and the pain,
To sing remembered songs again,
And catch anew through vagrant tears
The glamour of the vanished years,
The sweet felicities of youth
That knew nor any care nor ruth
That sprang spontaneous from the heart,
Oblivious of conscious art,
The song, the laughter and the play
That filled with mirth each blithesome day.
Nor child nor songster seeks to know
The source from whence its raptures flow,
Each full exulting lives and sings,
And to the broad world gladness brings,
While sorry men and tempest-tossed
Seek vainly for a joy long lost,
Hoping by vanity to find
Ease and abandon of the mind,
And fail, for all their high pretence,
Before the face of Innocence.

ANGUISH

(Lines written on the breaking of a friendship)

GOOD-BYE, is it? And life not half over!
Our interblent souls dissevered apart!
God of the Universe, me cover!
For I am heavy of heart.

I am undone; my sorrow consumes me.
I am smitten of grief and afraid,
Engulfed in despair that entombs me,
Stupefied and dismayed.

.....
O thou, my heart, why and forever this?
Is love's reward but bitter anguish,
Tossed from the heights of crownèd bliss,
To mourn and languish?

Thou, thou, my idol and my almost God!
Thee did I worship past all knowing,
Flamed to thy flaming, burned as sod
Burns, warmly glowing.

.....
Must I live, and find savour in living,
On the husks and dregs of desire,
Denied the old getting and giving,
And love's holy fire?

Dare I live without thee, O my Being,
My life's blood, my manna, my soul,
In shattered confusion unseeing
The ultimate goal?

.....
I yield, to drift upon a sea of pain,
That bears me nowhere on its heaving breast.
I care not, care no more again,
For aught but rest.

AURICULAS

ALL FLOWERS I love, but these the most
Of the sweet-perfumed, painted host
That prink the garden ways in Spring
And cause the heart of me to sing
With holy and peculiar joy,
As when, an eager, elfish boy,
I wandered in a cloistered place,
Seeking with bright, ecstatic face
The favoured blossoms of my heart,
In honeyed clusters set apart
Along the rambling border's edge,
Beneath the greening hawthorn hedge,
Distilling in the April dusk
Odours of amaranth and musk,
And seeming to my raptured eyes
Fairer than flowers of Paradise,
Designed in some ancestral hour
As my own God-given special flower,
In mystic love enshrined to be
For ever in the soul of me.

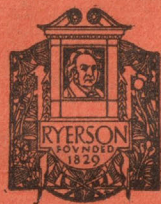
A MARCH SABBATH DAWN

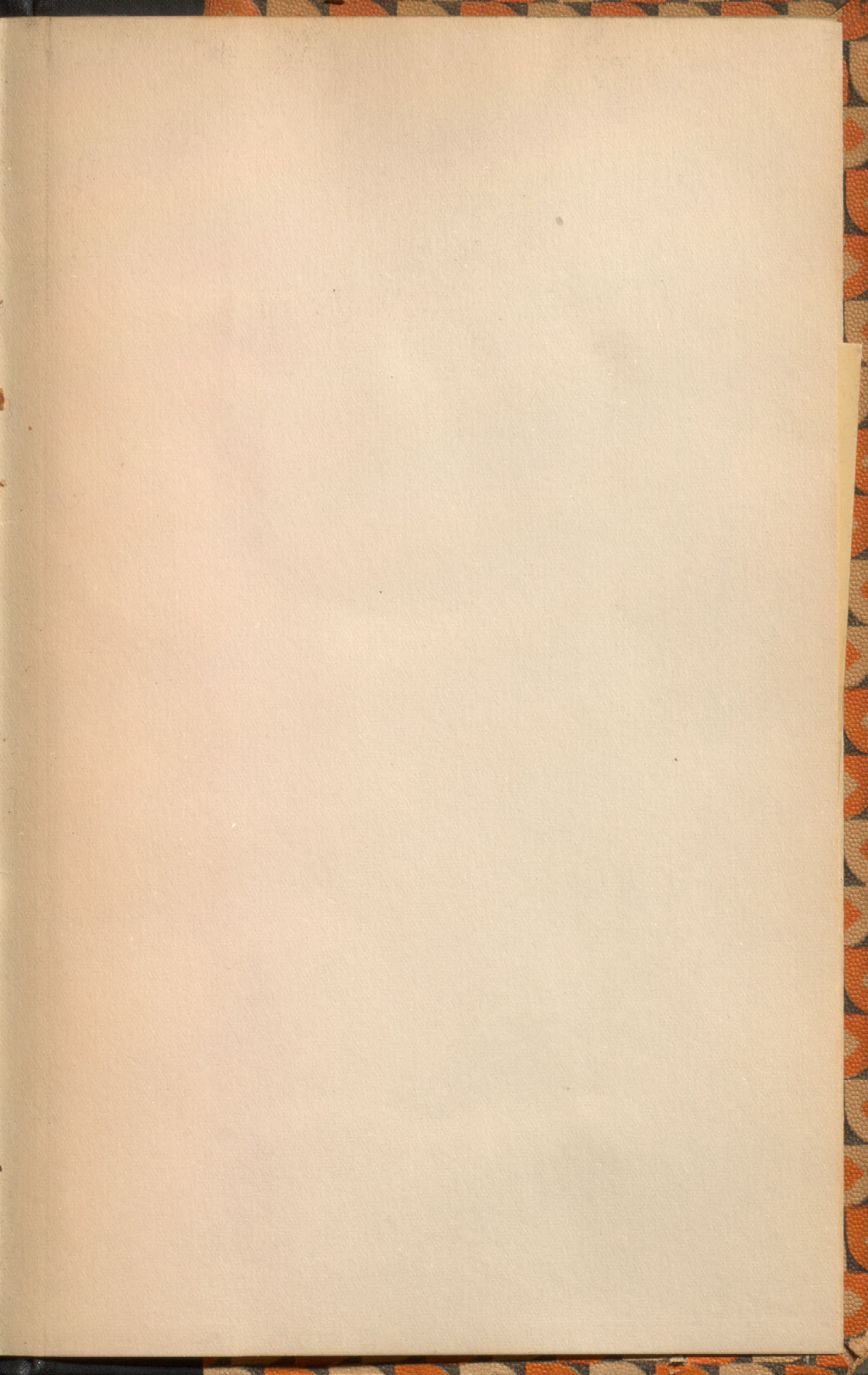
I HAVE not known so exquisite a sight in any Spring
As holds me now enchanted on this opalescent morn,
Nor drunk so deep of Beauty's cup, nor seen a holier thing
Than this resplendent dawning of a crystal day new-born.

I have beheld in ancient fanes the rites of godly men,
And loved the pomp and colour and the incense and the praise,
And felt the press of things unseen beyond my feeble ken,
And deemed it God that filled my heart with joy and sweet
amaze.

And I have caught in lesser shrines 'mid Calvinistic gloom,
Dim pictures of celestial dawns o'er fields of Paradise,
And watched the rapture of poor hearts in many a quiet room,
And seen the light of God revealed in their beatific eyes.

And here, no less meseems some holy sacrament proceeds,
In unimagined splendour in the chancels of the East:
The essence of a thousand rites, sans tapers, books or creeds,
With all the world a temple lit, and God Himself the Priest.





DATE DUE

Author.....Hosie John
Title.....The adventures tree

