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THE SHIP THAT
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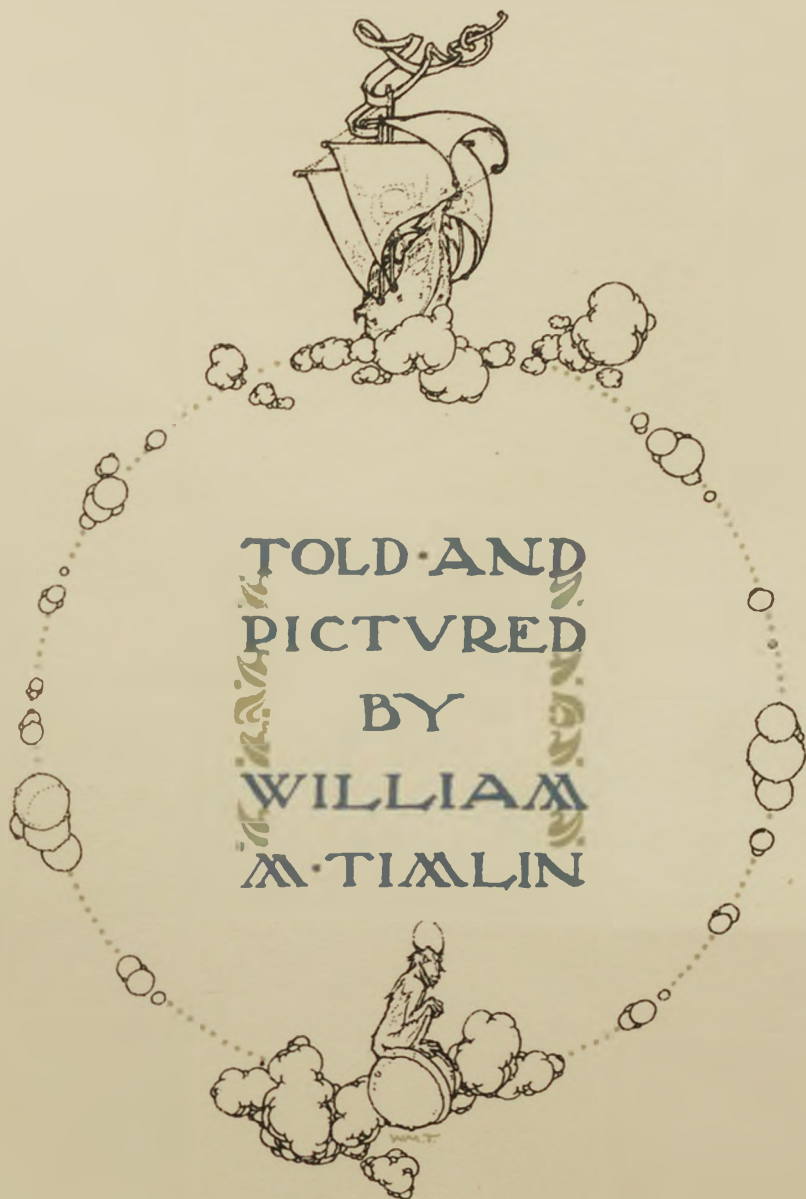
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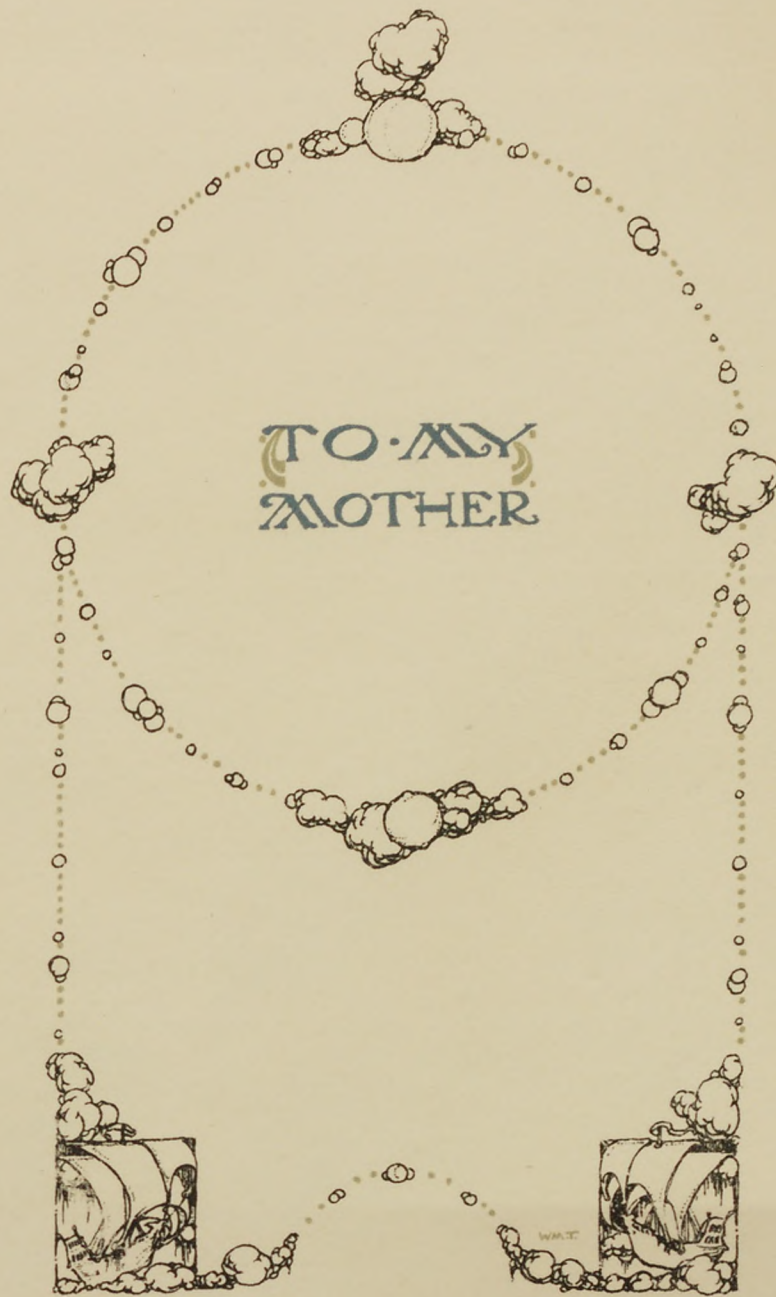
THE · SHIP · THAT · SAILED ·
TO · MARS ·

A · FANTASY



· LONDON ·
· GEORGE G. HARRAP & COMPANY LIMITED ·

[1923]



THE · SHIP · THAT · SAILED TO · MARS

PART · ONE

- The Ship-BUILDER
- The SHIPYARD
- The SHIP
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- The BUILDING of the SHIP
- The MANNING of the SHIP
- The VICTUALLING of the SHIP
- The LAUNCHING of the SHIP
- The DEPARTURE of the SHIP





WILLIAM M. TIMLIN.

THE SHIP THAT SAILED TO MARS THE SHIP-BUILDER

Although it was difficult to believe, the Old Man had not always been old, and in his dim, forgotten youth, he had said "I will go to Mars; sailing by way of the Moon, and the more friendly planets." But those around him, Scientists and Astronomers some, cried out in scorn, "Have we not ever taught you that Mars is thirty thousand thousand miles away, and nothing could ever live on a journey there?" Then he asked them quickly, "Could a Fairy go?" And they left him, muttering in their beards as they went, for they had no faith, nor any belief, in fairies.

Therefore he had taken his leave of men, and mens ways, and had spent his long lifetime in a sleepy office in a dull, dark street; passing his waking hours in strange dreams, or poring over weird and ancient books, and always and ever planning a ship to sail to Mars

By reason of his faith, the Fairies came to him, and he chose those with cunning skill as craftsmen to help him and started a shipyard.

All round him in his office were dusty fragments of his glittering, ineffectual dreams, and here and there little fragile machines coiled their fairy springs, or spun unheeded their golden wheels.

PART ONE 

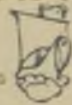


THE SHIPYARD

His shipyard was not commented upon, for it was so long ago built that no one remembered the building of it, nor did they recollect that it sprang up in a night—a crystal dome at the back of his office, a sudden globe that gave his little house the appearance of having blown a bubble. And people gave it no more attention than those other ample miracles—like the wonder of dawn or the beauty of the stars—that had been unnoticed in their midst for ever.

There in the shipyard the Old Man's Fairies worked untiringly, fashioning cunning models from the drawings supplied by him: from beautiful plans they made beautiful ships that would not fly.

Contented in his dreams—where no failure was a disappointment, so sure was he of ultimate success—the Old Man never heeded the grave procession of the years, nor ever required he aught of man or woman. So his life was perhaps the happiest on Earth.





THE SHIP

Upon a certain day it happened, just as the stars came flocking after the Sun, that he finished a design for a ship that would really fly. He knew in his heart that this was The Ship, and already he seemed to feel the dawn on Mars, and anon see its double moons wheeling through its ancient burnt-out stars.

Therefore, to make assurance more certain, he set his craftsmen to work, and the model made, was with exceeding difficulty, restrained from disappearing skywards by the quickest possible way.

In the forgetfulness of their relation, the Fairies nearly lost a valued member of their community, whose attention to duty was greater than his total weight.





THE PLANNING of the SHIP

It is not to be thought that the devising of the Ship was immediate and easy, for a great amount of time was spent in discussion before it was settled as to what size ship was needed to take so many crew of a certain stature, and so much provision of a certain weight.

There was also that careful point to settle as to what presents they should bear to Mars, for the Fairies have a legend regarding the dwellers there. And they think not as the Astronomers do, that there are dubious things on Mars, and unmentionable people. Moreover they have known from oldest times that on Mars there dwell those Fairies who fled the Moon when that unhappy planet cooled from sunny opulence to clearest shimmering ice.

Those matters settled, the Old Man made with loving care a big working drawing of the Ship and everything was marked down on it. It nearly came about that the drawing, of which they were all very proud, was spoilt by one of the Fairies, who would persist in colouring it blue in the wrong places.





THE BUILDING of the SHIP

The building of the Ship went very quickly. Everyone was so interested, and beyond closing up one of their number in a cabin with no door, there were no mishaps, or serious problems of construction to face. The wood, of incredible lightness, was brought through a trap-door from the grove of a friendly gnome, and two or three old crones wove the sails of thread of swansdown, and ornamented them with colours strung from peacocks' tails.

Also to them came the Elf King's favourite metal worker, laden with richly-carven plates of gold and ropes of sapphires and diamonds, and borne upon donkeys was a golden figure-head in the form of a triumphant phoenix.

And Pan sent two quaintly graven caskets of classic form, an offering to Mars. In one was the ring of a happy woman's laugh, and in the other the quickening joy of an English Spring.

From all fairyland there came wondrous presents whose use was hard to fathom, till all the shipyard gleamed with the misty radiance of silver and moonstone, and the warm glow of ruby and amethyst. And the night was lit by the lamps the fireflies and glow-worms kindle and the work went on happily, unceasing, from dawn to dawn.





THE MANNING of the SHIP

The Ship now rose in all its gracious bulk, from keel to deck a thing of manifold delights, and much was it conjectured regarding who would occupy its ten delectable cabins, or proudly strut along its fairy bridge.

Not because of self—for he had forgotten how to act like men do with each other—the Old Man appointed himself Captain of the Ship. This was easy of performance but there remained the difficult and delicate task of manning the Ship, for everyone wanted to go—even the old crones, who argued that their work was the most important part of the Ship, and their right of going the strongest. Then for the sake of that peace and harmony so beloved of Fairies, lots were drawn, and the crew was made up of those fortunates who drew the numbers from one to ten.





THE VICTUALLING of the SHIP

It is possible that the Crew, in all its importance had developed a certain pomposity that was undoubtedly difficult to live with, and this was the root from which sprang the confusion in victualling the Ship.

They all made out long lists of their favourite foods, and no one would give way to another's wish. Therefore it was so ordered that each should take what he wanted and eat it when and where he willed. The only thing they were unanimous about was their affection for milk, and to save space, they stole a cow, and as sustenance for the cow took the green field too. This field, with the cow in the middle, was attached to the back of the Ship, at the end of a rope, so as to be towed behind in the form of a raft.





THE LAUNCHING of the SHIP

The sail could not be hoisted in the ship-yard, even with the roof off, so the Captain ordered the Ship to be drawn up, and it poised on the point of the dome like a sunlit cloud - which in fact, the dull-witted passers-by, in that mean street took it to be. And if its radiance irritated their eyesight, its beauty, or strangeness never impressed them. With its sheen of ivory and gold, and lustre of emerald and sapphire; its peacock hangings and rose silk ropes, the Ship was nearly as beautiful as a sunset. And very few people there were in that neighbourhood who realised that night was heralded by a sun that slipped down readily through the smoke. **T**he Captain and Crew had the utmost difficulty, in persuading the homestayng fairies to release the ropes, but at last the Ship was free; and with a curtsey, it slid up a sunbeam through the clouds. As they sailed past those impalpable towers that the Westing wind had piled up, the Captain and Crew were fairly swollen with elation. They could not conceive of those dangers that they must inevitably meet. Nor had they knowledge enough to turn their course aside from the Sorrowful Planet, where tears as big as mountains are wrung from lowering purple clouds; nor from that repellant dwelling of Fate, the Thunder City, amongst the Iron Hills of Mars, or from those other Sinister Things that, driven from inhabited spheres, breed in uncanny silences on ancient horrid stars forgotten of the Gods.

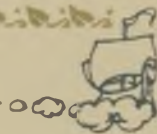


THE DEPARTURE of the SHIP

Below on the Earth, they saw the farmer whose cow they had stolen. He was standing beside the depression in his land, that had once been a perfectly good field, with its invaluable cow. It was obvious that he was surprised, but there was also in him heavy indignation, and his pardonable irritation seemed of just that quality and strength to inevitably force him to take the portentous step of Writing to the Newspaper.

Streaming towards him from the farm buildings, like ants from a heap, came his wife and family, and faithful farm hands; the order of their coming being arranged by their varying turns of speed.

Soon the Ship was mounting the edge of the gloaming, beyond view of anything, and up above a fairy floor of clouds.





THE SHIP THAT SAILED
TO MARS
PART TWO

- The Journey
The Monsters
The Gift
The Sorrowful Planet.
The Seven Sisters
The Meteor
The Eden Serpent.
The Air Sprite
The Star of the Classic Myths.
Calypso
The Argo.
Phœcus
Orpheus
The Pirates Planet

THE SHIP THAT SAILED TO MARS THE JOURNEY

When the Ship was clear of the heavy earth air, the Old Man and his Fairies were astounded at its unthinkable speed, for the Ship did not so much fly, as flash on its course, till all their world became a glorious sphere, spinning in light about a fearful Sun

Not that to them the Earth was of overmuch interest, for their attention was fixed on the wide flung, girdle of the Milky Way, spreading its path directly in their course.

Yet they did not turn aside from what they could now see was but a curtain of star dust, but passed on, and came through that glittering mist with sails and ropes outlined with living jewels that dripped in unimaginable splendour, and streamed away in swirls of sparkling light.

Then the gap they made widened enormously, and was visible from Earth, where False Prophets raved of portents and Astronomers babbled lies. And still the flowers bloomed, and the birds sang undisturbed; for theirs is the greater wisdom, the wisdom that is born in them and is deeper than man-found knowledge, which, being learnt awrong, may lead the knowing into ignorance and the learned into unbelief.

PART TWO.....





THE MONSTERS

For milestones they had stars thousands of miles apart, and some—
—times, when passing over a lonely desolate planet, they would see its primeval slime stir and heave, as some unnameable monster turned its remembering and weary eyes, following the radiant flight of the Ship. Or others would stretch their towering lengths and bellow uncouth blasphemies across the void.

Once the fiery breath of that One whose Name is shuddered at on Earth, and whispered to-and-fro on dark and windy nights, nearly engulfed the Ship, and shrivelled it in the cascading flames that ascended from its myriad eyes and mouths. His horrible spouse, that evil that had troubled men through all the fabled days, wallowed at his side, and, adding her voice to his, shrieked in maniac rage her hatred of mankind.





THE GIFT

There were so many Wonders to be seen, and so many Dangers to be watchful of, that the flight of time - if such it could be considered - was not wearisome, although time here was really non-existent, for Day was an endlong flying in the eye of the Sun, and Night a mere resting in a shadow.

Then again, the Fairies were making certain vain additions to their holiday apparel, against the hour of their arrival on Mars.

Much to his disgust, the Old Crone who was a member of the crew, had fashioned for the Old Man an orange-coloured dressing gown, all jewel-studded, with Turkish pointed slippers to match.

There was also the cow, which for safety had been housed on board, to be milked at intervals, and all the many other necessary attentions that the Ship required.





THE SORROWFUL PLANET

On one memorable occasion the Watch, from sheer boredom, had fallen asleep, and suddenly all awoke to the fact that they were sailing beneath a gigantic canopy of horrid clouds. Purple, ominous clouds they were, fat and slugaishly wet, and beneath them stretched a land of vilest ooze, pitted in incredible ways, and crawling with livid horrors. Then, slowly, a nearby cloud swelled, and dropped a single tremendous rain drop, that fell on the land with a heavy sullen sound, burying for itself a pit and hurling mud and crawling creatures into the fetid air.

With fear and loathing, shaking their bodies, the Crew flew to obey the Old Man's frantic orders, and, piling on sail, turned the Ship and fled from beneath that dubious curtain, out into the clean splendour of a welcome Sun.





THE SEVEN SISTERS

When a breeze, blowing from the Garden of the Gods, whose marble terraces front the illimitable sea of void in which the Sun and Planets swim, brought to them a breath of music, they veered slightly and came to that group of radiant stars whose name is known on our Earth as the Seven Sisters. And it is rare that those presumptuous ones who name the stars find so suitable a name as this - for here, on their little separate worlds, sit seven fairies, whose voices are the most beautiful in all the Universe but who once wrangled under the Windows of the Gods and argued and pleaded for one to say whose singing was the sweetest, till the Great Ones in anger, banished them to where they might sing in contest, undisturbing for All Eternities.

No sooner had the Ship hovered near, than they cried out for judgement, and the Old Man was a really troubled, for never had he been a Judge of Music. But the problem was solved by one of the Crew, who dropped over to them some of the modern Sonas of the World, which he had been bearing as a sport to Mars. Then the Seven forgot their quarrel in scorn at what was to them so horrid a curiosity; and now for them it will be a reproach to the Earth for ever, how some have perverted ancient and venerated sonas, and twisted the Melodies of the Gods so insanelly.



THE METEOR

Once as they sailed in the shadow of some monstrous planet, and it was dark and to be reckoned as night, they saw in the tail of that tremendous blackness a shuddering glow following hard upon them. Larger it grew, and hotter; and its course was a sort of lunatic swirl, so that, no matter how carefully he steered, the Old Man saw that it was not certain how the danger was to be avoided.

Therefore the Fairies philosophically gave themselves into the hands of their various Little Deities, and, having shifted the responsibility for any ensuing misfortune, comforted the Old Man, whose anxiety was great.

Then the Thing leaped out of the void at them with a baleful glare and a demoniacal roaring shriek; and, as it hovered imminent above them, it swirled in one of its erratic turns, and passed close by on the other side.

And the Fairies then knew it to be a Meteor — a giant spark from the Anvil of some Industrious God who was foraging, maybe, an iron circlet for the ankle of his Beloved.





THE EDEN SERPENT

After rushing for miles innumerable on their journey towards Mars, the Old Man decided that for rest they should descend on some promising and convenient planet. Whilst conjecturing on the choice of a landing, they saw in passing two brilliant jewels of a size and splendour unknown to men. Then they agreed that this was where they would land, for at the same time they could add these jewels to the abundant treasures they were bearing to Mars.

But, as they were dropping slowly towards the Star, they perceived with surprise, that the jewels were rushing upwards to meet them, and in an instant, with distended jaws open to engulf them, the tremendous head of Eden's Serpent loomed above, and the evil flashing jewels were its eyes.

It had been their end, had not the mighty breath from the gaping jaws blown them aside and onwards to safety, as is whirled an Autumn leaf in a sudden gale.





THE AIR SPRITE

When they were come through these recorded and many other narrowly-avoided dangers, the Fairies had lost much of their cheerfulness and all of their assurance; and the Old Man would turn his eyes aside when asked for confirmation that all was going well, for they were in a Space flashing full of little worlds, and none could they recognise as one on which they might alight for rest.

Then, on a sudden, they realized, as mortals do in a similar plight, that as something was amiss and beyond their remedying, they had better intercede with those higher Powers-That-Be. And they gathered in the bow of the Ship, and cried out in fairly well-simulated anguish that their repentance for arrogance and presumption was a tremendous and earnest thing. Thereat the Gods laughed, for it was a humorous sight and they that ruled in Fairyland sent an Air Sprite to their aid this being a great concession, for there are only three such in all the Fairy Realms, as they know the planets by name and the stars as familiar habitations.

With this joyfully-received guide, the journey was changed to one of pleasure undisturbed, for he would tell as they passed the various dwellers on all the worlds.



THE STAR of the CLASSIC MYTHS

And they came to the Star of the Classic Myths, that Gem amongst the Spheres, with its temples set near jewelled seas in gardens of living green; and there the lesser Gods have dwelling. Then, as it was not to be thought that such a wonder should pass unheeded, the sails were furled and the Ship sank slowly and landed, light as a bird, on a grassy upland on Calypso's Isle. Their welcome came from that peerless One, Calypso herself, who greeted them graciously, as erstwhile she greeted Odysseus, who sometimes, for other times' sake, would run his ship into her hospitable harbour.

Oaygia, as indeed all that fair world, was softly radiant with the far-away sweetness of those well remembered romances, whose fragrance, undiminished reaches down to our day.

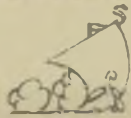
Across the magical seas they could dimly see the mighty halls of the Mythical Heroes, fronting the fairer foam, or topping the hills that shouldered through the woods.



The Star of the Classic Myths

THE ARGO

The light flashing from
sails and gilded prow
showed to them the far-
famed Argo returning,
bearing again the
triumphant Jason and
the Golden Fleece; and
Medea was there, but
wonderfully changed,
and not the horrific witch
that fable knows.





The Star of the Classic Myths
PHOECUS

When they were journeying slowly onwards in the Ship, after having bid a reluctant farewell to Calypso and all her golden enchantments, they saw amongst the eternal wood with its flower bordered streams, Phœcus, his forgetfulness forgiven, forever reunited to his well beloved Dryad.



The Star of the Classic Myths

ORPHEVS

And Icarus kept them
company, and
pointed out to them happy
Orpheus and his Eurydice,
and showed them where the
water-nymphs were joyous
in their revels, and where
dwelt many others whose
names were potent in the
fashioning of the Legends,
and whose lives were great
and glorious in the Golden
Age of Myth.



THE PIRATES' PLANET

Now their journey was nearing its happy end, for the Air Sprite pointed out to them, through an opportune gap in the encircling stars, the tiny Orb that was the Wonder World of Mars; and he named them the planets as they journeyed. There the sinister cruel World of Chinese Legend, and beyond that the beautiful Star of Dreams-Come-True, till for curiosity they landed on the Pirates' Planet, which is very famed amongst all the outer worlds.

There they saw the hardy spirits of all the Buccaneers and Pirates who sailed the fabled mains. Their ships were there also, and on the curving beach fronting the sunny seas they buried again their gleaming treasures. And the sea was filled with the glory of their ships, and the land with the splendour of their jewels; and they fought their ancient and dishonourable battles over again. But harmless were these joys, for nothing here was real, and all was dim and mystic, and not more clear than the romantic memory that our Earth holds of all these desperate men.







THE SHIP THAT SAILED TO MARS



PART THREE

MARS

The Arrival	.....	.....
The Landing	.....	.....
The Presentation	.....	.....
The Celebrations	.....	.....
The Log	.....	.....
The Temple	.....	.....
The Zoo	.....	.....
The Palace Gardens	.....	.....
The Princess' Chamber	.....	.....
The Sorrow	.....	.....
The Request	.....	.....
The Forest	.....	.....
The Forest Fairies	.....	.....
The Iron Hills	.....	.....
The Thunder City	.....	.....
The Prince	.....	.....
The Tower	.....	.....
The Raising of the Tower	.....	.....
The Return	.....	.....
The Finished Palace of the Princess	.....	.....

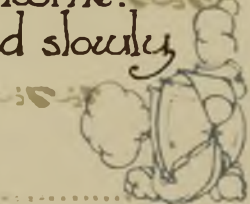
EPILOGUE

THE ARRIVAL

Now they were come to the ultimate fringes of all the Outer Worlds, and solitary and splendid before them blazed the Golden Star of their search; and the Air Sprite bade them a gay farewell, for his usefulness was ended and their way lay clear before them.

A little awed at the fulfilment of their dream, the Old Man and his Fairies gazed for some time at the radiant World and then turned to hurry on the preparations for their imminent landing. And so the Space flashed by them, and over the figurehead Mars loomed bigger and bigger till it filled the Heavens.....

That their coming had been observed was certain, and whilst the surface of the land was still but nebulous and opalescent, a cloud of moving specks was seen, rising through the clear warm air towards them, till in a little while the Ship was surrounded by a multitude of Fairies mounted on a variety of Creatures, and above the beating of wings was heard a musical roar of welcome.

So escorted, the Ship dropped slowly towards a Shining City. 



THE LANDING

As they arrived at the City of Mars, it was coming on to evening, and the Ship floated down through a wonderful purple twilight and came to rest, buoyant as a flower, on the placid mirror of a broad canal, from whose pellucid depths came flashing a band of Mermaids to bear the Ship near to where, on a marble causeway, stood many of importance in that City, to welcome the visitants.

Then as the Old Man—the first to step upon the Quested Land—bowed his greetings to the crowd, lining the water's edge, like a border of flowers in a garden, one evidently to be considered as Lord Mayor gave them a ponderous welcome in the name of the King.

And a shout went up from all assembled, and a peal of silver trumpets sounded. From hidden towers elfin bells rang, gladly, and from those creatures circling above came a rain of flowers, fragrant, softly—falling. Behind the causeway, rose a wing of the Royal Palace, of rosy gold-veined stone and from an upper window a Princess looked down.







THE PRESENTATION

Through those fantastic streets, the Old Man was conducted, and his Fairies and Bearers, with all the Earth-sent presents followed after. And the air was goblin-haunted with the breath of thin sweet music from balconies overhung. Under the fairy lamps the moving medley of the crowd could be dimly seen; the diaphanous figures and smiling faces of the women, the anomish features of the men, or the incredible mask of some impossible Beast shambling on its way.

The City rose before them: there, in the dimness, a quaint shop; nearby, a slim-towered palace, and behind and away, roof over roof, tower and spire, dome and minaret, twinkling into the sky. And on the height over which the City climbed, stood a fairy Temple of bewildering beauty.

In the Central Hall, whose extent was the soaring height of the Royal Palace, the Old Man talked with the King, one old and wise, and one who must indeed have seen the making of Fairyland; and gifts were given and received. And near the shoulder of the King, stood a slim Princess, whose dark eyes gladdened as they looked upon the Old Man.



THE CELEBRATIONS

From his room high up in a tower, in the guests' wing of the Palace, the Old Man saw a gossamer mesh of lights break out all over the City, for the night was fully dark. In a chamber nearby, he could hear the excited chattering of his fairies.

Arching above his head were the spanned Stars, the Worlds he had so fearfully navigated. A steely, sullen glitter in their midst showed to him his own Earth, and he perceived it was near the line of those Planets which the Gods, growing weary of their presence, brush off with careless hands into flaming, headlong incandescence. Maybe its life was yet only another hundred thousand years. Now already, the City was ablaze with lights of welcome, and fairy bridges across the Great Canal were as shimmering half-heaps of jewels; boats and wonderful barges moved in slow procession along the water-ways. At a courteous summons, the Old Man and his fairies descended and entered the Royal Barge—a gemmed, beflowered dream—and were seated near the King. Regally they sailed through the widening water-ways between acclaiming crowds, and the Ship That Sailed to Mars was towed behind. Amongst her maids in the prow of the Royal Barge the Princess smiled happily.





THE LOG

Near to dawn the Old Man sat making a last entry in his log. He wrote: "I have come as was intended, and must have been decreed, to a most amazing Land, called Mars, a land peopled, not by Things of various and curious deformities, but by Fairies of unusual grace and beauty.

And their chief City is of amazing opulence, and is built around and upon a hill, and canals radiate therefrom through wooded valleys, and flowers grow everywhere. One notable plant, flowered like an orchid, drifts growing through the air. Their beasts, harmless and subservient, are grotesque and weird to look upon; and many are winged and are ridden aloft. The delicate arts of these Fairies are shown in the tracery of their wonderful bridges; their palaces are a white delight, and their fountained terraces and gardens of a beauty undreamt of by men.

They have in profusion the jewels and precious metals known to Earth, as well as others not to be recognised by me. All are happy, although I heard a doleful hint of a horror called the Thunder City, and saw a single black-cloaked figure brooding, alone amongst the crowd."





WILLIAM M. TIMLIN

THE TEMPLE

Although the Old Man's Fairies had now left him, to live with more congenial spirits among the King's Barge Builders, he was scarcely aware of their departure, so busy was he exploring the wonders of that City.

Everywhere his presence passed unchallenged, and his friendly greetings were smilingly returned. Or an Elf would run out from some low-browed jeweller's shop and press a priceless ruby into his hand; or a Fairy would strip off her necklace of moon-stones for him, and many banquets were given in his honour.

Now the Martians have a belief that all was once miraculously created, and to the Creator they have raised a temple on the apex of a hill. Myriad-pinnacled, with daring spans of flying buttress and airy bridge, ever while they had added to it, till in time it had become an ineffable shrine of gratitude and joy. And it was a place of supreme happiness.

The Old Man spent much of his leisure for many days wandering along its terraces and up and around the great central spire, or viewing the treasures with which the place overflowed, and sometimes with him went the Princess.







THE ZOO

Now the City has a Zoo of great magnitude, and of which the Fairies are not a little proud, and its making was thus:—

On their arrival at Mars, following their flight from the Moon, they found the land fair and free of Man or Fairy, but roaming its woods were harmless but inexpressibly hideous things. Many were like unto the evil thoughts of a maniac at moonrise; others were sluggish, amiable beasts, and then there were those Monsters that flew.

Then, as it was rather trying to the feelings of even Fairies to step into a dell and find a towering monstrosity, dosing in that cool retreat; or wake up in the night to see an un-nameable thing, with creaking wings, perched upon the couch's end, they organised a Great Hunt, and nearly all these pests were driven in and housed, and caged in a place appointed.

There, amidst a herd of mooncalves, the Old Man saw the Cow, which he had presented to the intensely gratified Princess, and its demeanour was one of complete bovine content and absurd complacence; for ever there came multitudes to see the wonderful and fearsome creature from Earth.





THE PALACE GARDENS

At the close of his day's wanderings, the Old Man would come back gratefully to the Palace Gardens, and sit near a fairy fountain in the shade of some unknown tree, while the trailing blooms of the Air Plant floated slowly along on the scented breeze.

And often the Princess sat with him, her slimness curled amongst silken cushions; and her dresses were always of fragile fairy textures, rarely woven and quaintly patterned. Away behind her, rose the balconies of the Palace, huge against the sunset.

Sometimes she was pensive, as he talked of the Terrors and Storms upon Earth, and other whiles her manner was as one having some grave request to make.

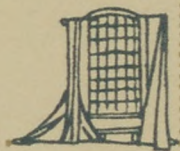




THE PRINCESS' CHAMBER

One day the Princess led the Old Man to her chamber, which it was said many artisans had slaved over for years to make beautiful. The walls were of dull-polished silver, damascened with golden ornament, and set with sapphires; the furniture was of silver and the hangings of peacock silks. And when they were alone she told him what had shadowed her eyes for many days.—

When the City of Mars had been founded and builded for years, and all was peace and joy, a fairy more venturesome than the rest, set out one day over the hills. And he followed the Moon's for a long while, and flew over marshes and mountains, till, glistening in the distance, he saw the jagged crests of what have since been called the Iron Hills. Over them hung a perpetual and gigantic Storm-Cloud; Lightning ran down the gorges like water, and always the Thunder rolled.



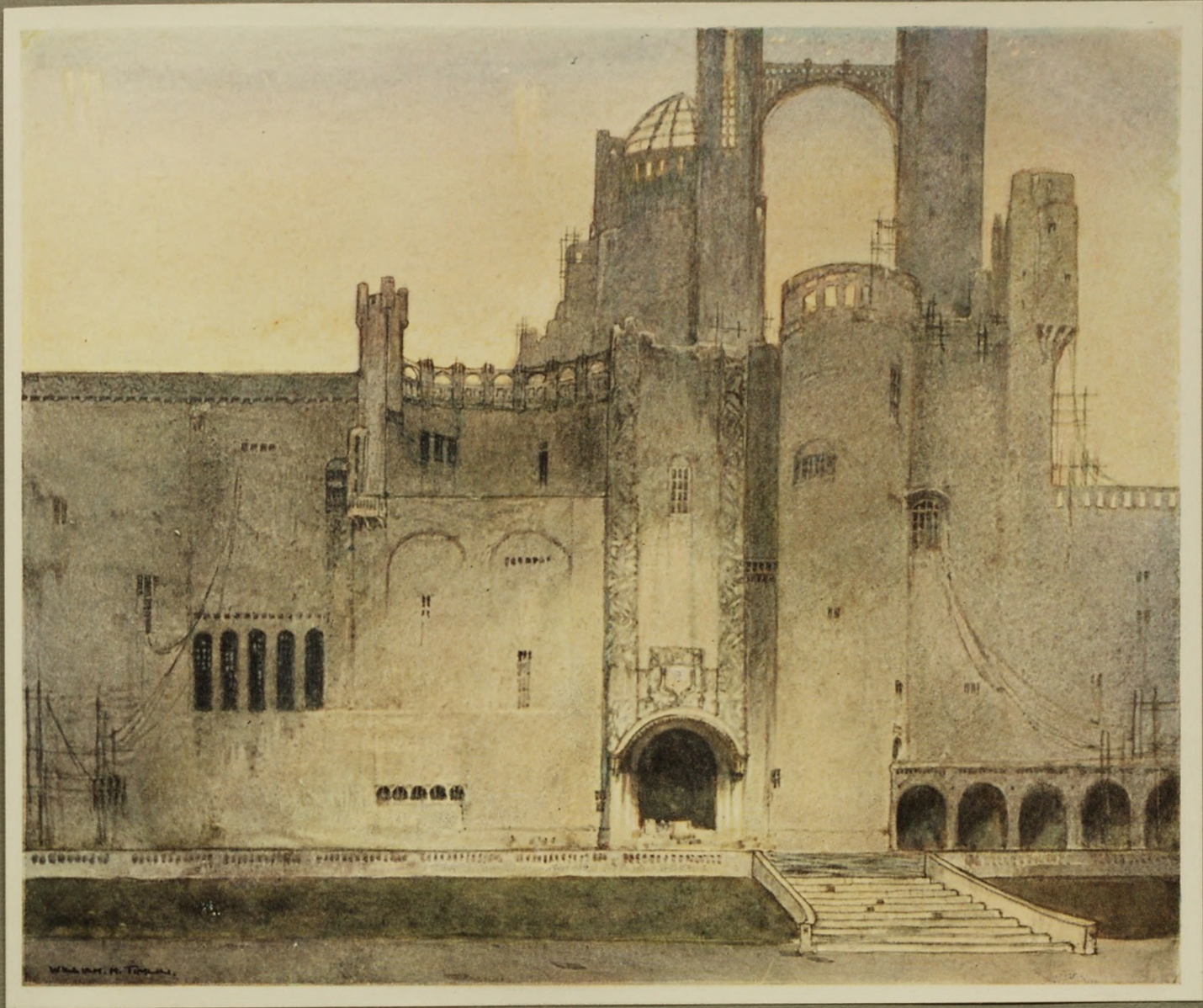


WILLIAM M. TIMLIN.

THE SORROW

As the Princess continued, the Old Man was able to sense the tragedy that had come upon the City of Mars, for the Fairy she spoke of had stayed amongst the Iron Mills, and the desolation and recurrent rolling Thunder had engendered a strange feeling which was Misery, although not then recognised by him as such. Yet withal he found it strangely pleasant. Therefore he stayed in that place, and could hardly bear to go; but at last he resolved to return. Out of hearing of the Thunder, the Misery departed, but the memory remained. To others he imparted the knowledge of his discovery, and thus it was, that during the past many had gone forth, and the strangeness of Misery had entranced them, and none had ever returned.

So Sorrow had almost come near to the City, and the Princess was almost sad, for but a short time before, the Prince to whom she should ere now have been wed, had stolen away, and was even now ruling in this dreadful City, and worshipping within the blasphemous Temple raised in honour of the Thunder. **P**ointing across the gardens, the Princess showed the Old Man the unfinished Palace of her Dreams, standing gaunt against the evening light.



THE REQUEST

Of late the Princess had often heard from the Old Man of the fearful and unfamiliar storms on Earth, and it was her hope that he might, in his knowledge and experience, clear away the trouble of her own people, a trouble against which Fairy Arts had long been futile. So she begged the Old Man to bring his earthly lore to her aid.

And one morning, while the City slept, he set out on a dragon procured for him, and steered his way, over the palaces, past the Temple, and beyond the hills, to where the broken shimmer of many lightnings showed him the course of his journey.





THE FOREST

As he went, the land unrolled beneath him like a many-patterned carpet, and it was very fair. But as he was come close upon his quest's ending, his way was blocked by a forest of such mighty growth that his dragon could not overfly it.

Therefore he descended, and, hitching his beast to a river willow, he entered apprehensively among the towering trees, into a pathless gloom. Then suddenly, as he was forcing his way through the heart of the forest where there was little light, there rose before him a Monster worse than any in all the Zoo of Mars. Its eyes glimmered madly red, and its tongue rasped suggestively among its spiky, craggy teeth, and its bloated body heaved.

A brooding silence hung round the place, and seemed to peer derisively between the trees. It was indeed a spot where any dreadful thing might easily happen.



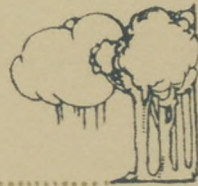


THE FOREST FAIRIES

To the Old Man, standing there horror-stricken, the fearful stillness of the Deast and the ominous silence were becoming breathlessly oppressive, when little lights came dancing through the gloom, and there appeared in that dreadful place several Forest Fairies, carrying lanterns of dead dragons' eyes, seeking for their lost pet. And the joy of the creature at seeing them was less by far than that of the Old Man, who quickly made his presence known.

So that he should not be further affrighted, the Fairies escorted him gaily to the edge of the forest, where, beyond a bare and miserable plain appeared the foothills that bounded the Thunder City. And faintly to be heard was the heavy muttering of the Eternal Storm.

The Fairies gave him a dragon for this further journey, for it did not seem right to them that one so infirm should toil so far a-foot.





THE IRON HILLS

His dragon soon over-passed the sordid plain, and rearing its head, rose at the barrier of the Iron Hills.

Threading between the lightning, he came to the hill-ringed valley wherein huddled the houses of the Thunder City.

And the Thunder roared and dreadfully rumbled, and all things were bathed in an evil leaden light, for there was never any rain - only the drifting clouds, only a dry, hot fever in the air. Here one might easily go mad.

The Old Man landed on the hill side, and found the place an ugly, sinister City, crouching flat against the ground; and the Fairies there were incurious and wandered unseeing, being too pre-occupied with the Misery that frothed and brooded in their brains.





THE THUNDER CITY

Wandering amonast low, flat houses in the gloomy streets, and passing black-cloaked stumbling figures, the Old Man came to what seemed to him must be the dwelling of the Prince, for it was larger than most and guards stood without.

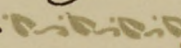
Yet he entered unchallenged, and, seeking, found the Prince enthroned in a dismal room, through the high-set windows of which the lightning flickered continually. And all the while the Prince sat brooding on the loveliness of Sorrow.

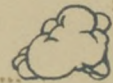
But the Old Man felt strangely happy, for here was a matter wherein a man might help a Fairy. It had been revealed to him as he flew between the long lightning flashes, how he might still this arrogant tumult, and now the plan was fully shaped.



THE PRINCE

Therefore he addressed the Prince in a manner which he considered was most suitable to one so absorbed in gloom, and which was carefully devoid of all the fulsome deference that ordinarily Princes loathe. "How lovely is the ugliness of Sorrow," began the Old Man, "And beyond words beautiful the vile thoughts of Misery, and to be carefully engendered, this continuous Thunder, which might drive to awful Madness. Then how desirable to be increased." To this cunning observation the Prince gloomily queried, "How so?"

So the Old Man pointed out how the Iron Hills only attracted a few long flares of lightning, and the Thunder was in accordance; whereas, if a long, thin Tower of Metal, filagree fashioned and light, of a length to reach the clouds, and all covered with copper points, were made, extended across the Valley, and then hauled upright, the lightning would play on its myriad points, all along its tremendous length. Then the Thunder would rise to a fearful strength, and discomfort would be increased. 





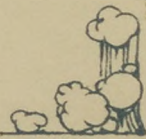
WILLIAM M. TIMLIN.

THE TOWER

To the Prince the thing seemed good, and straightway all were summoned dwelling in that City. And the metal was stripped from every house, and gold and silver were beaten into lengths. So in the weird light flickering across the valley, the work was carried on, and the Thunder pealed around them.

It seemed to the Old Man as if he dreamed, to see these speechless black-gowned figures moving amid that dreadful din, working absorbedly on the thing that to them would be an added sorrow. Around them crowded their weird houses, like unclean squat creatures, whilst here and there a window blinked like an evil eye.

And according to his example and direction, in a time the last rivet was tapped, and the Tower lay, a long glistening streak, stretching across the valley.





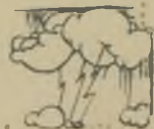
THE RAISING of the TOWER

In the centre of the City's square, the inhabitants of that miserable place were gathered round a deep, round hole, metal lined, wherein the foot of the Tower was fixed. Then, slowly, amid the crashing of the Thunder's deep reverberations, the Tower was hauled up by straining ropes, till it stood erect, its sides and million points shimmering and fairylike.

And the Thunder ceased, for the Lightning forsook the hills and hurled down no more long thunderbolts, but crackled cheerily on the little points that the Tower thrust forth like beckoning fingers. The stammering blue glare from the Hills was gone, and in its place, the Tower shone steadily and irridiscent.

And the Fairies all in a ring, gazed up, and slowly here and there a frown disappeared and a smile crept out, or a cloak back-flung, showed a gleam of silk or satin, for the Thunder was finally and for ever gone, and the Fairies were their own Fairy selves again.

And the Old Man in their midst beamed with pride.





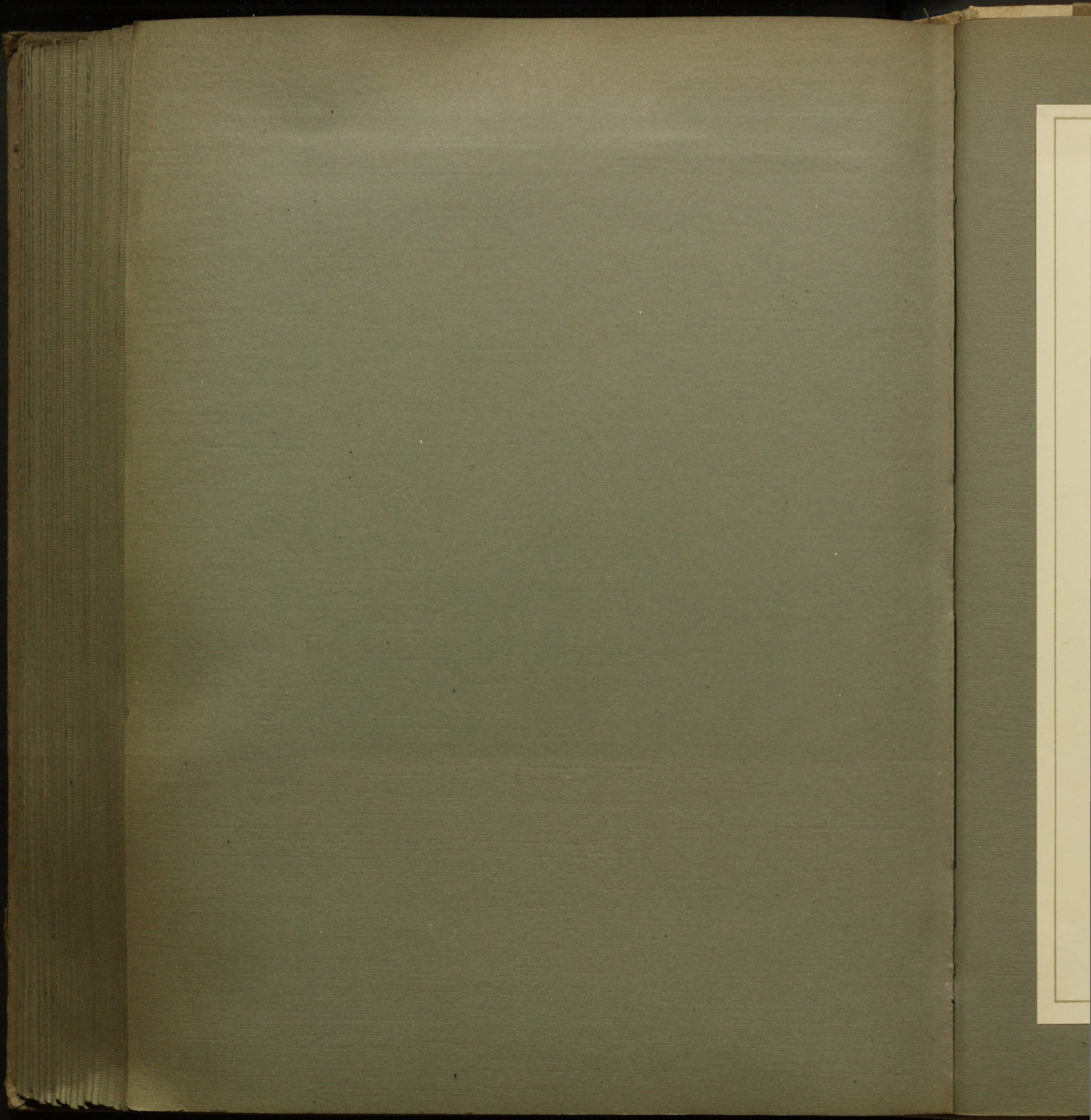
THE RETURN

Around that re-born throna flew the
cru, "let us return!" And one was sent
before to carry the news, whilst others
mounted, and, bearing the Old Man, rose on
beating wings and flew towards home.
Nor could the mighty forest stay them, for
they skimmed over its impenetrable top, on
which strange things gambolled and
played. Forward they went, on the journey
they had never thought to make.

And so they returned at last. And the
City softly glowed, canal and palace,
radiant tower and jewelled dome, fairy-lit
and beautiful, with flowers, light, and laughter
for the wanderers' return, and the Old Man
from dreamy Earth was the most welcome
of them all.







THE FINISHED PALACE OF THE PRINCESS

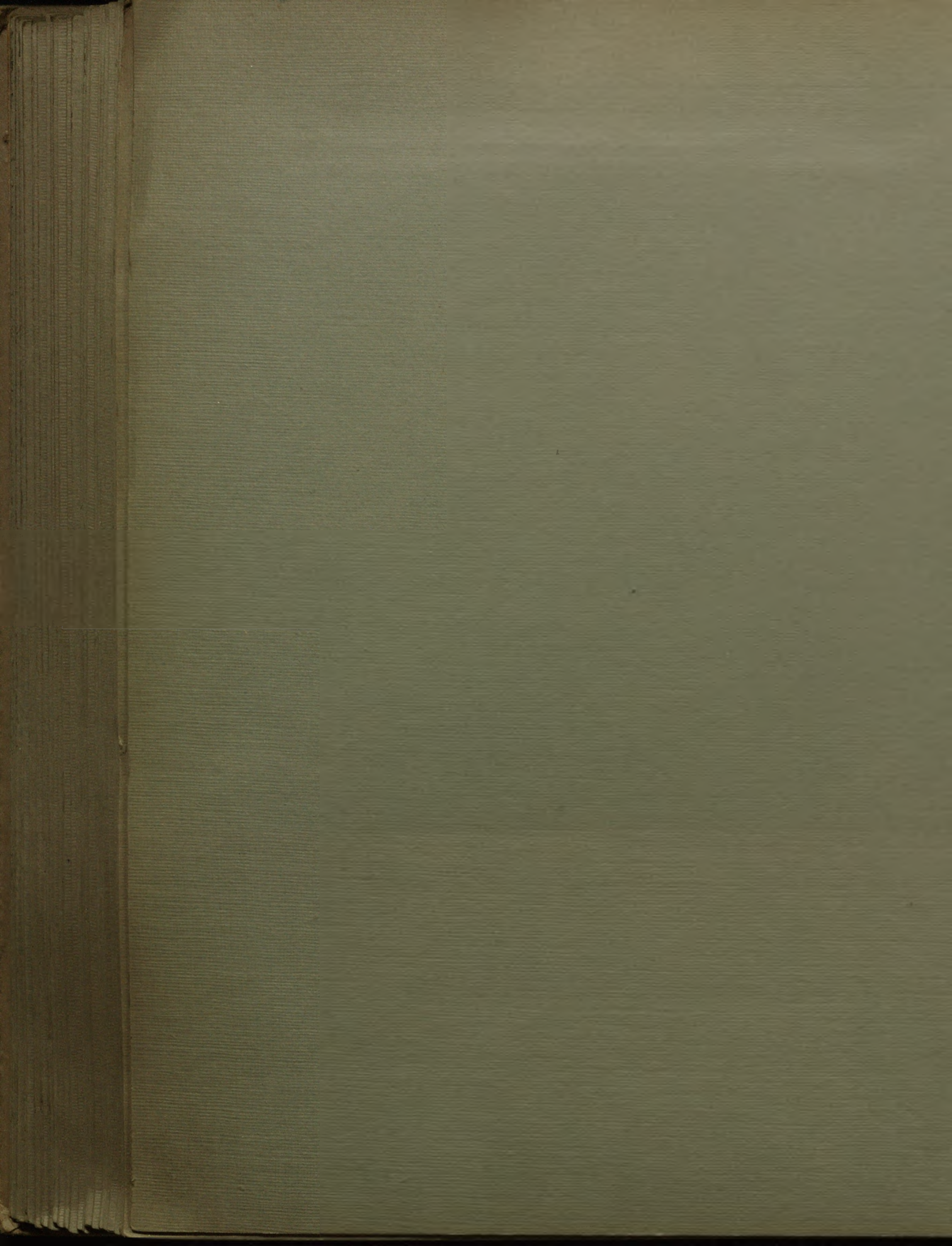
That night for a space, every Fairy laboured, as only Fairies can, on the unfinished Palace of the Princess, and it was soon complete. Its marble terraces were builded, and its many towers capped, and its crystal-floored halls were lit with gem-hungry lamps. And all brought gifts enough to fill many palaces,—hangings of many silks, and gold and jewelled things. One room, the Princess' own, had in it nothing but silver, sapphire, and moonstone, draped with luminous spider silk.

Then the Prince and Princess were married, and the bells rang out afresh, and on the scene shone the Double Moons the Old Man had so longed to see. All the evening, in the midst of all the merriment, the Princess held the Old Man's hand in gratitude that could find no words, and it seemed to him that here was a land where a man might live gladly, and for ever.









THE SHIP THAT SAILED TO MARS EPILOGUE

Here it is that this most brief account must end, but there is much more yet to be told concerning certain great and little happenings on the World of Mars. Of the Old Man's visit to the Forest Fairies, and his stay amongst the Goblins in the heart of that far distant Planet. Of how the Fairies left in the Shipyard on Earth, distressed and anxious about the Old Man's lengthy absence, built a ship according to his design, and finally arrived on Mars. Of how the Tower with its head amongst the Lightnings became the wonder-sight of that mysterious world, — and strange indeed it seems to us that the most fairylike thing in that land of Fairies should be a monument built by a Man.



FINIS.



WILLIAM M. TIMLIN.

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