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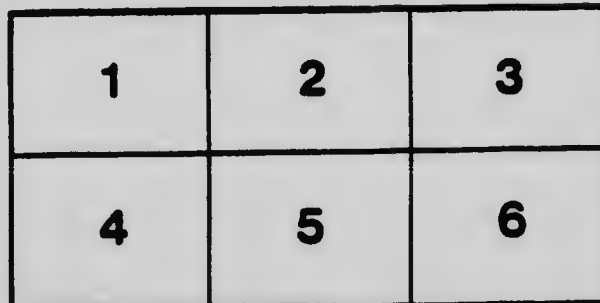
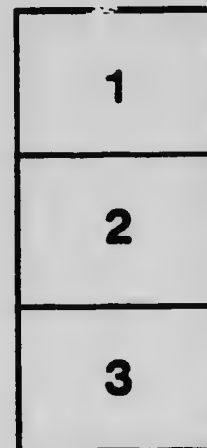
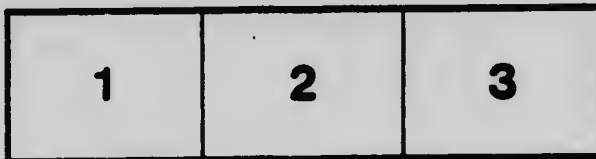
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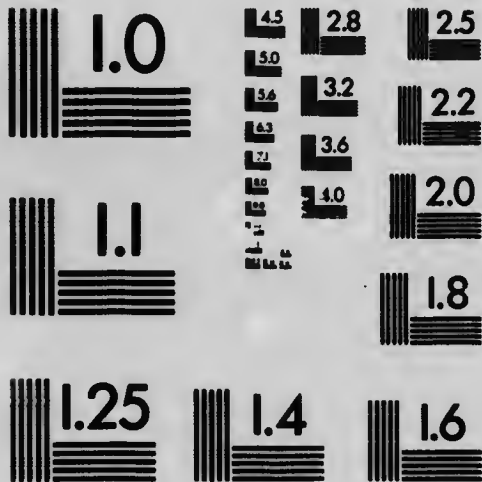
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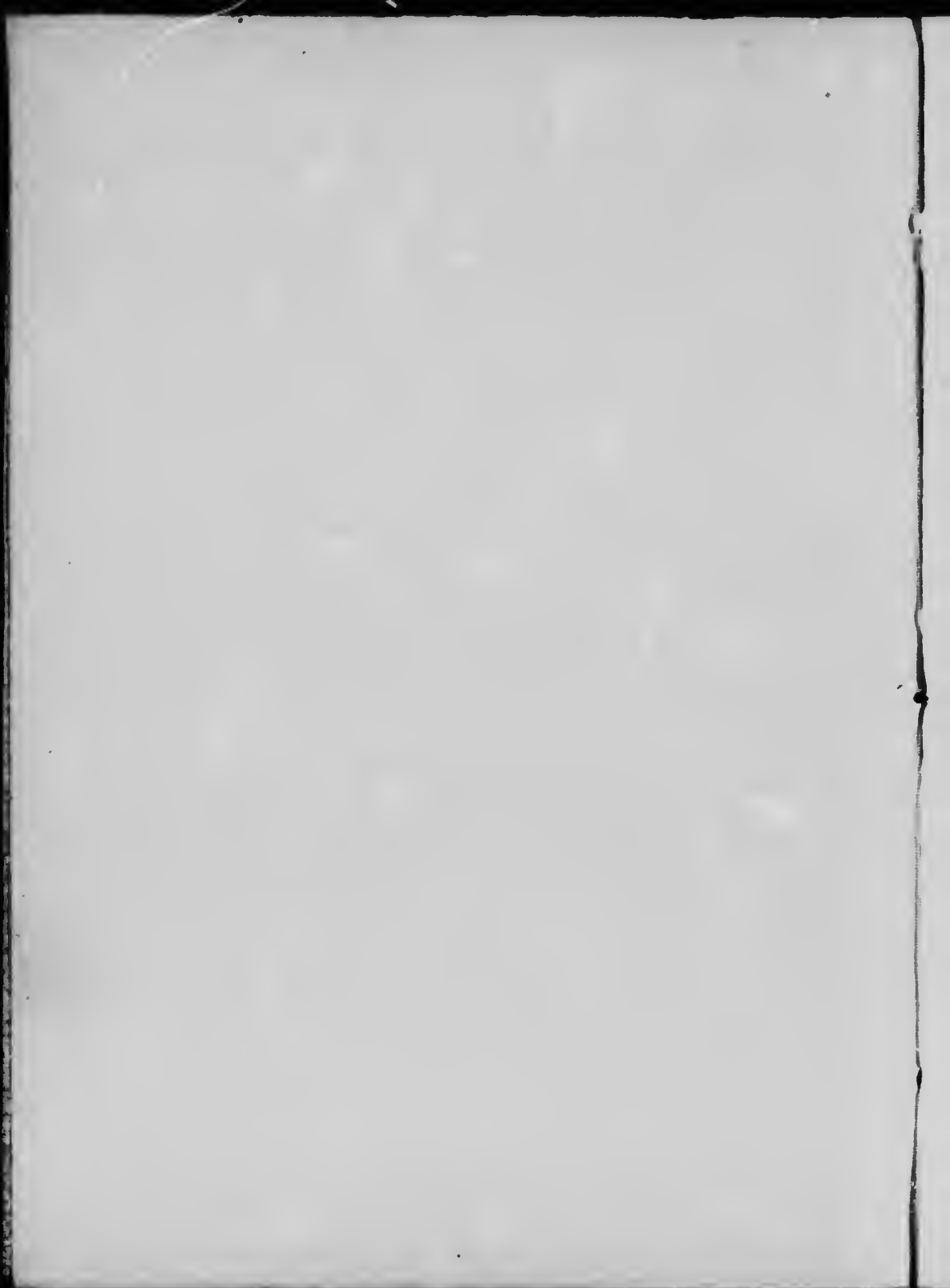
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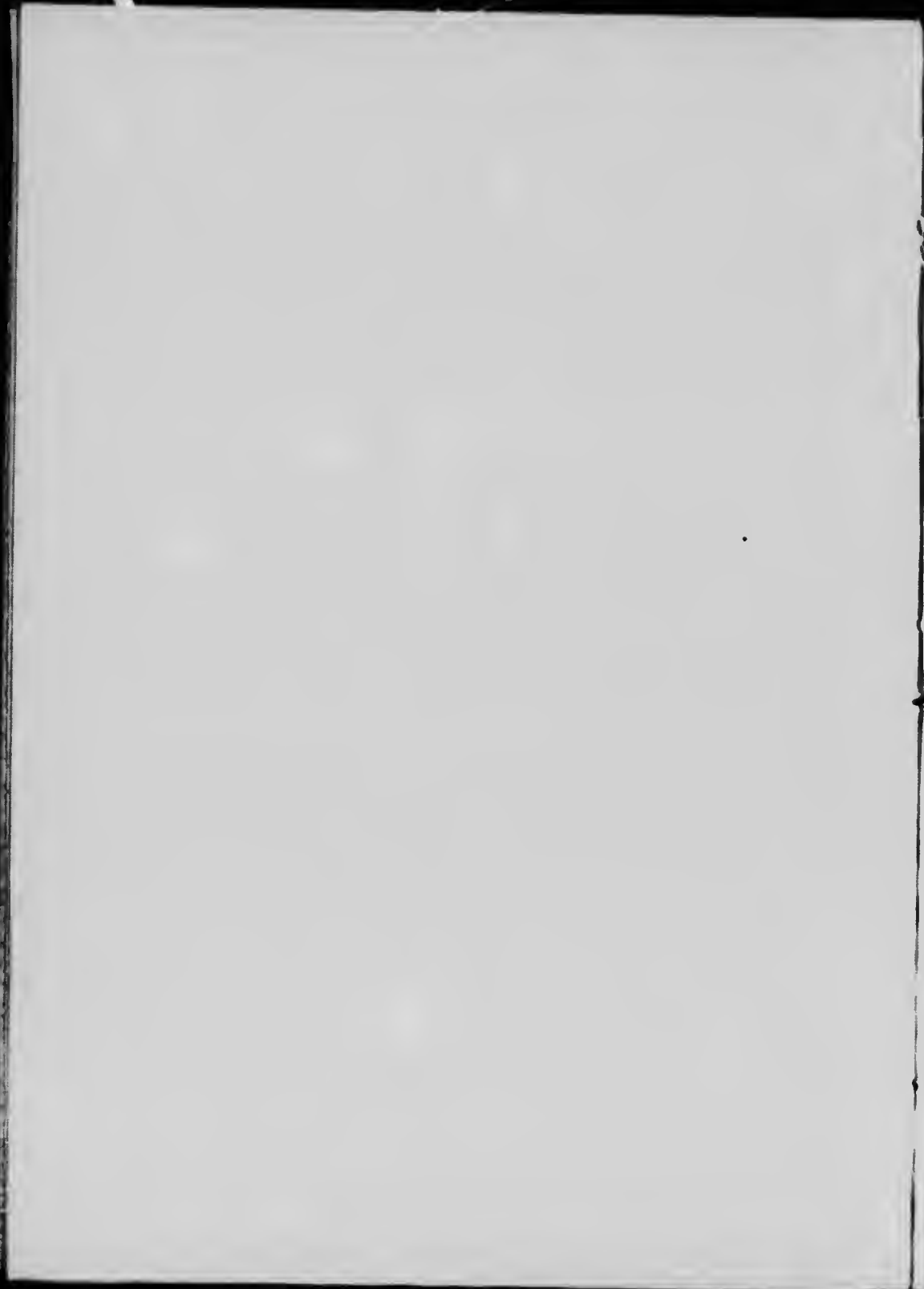
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Langford, N. H.





# The Ballad of Ruth.

A Story for Christian People,

BY THE

REV. M. O. SMITH, M.A.,

Priest of the Diocese of Vermont,



With an Introduction by the Bishop-Coadjutor  
of Montreal.

MONTREAL :  
E. M. RENOUF.

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1904.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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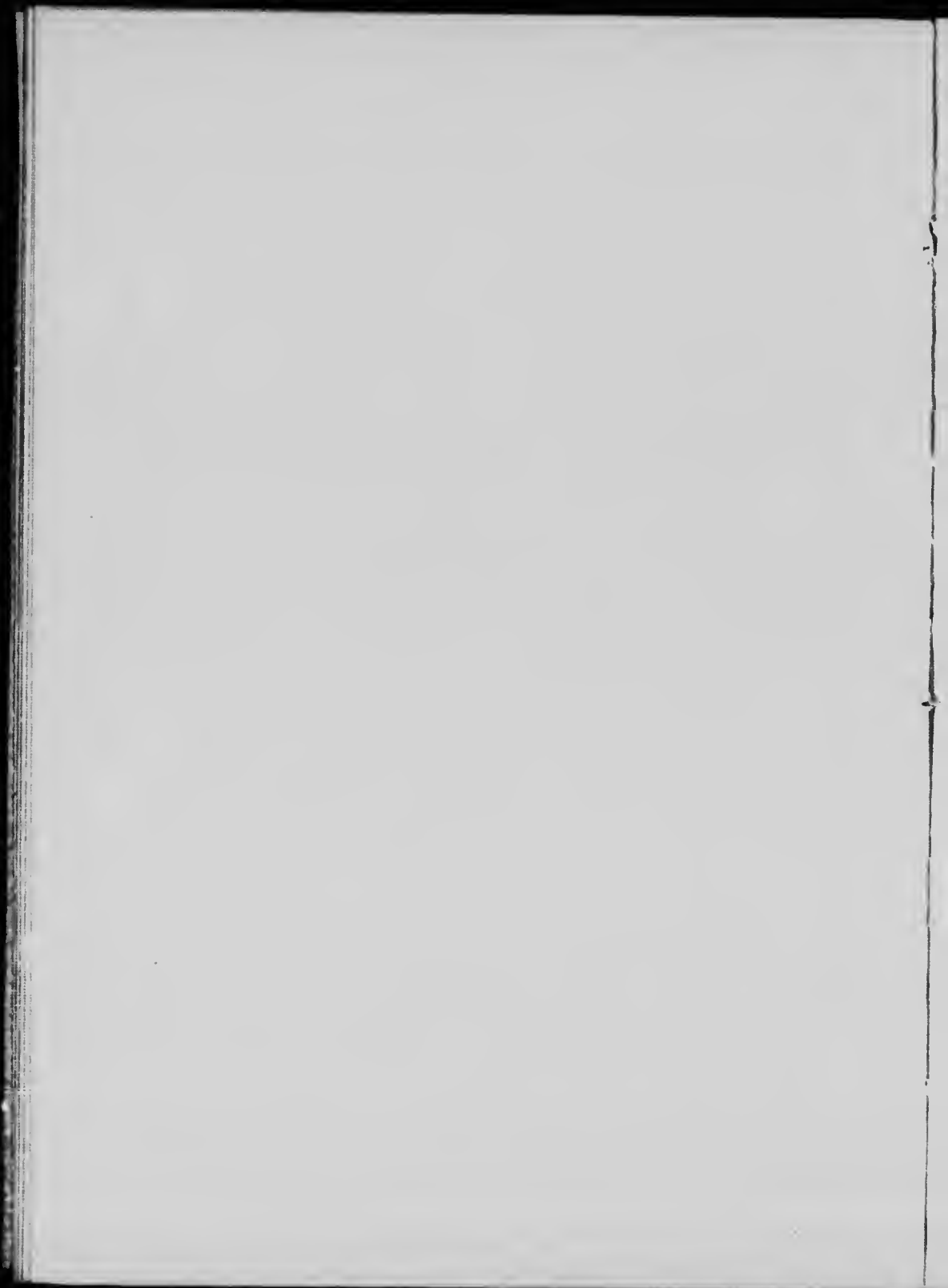
The story of Ruth, apart wholly from its inspired character, is one of great beauty by reason of the exquisite simplicity of the record. The figure of Ruth stands in the foreground, a striking conception of womanly duty, illuminated by deep and lasting affection; Naomi reflects the experience of the sorrows of womanhood eating into a heart that still holds fast to its religious faith, whilst Orpah presents that picturesque kind of love which feels and weeps and midst tears fades out of vision. Mr. Smith, caught afresh by the beauty of this sacred story, as many have been caught before, has versified the text, and has succeeded in preserving the simplicity of the record, which is its chief beauty.

JAS. CARMICHAEL,  
Coadjutor Bishop of Montreal.

*St. George's Rectory.*

Throughout the name of Ruth's mother-in-law is here to be read Na-ō'-mī, with the accent upon the penult; as given in Nelson's Aids to the Bible, and as is probably the better pronunciation.

I.



# The Ballad of Ruth.

---

## I.

'Twi't Moab's cliffs and Israel's hills,  
Fixed deep the gulf must be,  
Where Jordan's stream descending fills  
That dead and silent sea.

Each morning Bethlehem's shepherd true  
May turn his eastward gaze;  
Start Moab's lowering heights to view,  
With radiant hues ablaze.

The boldest Judge that Israel saw,  
In that harsh, harrowing day;  
He could not keep the scourge of war  
From Bethlehem's fields away.

He could not keep from Bethlehem's fields  
Those Midian hordes away;  
Nor still the pain that pestilence yields,  
Nor famine's course could stay.

He could not keep Elimelech's feet  
    'Midst Israel's bounds constrained :  
Naomi's life in her home so sweet,  
    Two sons her love that gained.

Up Moab's cliffs to the east afar,  
    Chilion and Mahlon they tread ;  
Their father's staff follows slow to rear,  
    Their mother's beast is led.

But his sons have a bride from the souls un-  
    taught ;  
    And the mystic words of truth,  
Are by wandering feet of the exiles brought  
    To Orpah and to Ruth.

They are laid there to rest by their father's side,  
    Ere a ten brief years are past ;  
And three women bereft of their all abide  
    In this wide, wide world outcast.

There's a corner at home where the girlhood  
    sped,  
    For these Moabite maidens twain ;  
But Naomi the aged, her hoary head  
    Hath no roof from the wind and the rain .



Oh! how yellow they wave in the sunset glow,  
With that deep gulf fixed between;  
When those harvests again that doth God be-  
stow,  
Are in Bethlehem's fields, I ween.

"My daughters," she cried, "and my steps are  
bent  
To that land where my boys I knew,  
As your love for the dead through these years  
ye spent,  
So may God do the same by you."

"Not a son evermore with his smile so bright,  
Not a babe on my breasts shall lie;  
Still some Moabite child may your hearts de-  
light,  
And an infant's soft laugh and its cry."

"Our mother," they answered, "and so could  
it be?  
Thy last years left alone!  
We will turn our steps to the west with thee,  
And thy childhood's country own."

Oh! but Orpah's faint heart through her fast-  
 flowing tears,  
 To start from a dream like this ;  
 Till a wide, wide parting of long, long years  
 Shall be thine in a last long kiss.

Yet why lingerest thou longer thy purpose to  
 poise,  
 Thou brave little maiden, Ruth?  
 Lo, thy sister returns to her home and her  
 joys,  
 And the people and gods of her youth.

As a candle's bright rays through the darken-  
 ing shade,  
 As a star in the skies sublime ;  
 So the faltering steps of one weak little maid  
 Shine on till the end of time.

She hath chosen her part with the heirs of the  
 truth ;  
 She is one of God's own for aye ;  
 As with Jael and Rahab, the glory of Ruth  
 Shall be told in His page always.

"Hath Naomi a daughter," 't was in Bethlehem  
said,

"For the sons that we knew with her then?"  
Till they welcomed her back as a friend that  
was dead,  
And recovered to life once again.

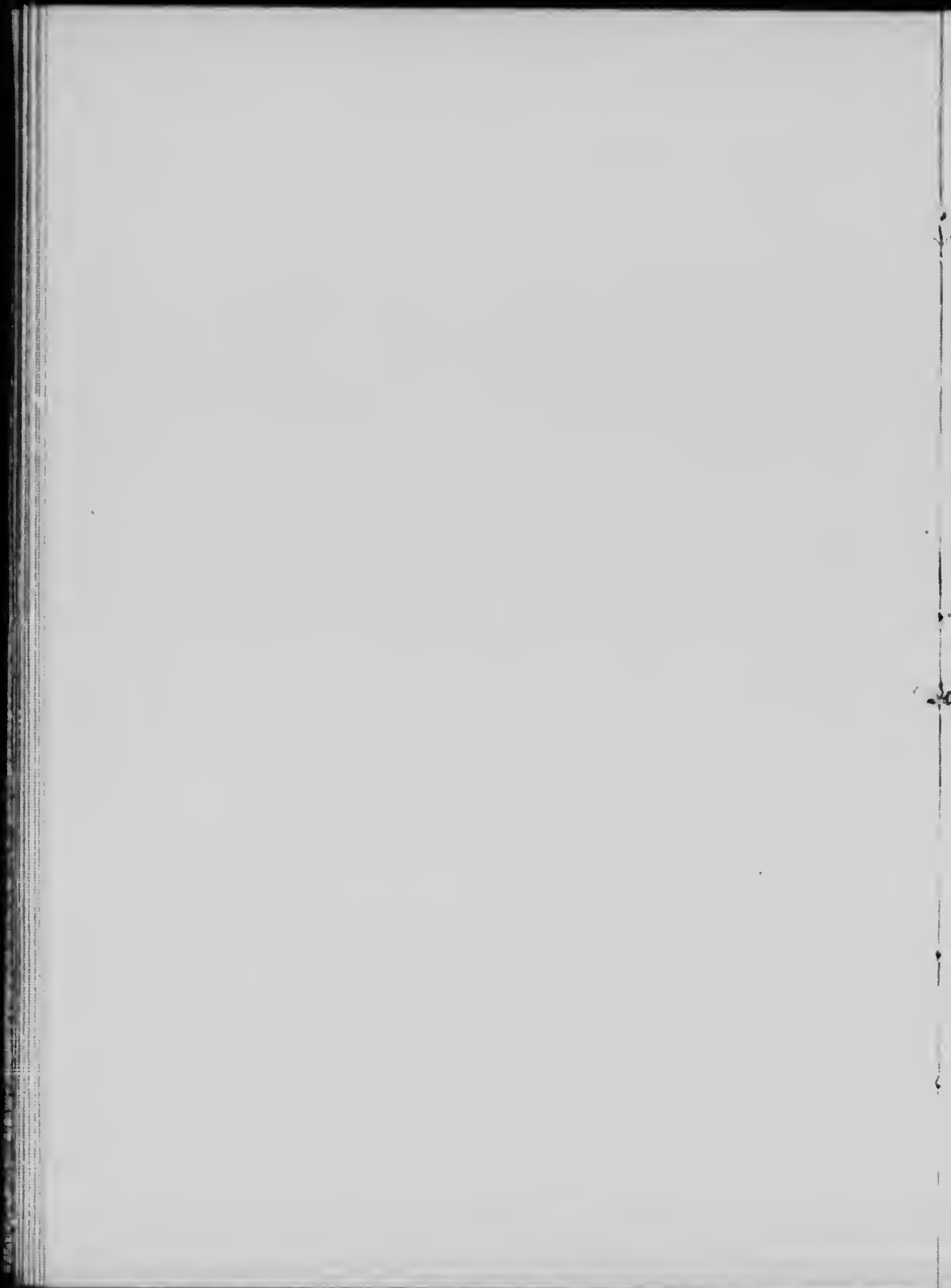
But she answered, "As Mara returning you  
see,

As Naomi who set forth to roam;  
For by bitter affliction hath God dealt with me,  
And the full one hath empty brought home.

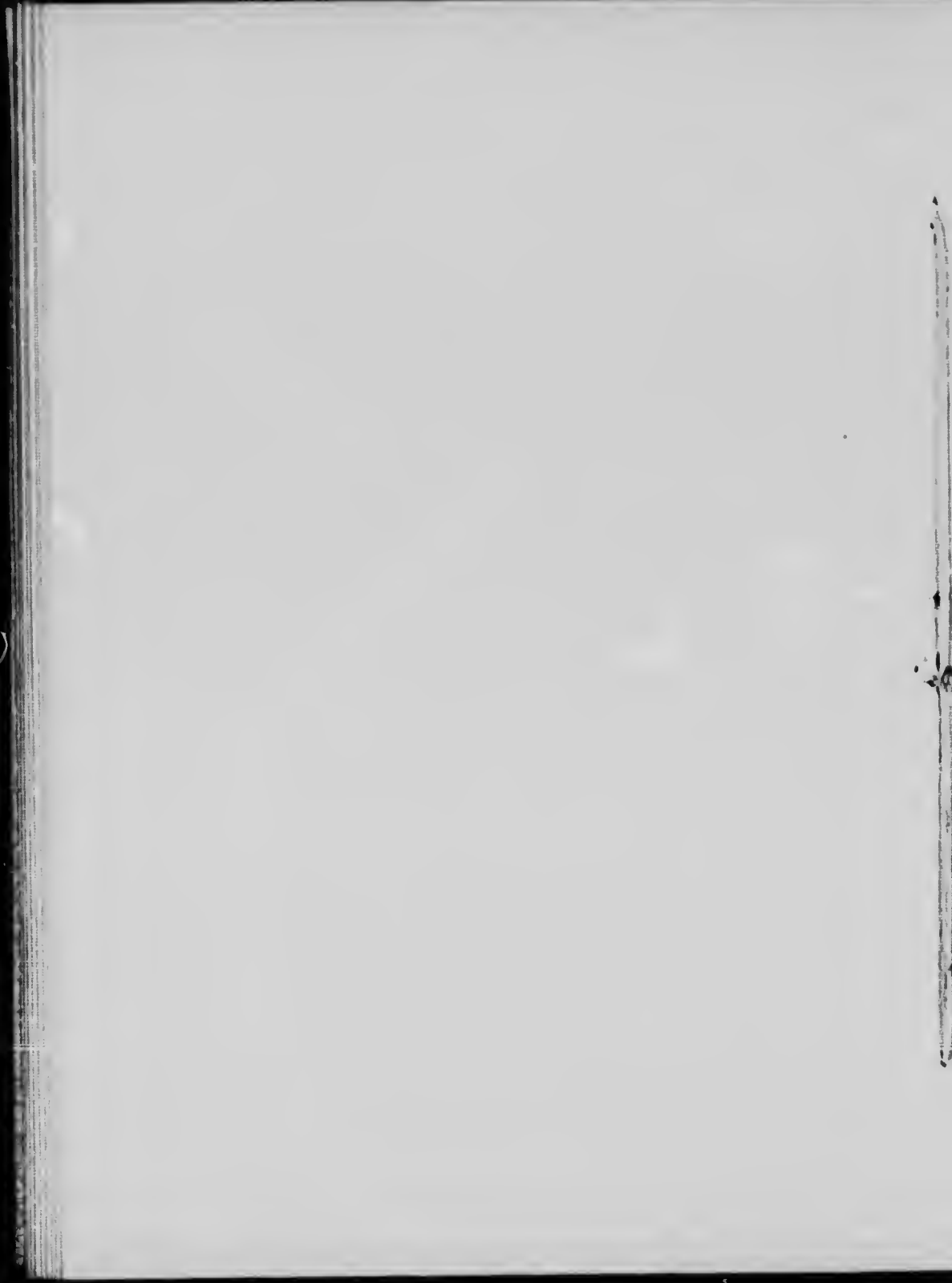
Thus Naomi came back to the town of her  
birth,

And with Ruth as a daughter so brave;  
When the Passover time was abroad on God's  
earth  
And the barley-harvest waved.





II.



## II.

Boaz once in Bethlehem's town  
Lived Elimelech's kinsman plain ;  
O'er the hill-tops up and down  
Stretched his fields and crops and grain.

Cheery was his greeting then ;  
Joyous was their welcome too :  
"God be with you," to his men ;  
"God bless thee," their answer true.

"Who the maiden gleaning there,  
Those long rows of grain between ?  
Never yet that maiden fair  
'Midst my damsels have I seen."

"Moabitish maiden she,  
To Naomi daughter grown ;  
None of Israel's company  
Faith and love like hers have shown."

Gentle was her curtsey deep,  
Fresh the flush upon her brow ;  
Human kindness could not keep,  
Welling forth from Boaz now.

“ Bid the young men touch not thee,  
 Lest their speech may be too rude ;  
 All our laws of courtesy  
 Kind, considerate are and good.”

“ ’Midst my maidens find thee room ;  
 Think not from the field to stray ;  
 Grateful gleaner art thou come  
 In thy God-appointed way.”

“ True disciple’s lot be thine,  
 Free the cup of water take ;”—  
 Type assured of grace Divine  
 Springing up for Jesus’ sake.

“ Stranger maid in Israel’s land,”  
 (Wistful Ruth made answer meet)  
 “ Kindness seeking at thine hand,  
 Welcome as thine own to entreat.”

“ God whose wings of love below,”  
 Boaz said, “ thy trust is stayed,  
 Blessings shower,”—and thus we know,  
 E’en St. John for lady prayed.\*

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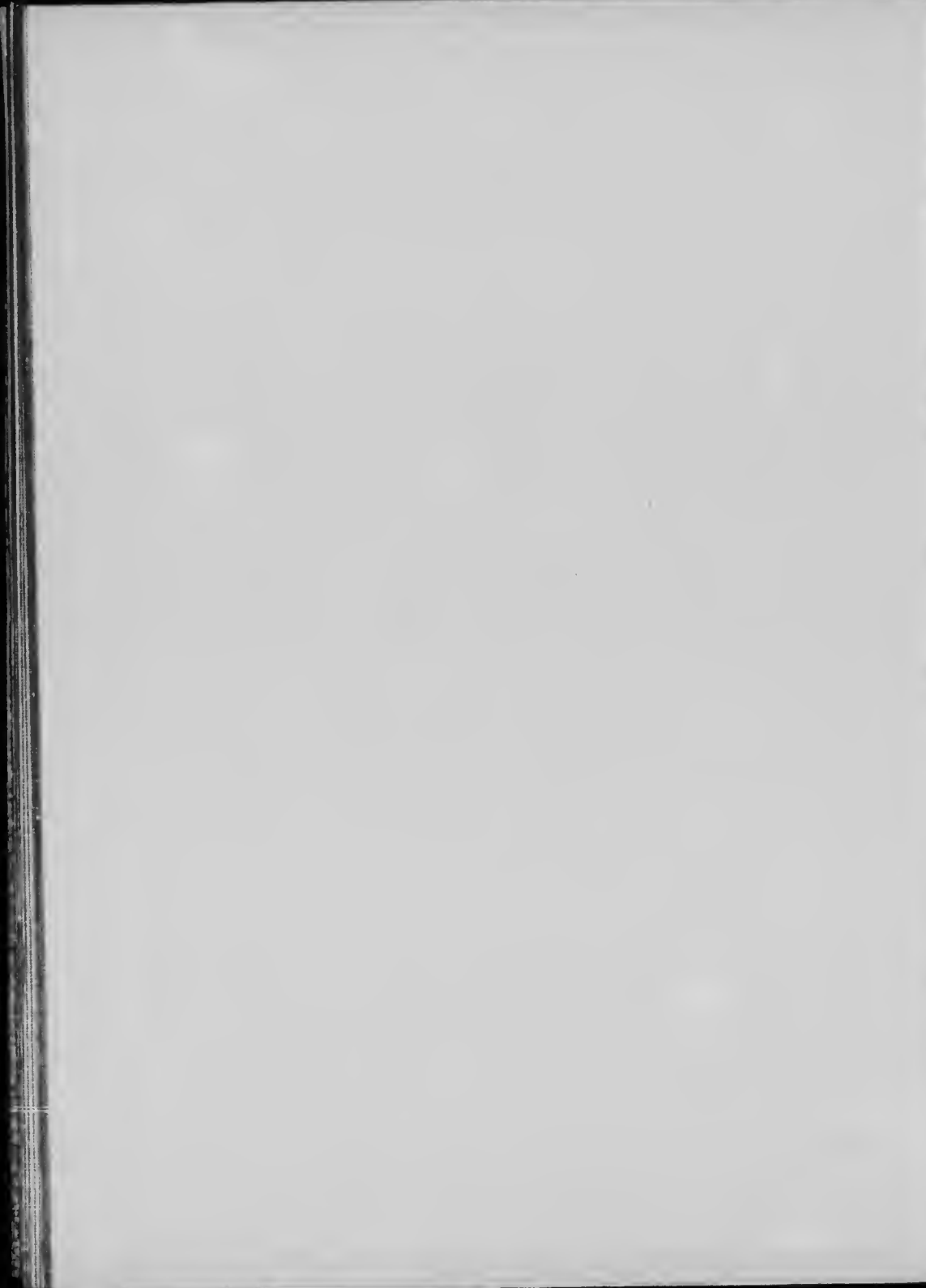
\*II. St. John 8; where there is an underlying reference  
 to Ruth ii. 12.



“Israelites, so by God’s law,  
Moses taught must liberal be ;  
Bid my young men scatter far  
Wisps of white new grain for thee.”

Men and maidens labouring fair,  
Wheat and barley-harvest too ;  
Found they Ruth no otherwhere,  
Till the Pentecost was through.





III.



## III.

Yet when Ruth's feet were treading, where the  
wheat-fields were spreading  
Their broad yellow blaze 'neath that bright  
southern sky;—  
Still Naomi's heart beating, was some resting-  
place seeking,  
Where with Ruth 't would be well whilst the  
long years passed by.

Flowed from Ruth's deep affection, such a  
strong recollection,  
Veneration unchanged towards Naomi as  
due ;  
Nor was confidence shaken, nor was counsel  
forsaken,  
Nor obedience faltered whate'er she might  
do.

Then said Boaz, " Be evil, to such hard heart  
uncivil,  
As shall nurse evil thought of thy conduct,  
fair Ruth !

Full of kindly endeavour, pure and virtuous  
 ever,  
 Touched with woman's fresh sympathy, ten-  
 derness, truth."

"In the morning full early, dealing upright and  
 squarely,  
 We will face every claim made in broad light  
 of day ;  
 There's a kinsman that's nearer, he can scarcely  
 be dearer,  
 We will probe that bold kinsman what part  
 he will play."

Bnt Naomi's heart beating, at such sweet tale's  
 repeating,  
 Answered, " Rest thee, loved maiden, till the  
 sun sets this day ;  
 For I know that not ever, will our kinsman's  
 endeavour  
 Rest, till all things prove well as God wills  
 and we pray."



IV.





## IV.

To the north stood the gateway in Bethlehem's  
town,  
And the road stretching out towards Jerusalem  
shown ;  
And the seats where the elders assembled  
would meet,  
Their disputes to decide and their counsel  
complete.

Through that gateway St. Joseph, God's angel  
that heard,  
And the Virgin embracing her Babe and her  
Lord ;  
By wise Providence snatched from King  
Herod's rough play,  
To that strange old Egyptian land once took  
their way.

Through that gateway the shepherds enraptur-  
ed they sped,  
As the sweet-noted *Glorias* rang overhead ;

Through that gateway the Wise Men they fol-  
lowed the star,  
God's safe guide to their footsteps from coun-  
tries afar.

By that gateway of old, when dread danger  
drew near,  
Jeremiah stood bravely God's people to cheer ;  
And their captain Johanan, he could urge but  
in vain,  
To the land to stand fast and their safety re-  
tain.\*

At that gateway cast Boaz his clear glance  
about,  
And ten men of the city soon he rightly chose  
out ;  
And he said, " My bold kinsman, are the wit-  
nesses nigh,  
If this field of Elimelech's fair thou would'st  
buy."

Then this kinsman made answer, " To buy and  
to sell,  
Such a bright opportunity ever falls well ;

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\*Jer. xli. 16, 17, 18.

Bid Naomi just price of her lot but to say,  
And this kinsman, I take it, stands ready to  
pay."

But said Boaz, "There's something that scarce  
can be bought,  
And the heart of true womankind otherwise  
sought ;  
If there's room in thine heart for a maiden so  
fair,  
Cast this bargaining aside and make way for  
her there."

Then this man said, "A maid and a bargain, I  
see,  
Are two things, to my notion, that but ill can  
agree ;  
If thou burden'st thy sale with thy maidenhood  
true,  
Keep the maid to thyself and inheritance too."

Yet the great-hearted Moses, God's spirit that  
filled,  
Had his own well-formed thoughts about men  
of that build ;

And directions he left that an old leathern  
 shoe,  
 Should both measure their value and dignity  
 too.

So said Boaz, " Bold kinsman, thy word hath  
 been passed,  
 And Elimelech's heritage mine stands at last ;  
 And this Moabite Ruth, Mahlon's wife, as these  
 prove,  
 Is mine own now forever to hold and to love."

With glad voice from these elders burst at  
 once their reply :  
 " May full blessing from Heaven's realm ever  
 prove nigh ;  
 As with Leah and Rachel, which did Israel's  
 house build,  
 So with children's bright laughter too thine  
 home be filled."

But Naomi's deep happiness who shall un-  
 fold ?  
 In her arms when her daughter's sweet child  
 she might hold ;

She might tend him as nurse, on her bosom he  
 leans,  
 And they called his name Obed, God's servant  
 that means.

Till all Bethlehem's womankind thrilled with  
 her joy,  
 Said, "Still more as Naomi's, than Ruth's own,  
 stands this boy ;  
 Both to nourish her age and her life to restore,  
 Seven sons, if she'd lost, might seem sad loss  
 no more."

Now this Obed, to Jesse, proved the father they  
 tell ;  
 And from Jesse sprang David, as all know full  
 well ;  
 And King David's great Son came as King of  
 the Truth ;  
 And I lay down my pen to the Ballad of Ruth.



ROSSEAU,  
 Aug. 19th, 1904.

