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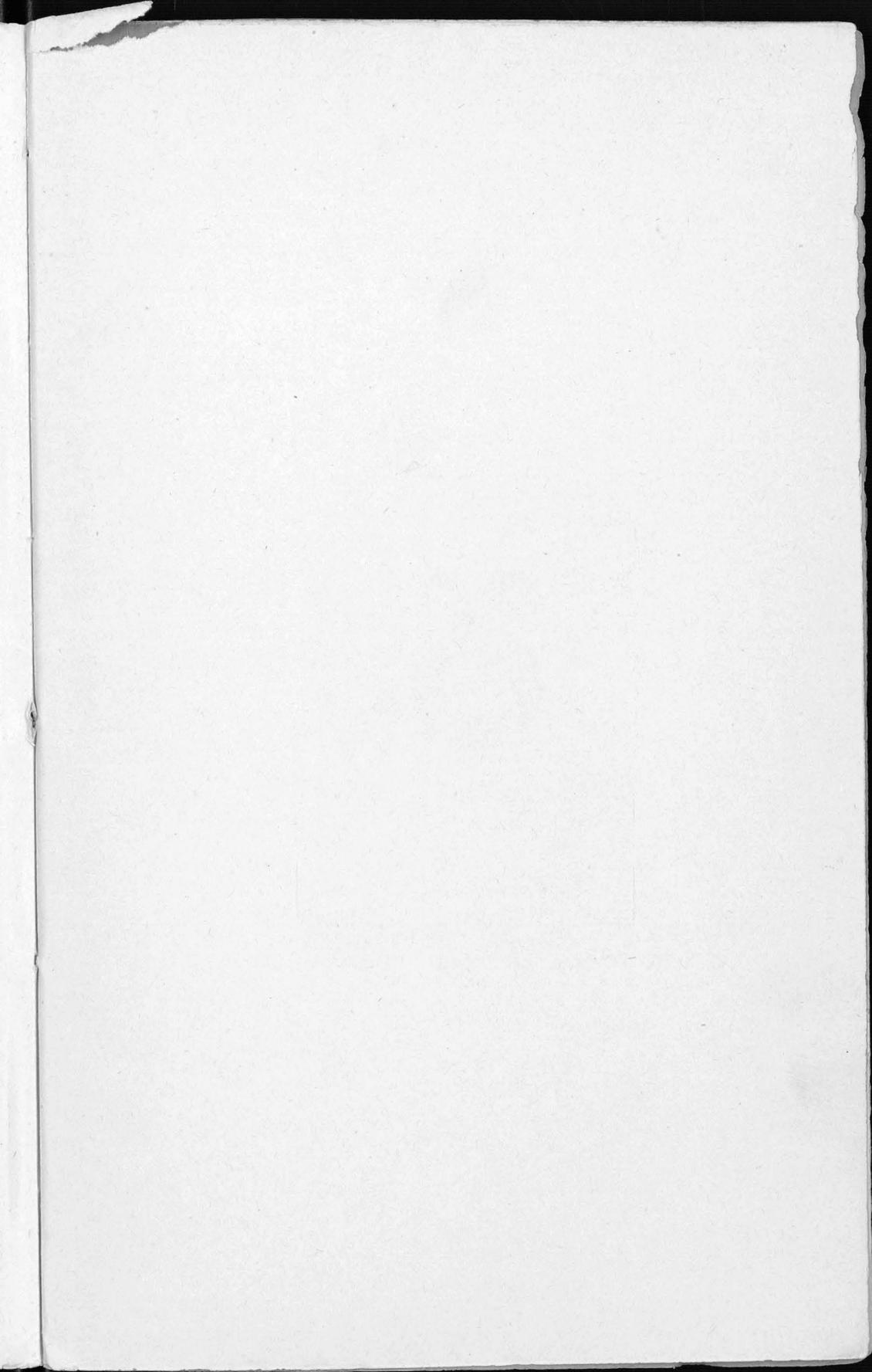


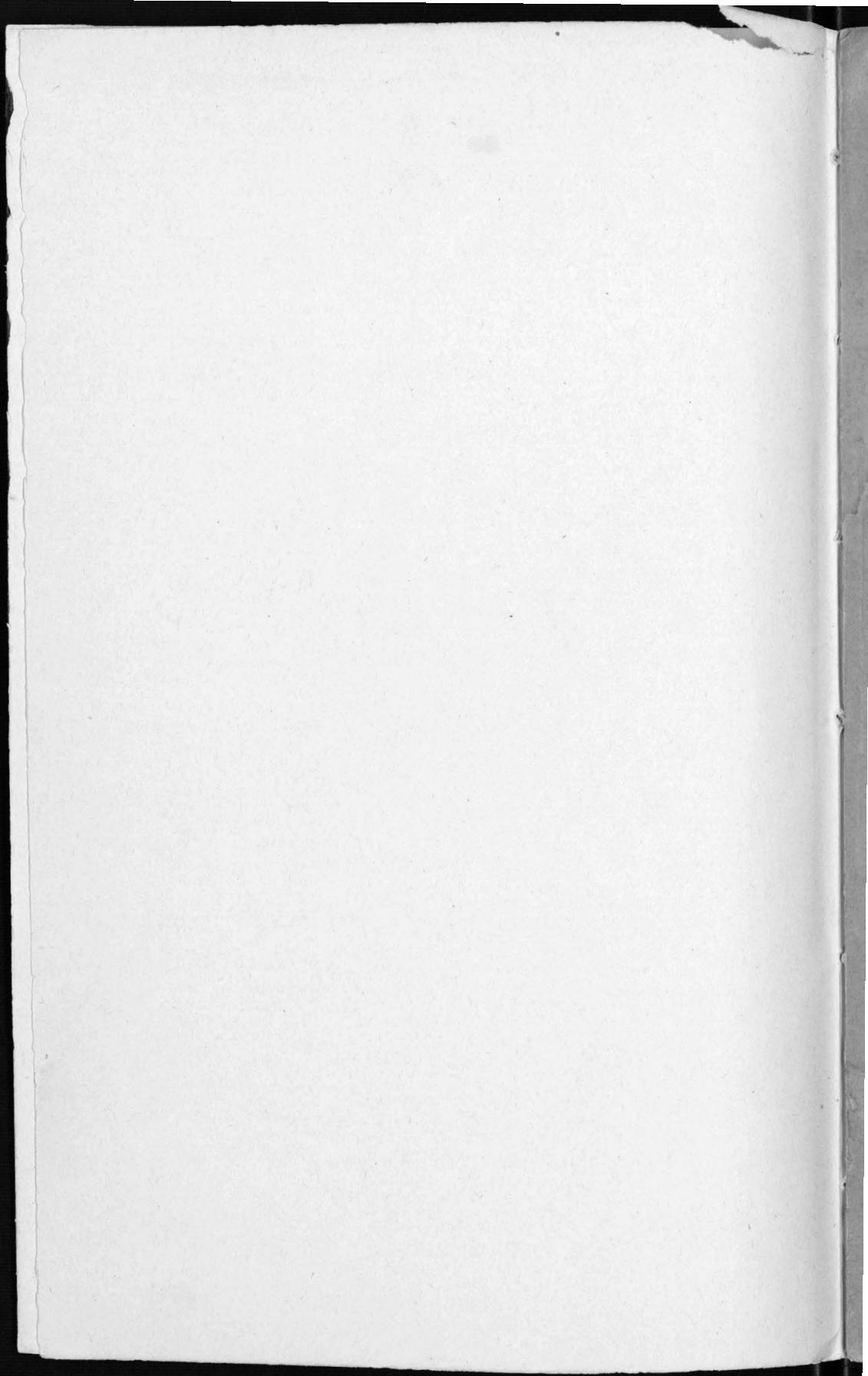


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# A SERMON,

BY THE

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REV. THOMAS A. JAGGAR,

AT THE

ANTHON MEMORIAL CHURCH,

ON

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1865.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.  
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New York:

R. C. ROOT, ANTHONY & CO., PRINTERS AND STATIONERS,  
No. 16 NASSAU STREET.

1865.  
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A. S. H. M. O. N.

REV. THOMAS J. JAGGAR

ANDREW MEMORIAL CHURCH

EASTEN BUNYAN CHURCH IN NEW

THE MEMORIAL CHURCH IN NEW

NEW YORK

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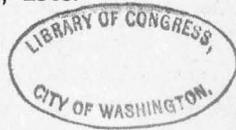
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## A SERMON.

—♦♦♦—  
EXODUS XII. 30.

“There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house, where there was not one dead.”

“He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shown no mercy,” is a declaration nowhere more fully and forcibly exemplified than in the career of the rebellious Pharaoh. Long had the chosen people borne the galling yoke of serfdom. The day of their deliverance, when Israel’s God, with an arm of omnipotence, would break the oppressor’s rod and lead them forth, free and triumphant, was at hand. Mightily did He assert His sovereignty and power. He made the elements conspire to humble the Egyptians, and called upon the noisome reptile and corroding insect to avenge His own elect. He let loose foul disease from its secret lurking-place, and bade the sun withdraw its salutary light. The sacred waters crimsoned at His word, and the ripened harvest withered at His touch. The obdurate Pharaoh moved by transient fears, relents amid the terrors of storm and pestilence, but when the wrath is overpast, he buckles on defiance and rebels again. Stroke after stroke descends, melting his stony heart, as glass fused by the lightning’s touch, and left more flinty than before.

The plague of horrid darkness, which had enshrouded the land, fleeing at the Divine command, bore with it Pharaoh’s penitence. There remained but one more judgment. One warning only, intervened between him and

destruction, and that an awful warning, "Such as there *was* none like it, nor *shall be* like it any more."

It was that solemn hour of night when silence holds supremest sway, and even the whisper of a human voice sounds irreverent. "Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," seemed to have wrapped in deep oblivion all creation. Not a breath, not a sound breaks the oppressive stillness; while the clear vault of heaven, freed from the sable covering with which the wrath of Deity had veiled it, beams forth calm and beautiful, disclosing in hazy outline the long and verdant valley of the Nile, stretching away until lost in the dim distance. The witching time wore on, and though all nature slept, one noiseless messenger was busy. A piercing wail of anguish, rending the still atmosphere as though the lamentations of the lost had broken loose, made manifest his presence and his work. Never before or since has such a cry been wrung from this suffering world. It was the convulsive sob of a nation's grief, as she bent over the stricken form of her loved first-born. There were none to comfort for all were alike bereaved. In every abode, from the monarch's palace to the captive's dungeon, death had its victim. The flower of every flock was taken. The pride of Egypt smitten when the glow of life and hope was brightest. Who can conceive the horrors of that night! A corpse in every house, and the bereaved survivors (as we read their custom was) rushing wildly through the streets, bewailing their dead with loud and bitter exclamations. "Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they are not."

Such was the final plague of Egypt. The departure of the Israelites, the continued obduracy of Pharaoh, and his ultimate overthrow in the Red Sea, are facts too familiar to need more than mention here. As the chosen people typified God's believing children in every age, foreshadowing their deliverance from the bondage of the

world, and toilsome pilgrimage through a wilderness of sin and sorrow to a Canaan of eternal rest and joy; so we may discern in the history of the Egyptians, their rebellion and idolatry, and the fearful judgments which were visited upon them in consequence, this guilty world in miniature. We might almost find a parallel for every plague, in the various evils which sin has brought upon creation, blighting tempests, ravaging insects, pestilential winds, loathsome diseases, but all converge to the one end, all concentrate in the one ultimate and universal doom—death. This is the last plague of fallen humanity.

I. We speak now of *physical* death. How universally prevalent it is! How desolating its effects! We look abroad upon our race, and truly may it be said, "There is not a house where there is not one dead." Rich and poor, the lofty and the lowly, the wise and the simple, all alike have felt the blighting presence of this impartial and merciless destroyer. Could we rise above the earth, and comprehend in one glance its whole surface, spread out like a map before us, a perfect network of funeral pageants, closely interwoven, crossing and re-crossing one another, would meet the eye; and could the voices of the mourners mingle as one, and rise to our ears, it would be a sound to harrow up our souls, and send a shudder through the frame. We may roam through varied climes, from regions of perpetual snow to the burning plains of the equator, and while everywhere we mark diversity of form, feature, language, and complexion, as well as of custom, religion, and government, one point of similarity runs through all; a common sympathy for a common woe unites all; the Esquimaux and the African have alike their dead. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and whatever distinctions there may be of rank, of wealth, or of intellect, around the grave, the prince and the subject, the lord and the commoner, the

statesman and the rustic, may join hands and shed a tear together. There they must acknowledge a common origin and a common end. But we need go no farther than the community in which we live, to find the statement we have made illustrated. Within our immediate sphere of life we have a truthful picture of the world at large. Pass along the streets of this metropolis, and where will you find an unbroken circle?—a home without the vacant chair? Shall we stop at each door and ask, “Have you any household graves?—Are there any dead among you?” Oh! what emotions would be awakened, what tender fibres of the heart touched, what gushing memories revived, by such sad questions. “Ah, yes,” one would say, “there was a little merry prattler bloomed into our home, whose laugh was music, whose blithe and gladsome presence was like a sunbeam in our path. But, alas! one fatal day that light went out. We miss the patter of the little feet upon the stairs; we long for a note of that mellow, childish voice which so often charmed away our cares—it is hushed in death. A narrow mound in the quiet churchyard corner covers all that treasure.” Another, perhaps, would tell, with a heaving breast, of some eldest-born, the child of many prayers and careful training, the pride of the family, just ripening into manhood, with the bloom of youth upon him, and gay hopes gilding with rainbow hues the future—how the rude hand of disease plucked the roses from his cheek, sapped the fountain of his strength, blasted all his joyous expectations, and laid him in a dark and cheerless grave, leaving dark and cheerless hearts to mourn his loss.

And then, again, another would reply: “Speak to me not of death; for one there was, the best and the dearest, who guided me with gentle hand through the helpless years of infancy and childhood; who many a long night, with sleepless vigilance, watched beside my bed of languishing, cooled the burning brow, fanned the fevered

cheek, moistened the parched lips; and whose loving counsels cluster in my memory now, like good angels beckoning me to follow her as she followed Christ. This pure, devoted being, the greedy tomb has snatched away, and home is dreary, for no mother's presence hallows it."

And so it is all the world over, brethren—

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there;  
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,  
But has one vacant chair."

Wave after wave sweeps up, and then receding, bears away its multitudes. By-and-by your turn will come and mine, when we, too, must launch off into that ocean deep, which sends back no tidings save the hollow murmur—gone. "All that breathe will share our destiny. The gay will laugh when we are gone; the solemn sons of care plod on; and each one, as before, will chase his favorite phantom. Yet all these shall leave their mirth and their employments, and shall come and make their bed with us—shall, one by one, be gathered by our side." And is this all? Is this the end of man? Are all his hopes, and plans, and high capacities, bounded by the three score years and ten? Is the tomb the utmost limit of existence—and must we write over the portals of our graveyards; "Death is an eternal sleep"? The parent, brother, sister, darling child, all who rest in their lonely beds. shall they never more awaken into life? Have the solemn ages brought no response to the plaintive question of the heathen poet—

"While tender herbs and flow'ry tribes,  
Though crushed by winter's unrelenting hand,  
Revive and rise when vernal zephyrs call;  
Shall man—brave, mighty, wise—bloom, flourish, fade, and fall,  
And then be wrapped in a long, dark, silent, and oblivious slumber,  
From which no power can rouse him?"

"I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, from henceforth *blessed* are the *dead* who die in the Lord."

And another voice comes echoing through the arches of time, from a rocky sepulchre where hope had seemed buried, declaring in trumpet-tones, which thrill the soul like a peal of victory, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Succeeding ages have taken up the song of triumph, and, nation after nation taught the strain, earth rolls the rapturous "Hosanna" round. To-day we join our voices and swell the universal chorus, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." By sin came death. That is the progenitor of the malignant evil. The Redeemer bearded the lion in his den. He descended to the lowest depths, deprived sin of its dominion, destroyed its power, expiated its guilt, nailed its curse to his cross, and then, stepping into the grave, met single-handed the great foe of man; bowed to his yoke only that He might display His power to break it; submitted to the bonds and barriers of the dungeon tomb, only that, in the greatness of His strength, He might rend them asunder, and issue forth, the world's great Liberator. Thus at once He set the seal to His divinity, confirmed the efficacy of His atonement, manifested to the universe His absolute rule over the king of terrors, and proclaimed with majesty, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death."

II. But while all shall rise from their graves, all shall not rise to life. "There is a death, whose pang outlasts the fleeting breath." There is a death which consists not in the loss of consciousness, which is not marked by the silence of the heart, the absence of the warm glow in the cheeks, the stiffened form, and glassy eye, and marble countenance. He who is its victim is dead while he liveth. It is a state, however, though far more fearful,

yet analogous to that of natural death. It consists in the withdrawal of a vital principle. "In God's favor" we read "is life," and the absence of this favor constitutes spiritual death. "As the life of the body is derived from its union with the immortal spirit, and continues only while that union subsists, so the life of the soul is derived from its union with God." Sin was the malady which dissolved that union, and caused the vivifying light of heaven to withdraw, and leave the soul, though not deprived of its natural powers, as the body even after death does not wholly resign its material substance, yet devoid of life and happiness, those twin sisters which are everywhere linked together in the gospel.

Things essentially inanimate awaken no peculiar emotions, for though destitute of life, we are conscious it was never possessed. But very different are the feelings excited when we look upon the lifeless remains of a human being. We gaze with intensest awe upon the rigid limbs, and the pallid countenance oppressive in its calmness. We speak in muffled tones, as though the dead could be disturbed. Here, we think, is the vacant tabernacle where an immortal spirit dwelt. Those darkened eyes once flashed with light. Those limbs now motionless once were animated by an ethereal impulse. The crimson blood flowed through the swelling veins and the tide of feeling swept along the tingling nerves. Now all is hushed and dark. Speak to the passionless corpse—it answers not. Look upon it with an eye that beams with the fondest gaze of love—no responsive ray comes back from the stony pupil. Clasp it in a warm embrace, it chills you to the very soul. It is a dead thing, without motion, sensibility or thought. With such a presence in every house, can we wonder at the bitter cry, of the stricken Egyptians? And yet we live unconcerned, with a more fearful death around us. The "dead in trespasses and sins," oh, where are they not! They make the world

a mighty mausoleum, could we see humanity as God sees it, we should recoil with more horror than from the contemplation of a tomb's corruption. Here we should remember God once dwelt. The soul of man was the abode of light and love, now it is overspread with carnality and darkness. "How is the gold changed, and the fine gold become dim." Not only in the far-off lands of heathendom, but in almost every house of this community, there are such lifeless souls. They are unconscious of their state, oblivious to any higher principle than self-pleasing. Strangers to purity and hope, we appeal to their hearts with all the eloquence of earnestness, they are impassive and unmoved. We tell them of "the love which many waters cannot quench," yearning so warmly toward them, it awakens no answering, sympathetic thrill. We warn them of danger, and cry out "What meanest thou O sleeper, arise, and call upon thy God." 'Twere as vain to raise pulsation in the silent statue.

"Son of man, can these dry bones live?" Is there any power adequate to raise them up a living, breathing, multitude? "O ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live, for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." These are the assurances of a spiritual resurrection, which Christ by His own victory over death and the grave has sealed to us. By His cross He bridged over the awful chasm, yawning between a just Jehovah and His fallen creatures, and opened a way to reconciliation and peace. By His spirit he breathes new life into the dead soul, stays the progress of corruption, and implants a seed whose bloom will be an amaranth, the immortal flower. Faith, simple faith, is the realizing power. He that believeth being transformed by the renewing of his

mind, is no longer *dead unto righteousness*, but *dead unto sin*, and *alive* unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Such are in brief the glorious truths which we herald to-day. Gloom and uncertainty no longer veil the tomb, but the bright beams of hope and immortality irradiate every grave, like the glistening angels in the sepulchre of Jesus. Despair and doubt no longer need oppress the anxious soul, for the "Son of righteousness has risen with healing in His wings." The believer may go on his way rejoicing, singing as he goes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Though the application of our text yet holds good, both in respect to physical and spiritual death, that "there is not a house where there is not one dead," having viewed it in the light of Easter, we see it tinged with radiant hope. It is a glorious thing to know that those who rest in Jesus are not lost, but gone before, and shall rise to greet us in the better land. It is a glorious thing to know that there is a Redeemer, able and willing to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him. *Able* and *willing*; let the cross and passion testify how willing, and the power of His resurrection be the measure of His ability.

The words before us have a special application to us, this day as a nation, which you have doubtless already anticipated. Four weary years has grim-visaged war pursued his ruthless course, and scarce a house is left where there is not one dead; and now when these sacrifices promised rich returns of peace, and the ship of state seemed gliding into still waters and beneath cloudless skies, a missile of death from a dastardly foe strikes down the faithful helmsman who had guided her so skilfully through all those stormy, perilous years, and leaves us paralyzed, dismayed, woe-stricken. In every loyal household of the

land there is this day a feeling as if death were there. Unconsciously the hearts even of those who at first were his political opponents have gone out toward our lamented President. His wisdom devoid of arrogance and ostentation, his decision unwavering, yet not warped by passion or prejudice, his conciliating policy, "with malice toward none and charity toward all," recognizing a brother in a foe; these have won for him the confidence and love of all true patriot hearts. We knew not how deep the feelings which stirred within us, how like sons to a father we were looking up to him, until the tidings came that he had fallen. Then strong men as well as gentle women bowed their heads and wept.

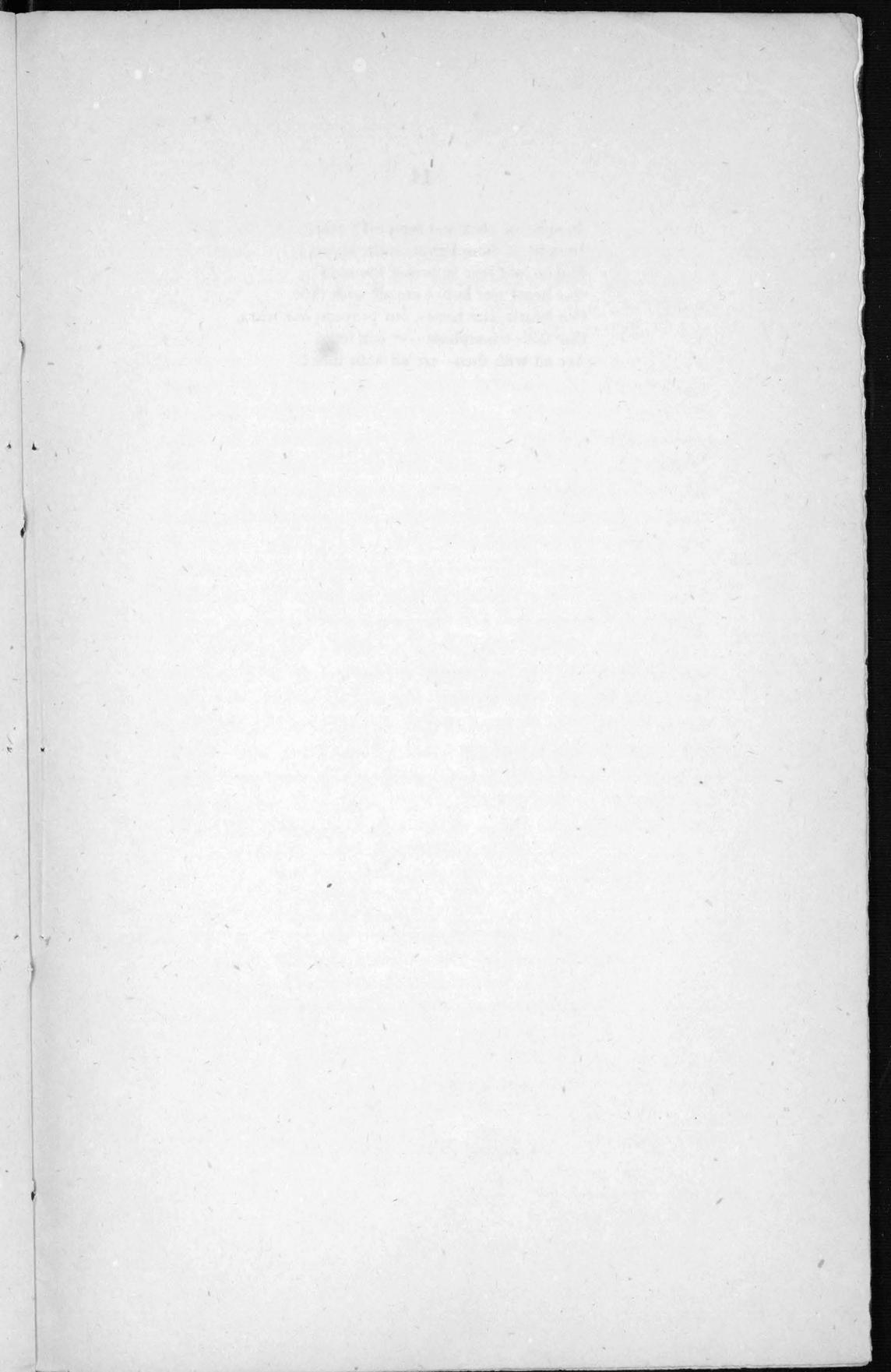
"Tears fell, when he was dying, from eyes unused to weep." The gay garb of rejoicing has been shrouded by the heavy funeral pall, and our Easter flowers have given place to this sombre drapery. It is fitting that we should thus array the pulpit and the sanctuary, for the church has lost a friend and defender. The principle which he so manfully upheld is a principle of Christianity. That freedom to worship God, which is the glory of America, is involved in it. Our lives, our liberties, our homes, are staked upon its maintenance. God forbid that the ministers of Christ in times like these should hesitate to enforce it. Yes, it is fitting that we should mingle tears with our praises to-day, and yet not tears of despondency, for the hand of God is in this great bereavement. It is another of those stern interpositions which have so marked this whole struggle, reminding us that the Lord Jehovah is our ruler and captain. In every crisis, when our reliance has been placed upon some human agent, we have been disappointed. Scarce a prediction of the wisest statesman or the shrewdest politician has been verified. We have been conducted through the most intricate and mysterious paths in a way which has totally confounded the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent. And

I believe that from the grave of Abraham Lincoln a resurrection power will issue, to lift this Republic to a higher, purer glory than it has ever known before. We felt it in the thrill of righteous indignation which darted through our hearts when the fearful tidings came. Already it is stirring, and the long dormant patriotism of many a soul has been revived. There is an Easter-day for these United States yet to come, when from the dark tomb of misfortune, they shall rise to peace and strength and universal freedom. We have parleyed with rebellion, we have doubted its criminality, we have been disposed to treat it as a venial offence. God is now teaching us how foul a thing it is. No *revolution* inspired by a righteous feeling, or moved by a pure aim, would descend to assassination. That act was but the culmination of a series of atrocities, which are too surely the exponents of the fiendish spirit which inflames our foes. Oh! in every breast let there be this day a resurrection of the patriotic impulses which animated our fathers, and around this dear emblem of our liberties let us vow fresh fealty to the Union and the Constitution. Then trusting in God, we need have no apprehensions for the future, but with the poet sing :

Sail on, O Union, strong and great !  
 Humanity, with all its fears,  
 With all the hopes of future years,  
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate !  
 We know what master laid thy keel,  
 What workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,  
 Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,  
 What anvils rang, what hammers beat,  
 In what a forge, and what a heat,  
 Were shaped the anchors of thy hope !

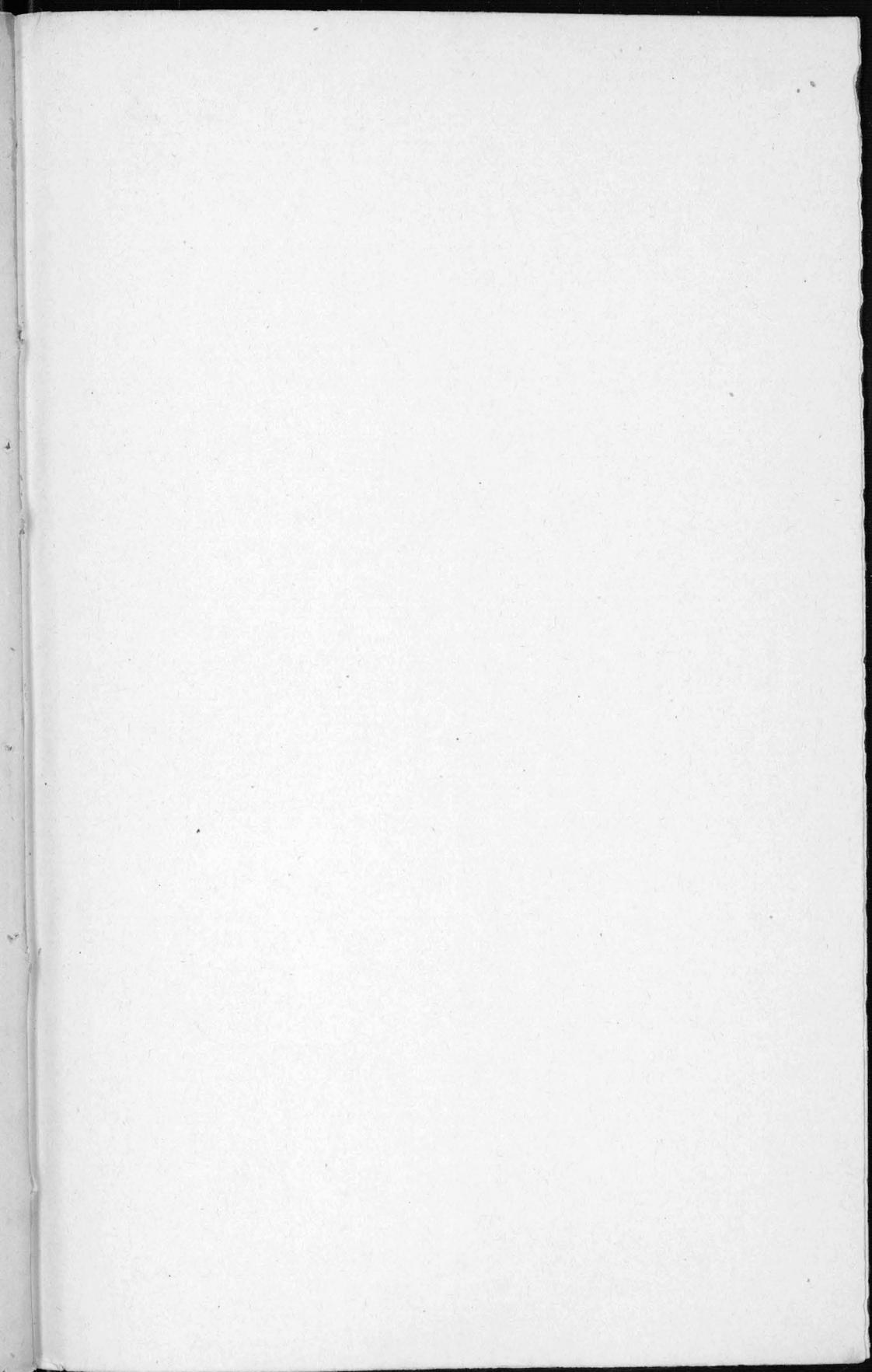
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
 'Tis of the wave, and not the rock ;  
 'Tis but the flapping of the sail,  
 And not a rent made by the gale !

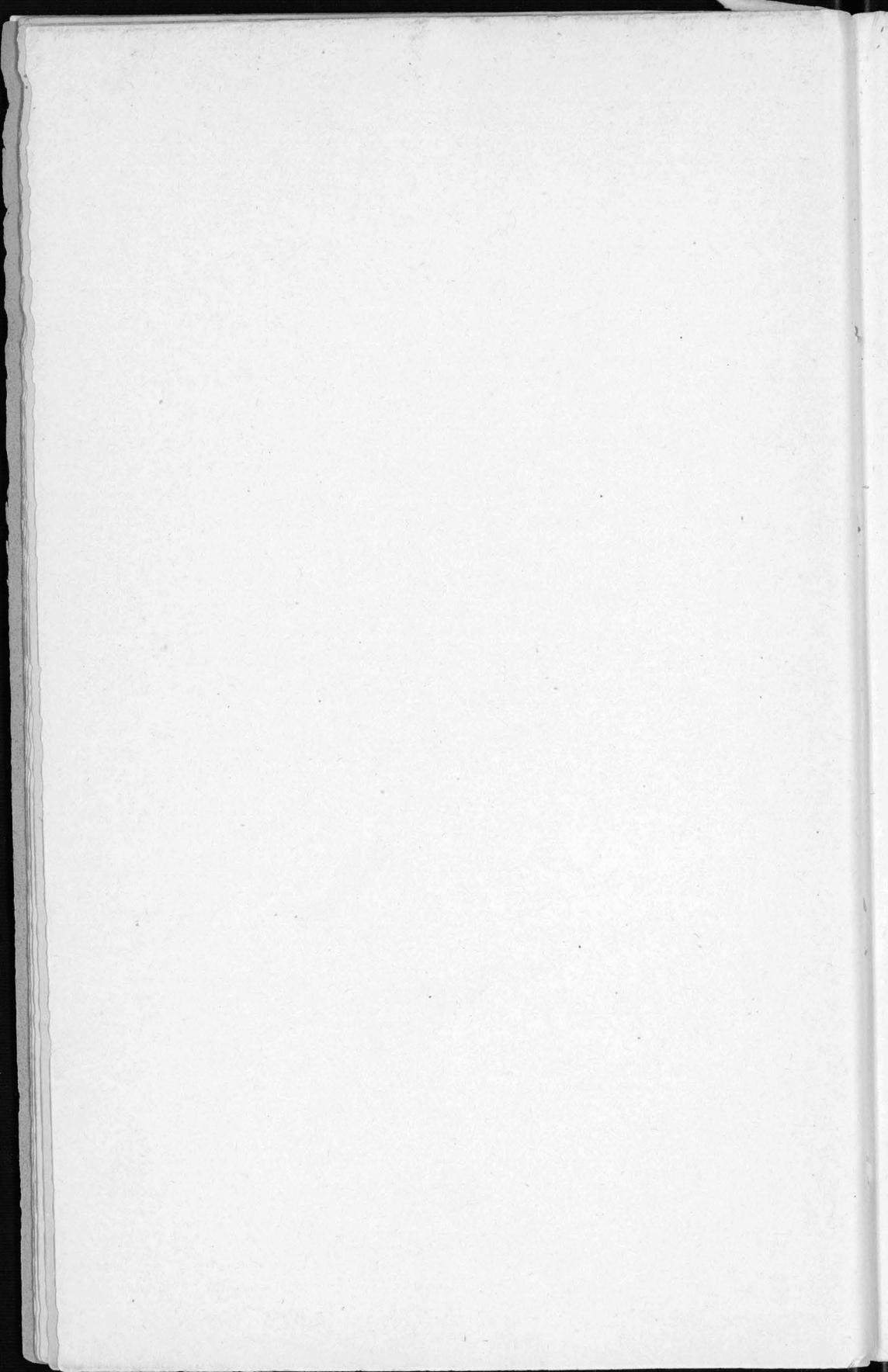
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,  
In spite of false lights on the shore,  
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!  
Our heart, our hopes are all with thee,  
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
Are all with thee—are all with thee!

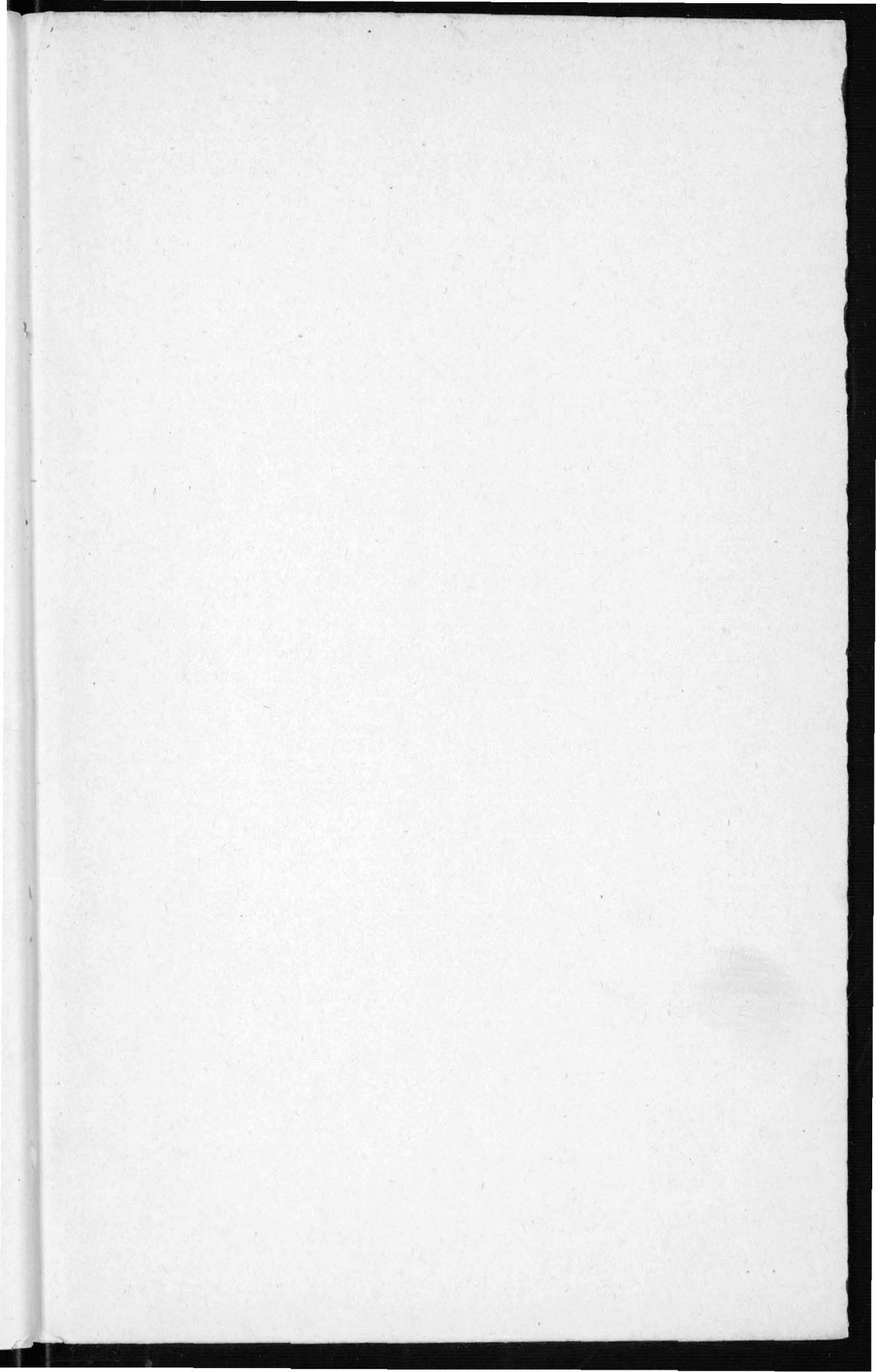


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