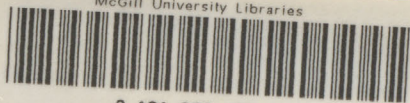


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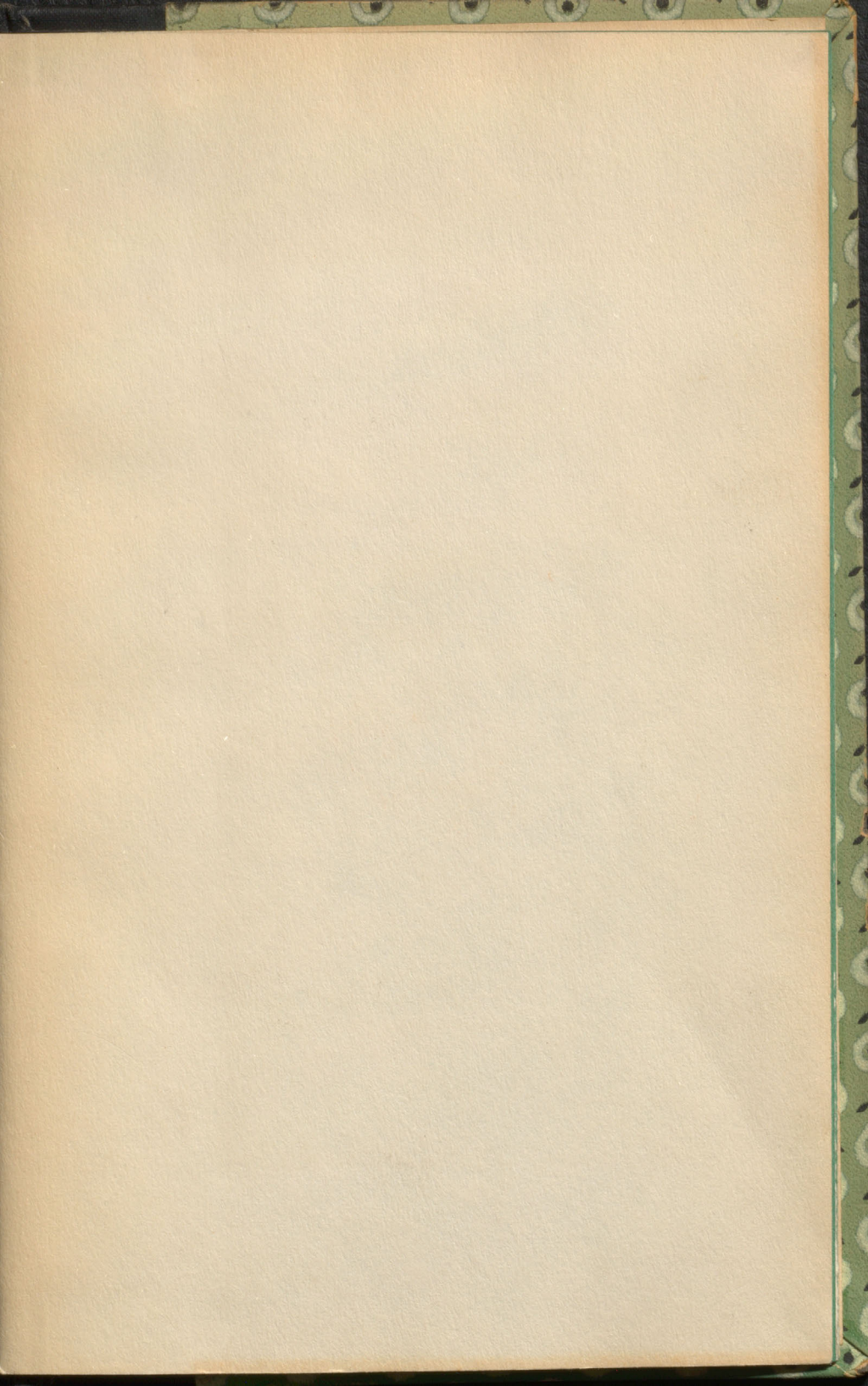
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EARTHBOUND

By

AUDREY SILCOX

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BDB 4981

This is Chap-Book Number Sixty-three

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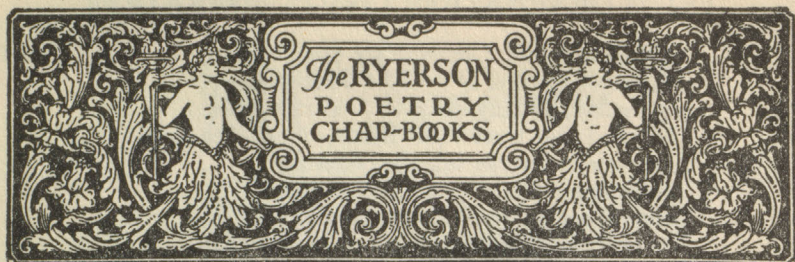
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Earthbound and Other Poems

By Audrey Silcox



EARTHBOUND

EVEN in heaven
This child of earth
Will seek in dreams
His place of birth,

And hungering,
Will know again
White lilacs drenched
In an April rain.

A flying wedge
In an autumn sky,
And the scent of leaf-smoke
Drifting by.

The sorcery
Of a white thorn tree
And a winding road
That runs to the sea.

The eternal hope
Of upturned clod,
And a fresh wind blowing
O'er the fields of God.

Page One

FROM GENERATION UNTO GENERATION

AT close of day I smile to see them there
Beside the fire, as twilight shadows creep,
My mother, and my daughter, comrades rare,
Their bed-time tryst with "Mother Goose" to keep.
From tale to merrier tale the pages flit
'Neath finger-tips so petal-like, so fair,
Beside those patient hands to service knit.
The quiet face, down-bent, so etched by care,
Broods tenderly above that cheek serene,
Dewy, unmarred, fresh from the kiss of God,
The earnest eyes whose gaze so crystalline,
But lately glimpsed the heaven towards which we plod.
My own eyes dim with sudden, burning tears
Of gratitude and fierce, protective zeal,
In blinding knowledge of the ravished years,
Prescient of all the hidden years conceal.

God, without Thee, upon what shifting sand
Do I, the shaft of life where meet these twain,
Midst ravening currents of the cruel years, stand
And know my weak strength vain!



TO MARY, IN LENT*

OMARY, on that far-off temple day,
When seven virgins cast their lots to choose,
Whether of gold or scarlet, purple, blue
They'd spin the threads for the new temple veil,
And the true purple fell by lot to you;
There in the courtyard, while the white doves drooped
With drifting pinions through the tranquil air,
Came there no troubling dream, no shadow chill,
No piercing vision of a sundered veil,
Of purple robe beneath a thorn-crowned head,
Of bitter rood upon a far green hill?

*From the Protevangelion.

GRACE BEFORE WRITING

ON paper white as linen fair,
In ink that might be wine,
Bless now the words that are as bread
To that far love of mine.

Let here be cheer for loneliness,
And here be ease for pain,
And touch my homely chronicle
With laughter once again.

The simple tale of daily life,
The round of custom's day,
Fall like a saga of the soul
On heart so far away.

Here are the humble elements
To grace a distant shrine;
The cloisters of the loving heart
Lead close to the divine.



DAY-DREAMER

HE waits through all the seasons, patient, mute,
But not despairing, for that hour sublime
When to his hand shall fall the magic fruit—
The golden apple on the bough of Time;
Swiftly his tongue shall taste it, and behold
There rise before his eyes, grown desert-dim,
Rich caravans of silver and of gold
With all the treasure life has held from him;
And on his ears the music of men's praise
Shall fall and bring refreshing to his soul;
His path shall lie amid the pleasant ways,
His broken spirit shall again be whole.

Hard are the barren years, their burden great;
Still for thy golden fruit, life, he doth wait.

RESURGAM

PLEDGE me no paradise of burning gold,
Tell me no tribal tales of gem on gem,
Think not my questing spirit to enfold
In robe of samite with bejewelled hem,
Nor for this pilgrim spirit newly-born,
Freed of its cumbering garb, fresh fetters weave
Or broider trammels of a creed outworn.
But lure me with the spell of April eve,
At sunset hour, when all the world is still
And for a lost enchantment seems to grieve
As for the glory fading from each hill;
Or call me with the ecstasy which breaks
Full-throated through the hush of April dawns;
Provoke me with the memory which awakes
When wind-stirred lilacs blow on dew-drenched lawns;
Entice me with the wistfulness which broods
O'er half-awakened orchards, like a prayer;
For that essential beauty which eludes,
Makes for this seeking heart a certain snare.
Give me sure hope of but one hawthorn lane,
And I shall rise again!



AUTUMN PROCESSIONAL

LIKE a bacchanal troupe, October led
Her harlequin hours from rout to gayer rout,
Leaving their tattered robes and banners spread
On many a ravished hillside round about;
Wilder and shriller grew the songs they sang,
Until All Hallows' bells at midnight rang.

Changed in a twinkling is each reveller wild
To humble penitent who kneels and prays,
As gray November, like an abbess mild,
Missal in hand, shepherds her nun-like days;
Wistful and wraith-like, as they disappear,
They light the vesper tapers of the year.

PATTERANS*

YOU went this way,
My heart believes.
In the dust of the cross-roads
I found green leaves.

Hung on a thorny hedge,
I found your staff;
I snatched it up
With a sob and a laugh.

Often I yearn
For the warmth of your cloak,
Reeking of many
A peat-fire's smoke.

No books your scrip held—
Your wisdom lay
Spun o'er the skies by night,
The green world by day.

Deeply we drank
Of life's red cup;
I hunger now
For bite or sup.

Round my neck is the token
You bade me keep:
Each night I kiss it,
Before I sleep.

Whither the road winds
I know not at all,
Nor care—my heart follows
The sign of your call.

*A patteran is a sign to the initiate, usually an arrangement of grasses, leaves or twigs, left by gypsies for members of their band coming after.

OLD HOME

THE door is wide for many a guest,
The step is broad and low,
And there is welcoming and rest
For all who come and go.

The fireside speaks of sweet content,
Of long dreams and old love,
Of Yule-logs and of merriment
With holly-wreaths above.

The rooms are mellow with a breath,
A perfume of the past;
They have known life and love and death,
The first things and the last.

Its rooms are never empty quite,
Nor silent utterly,
The past comes back on footsteps light,
And whispering memory;

For here has happiness been spent,
And here have tears been shed;
Here has been shared love's sacrament,
Here mourned beloved dead.



SONG

OUT of the sky, the storm,
And out of the storm, the rain:
And out of the joy and the thrill of life
And out of its peace, comes pain!

Out of the dusk, the night,
And out of the night, the dew:
And out of the glare and the heat of life
And out of its grief, come you!

Out of the sea, the dawn,
And out of the dawn, the sun:
And out of the depths of life comes love;
And I love you, dear one!

AVIATOR'S SONG

DOWN sink the clinging arms of earth;
Insurgent from her bonds, I soar;
Forgetful of my lowly birth,
The fields of heaven I explore;
And down far road-ways of the sky,
I fly! I fly!

The babel of the world below
And all its warring sounds I leave;
The ether which the eagles know,
The silence of the blue, I cleave,
And 'scape the world of duller things,
On wings! On wings!

But earth-bound still, I hear her voice,
Infinite space my soul appals,
Her sheltering hills my heart rejoice,
Her fields, my homing heart recalls.
I sink again, to earth's brown breast,
To rest—to rest.



MEMORIES

WHEN the day draws in and the wind awakes
And the shadows begin to creep,
When the spirit of things of a former time
Moves over the heart's still deep,
I pause at the place where I always pause
When I walk where the memories keep—
Once you lay close in my arms asleep,
When the shadows began to creep.

When Life draws in and the dark comes close,
And the silence is very near,
I shall tell my heart as we stand and wait
The approach of the final fear,
How Love once lay in my arms asleep—
Was it only in yesteryear?—
Then I shall look up with a quiet soul,
When the silence comes very near.

LENT

A LITTLE plot
Of time, hedged round
With hours
And days
Wherein to raise
Soul's flowers.

A quiet spot
Of fallow ground
To feed the roots;
Early and late
I cultivate
The spirit's fruits.

A little pool
Of peace, beset
And rimmed with prayer;
For aid I look,
With Thy Book, *
My herbal fair!

*This line should read, "Within Thy Book"

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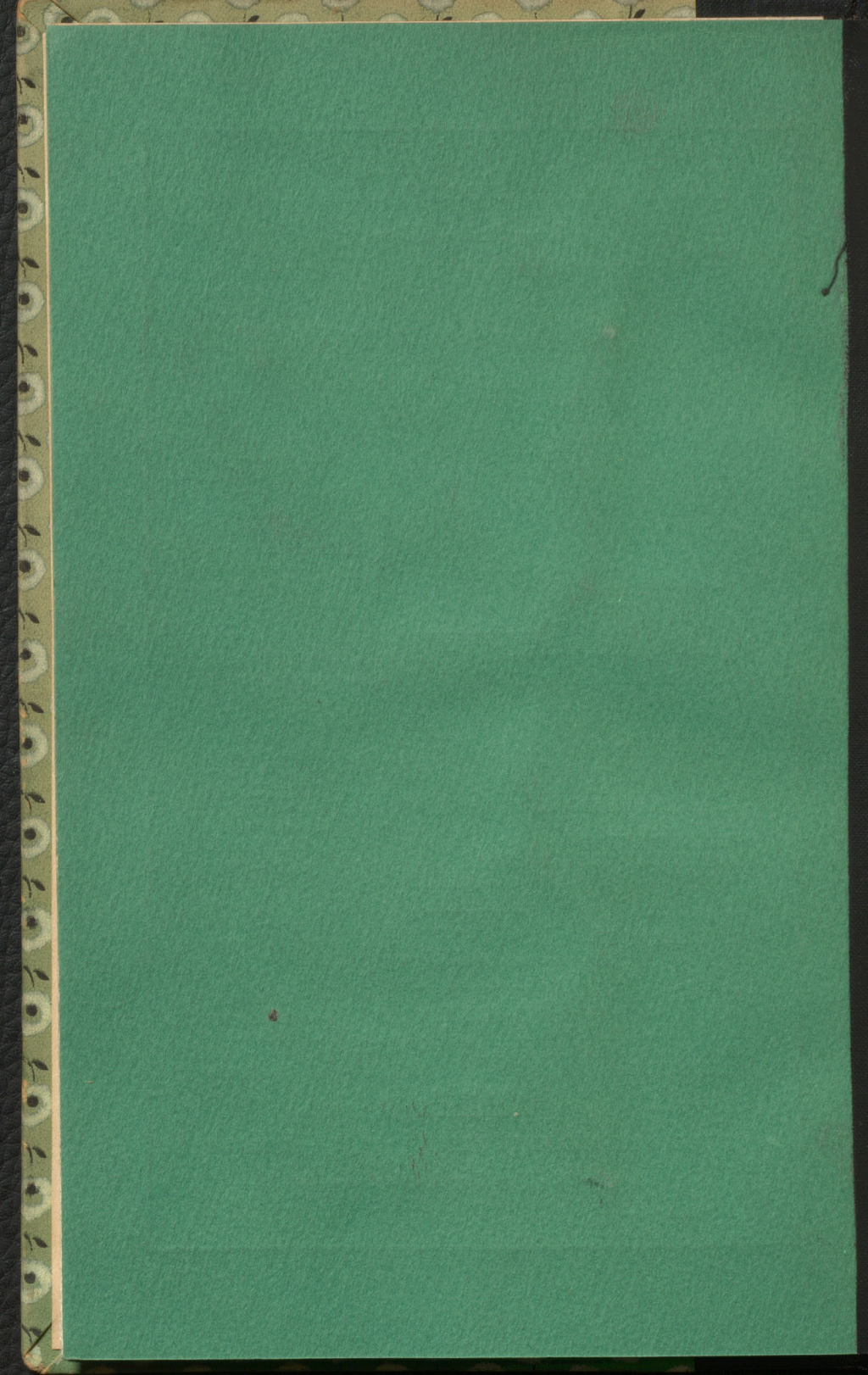
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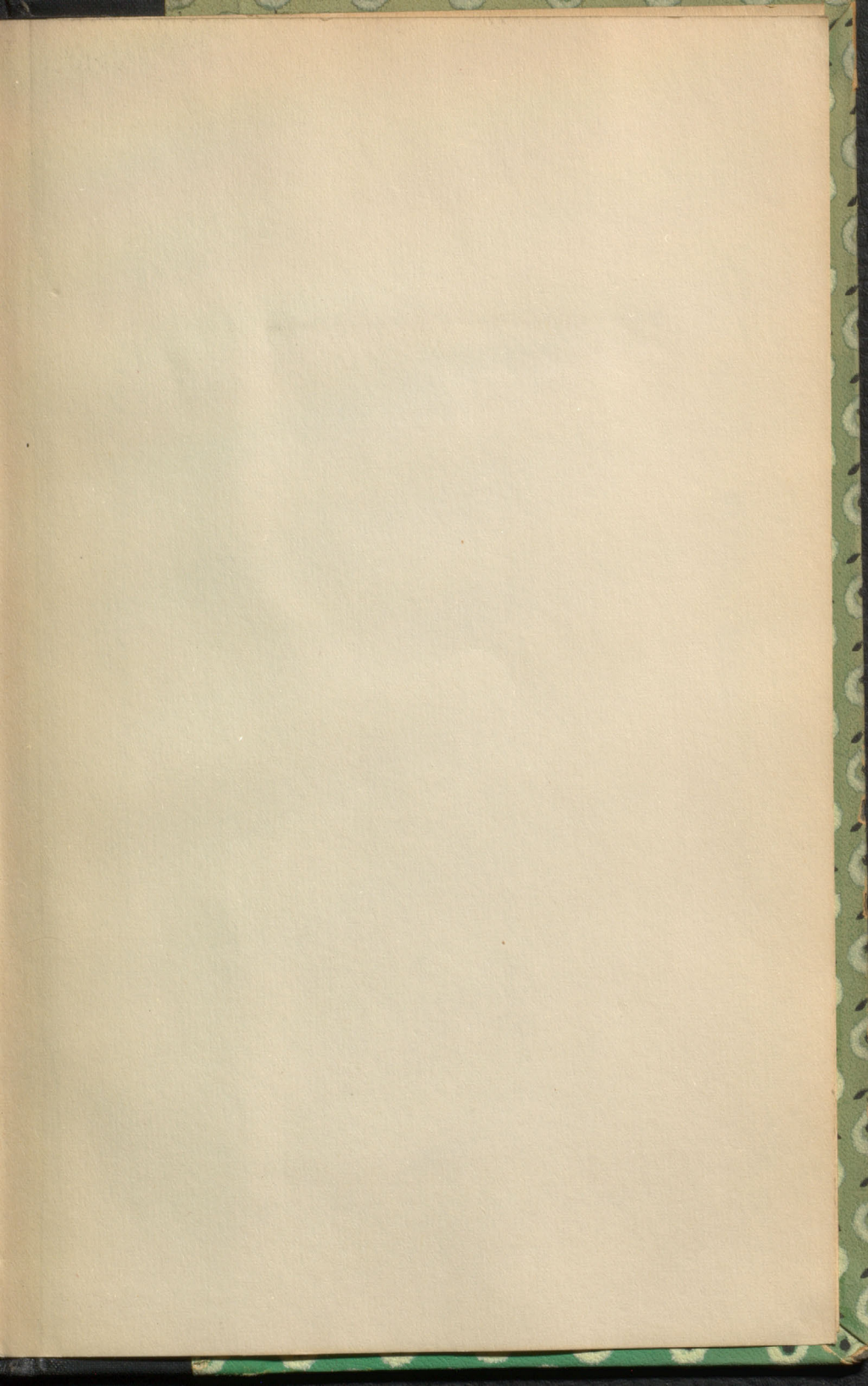
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