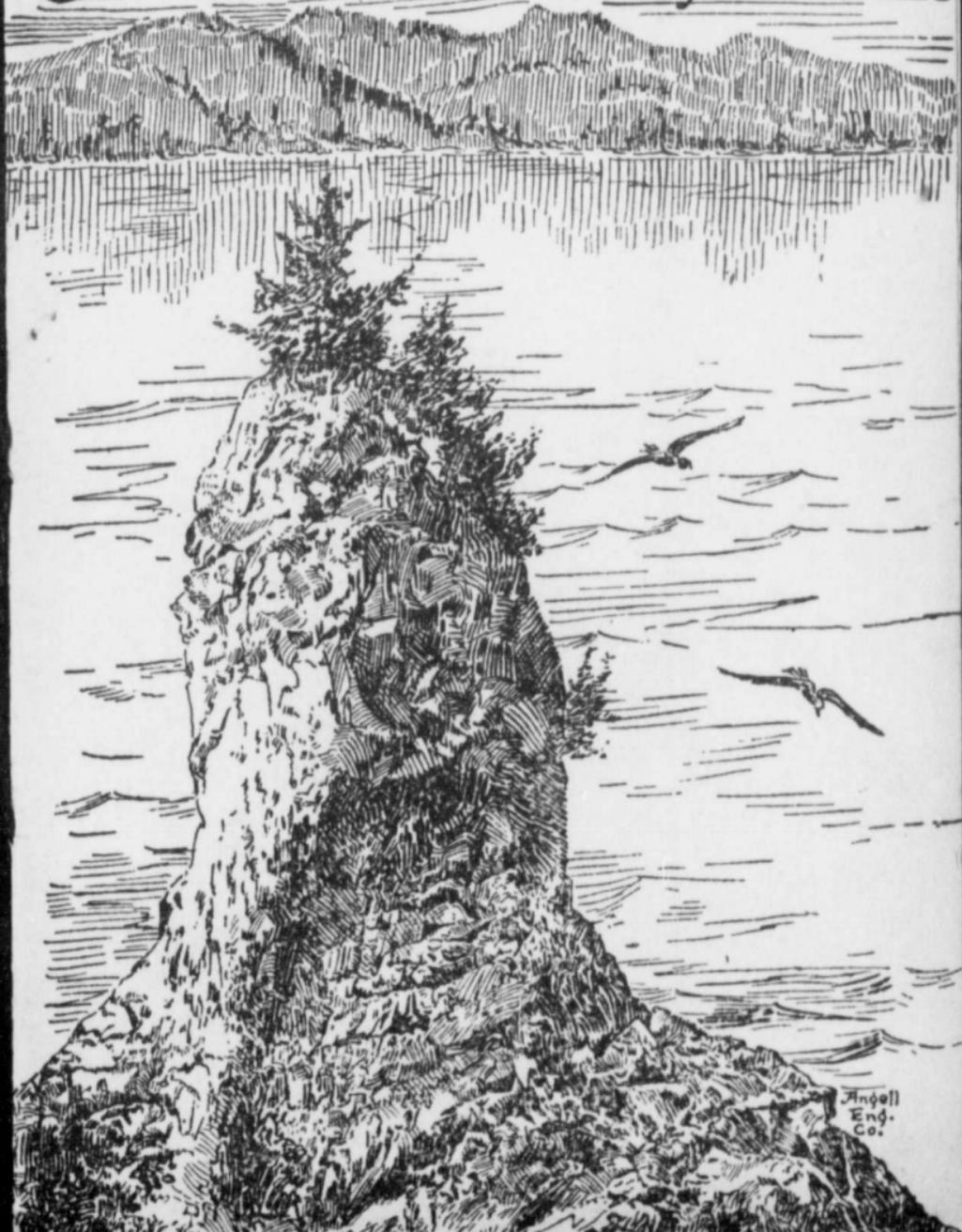
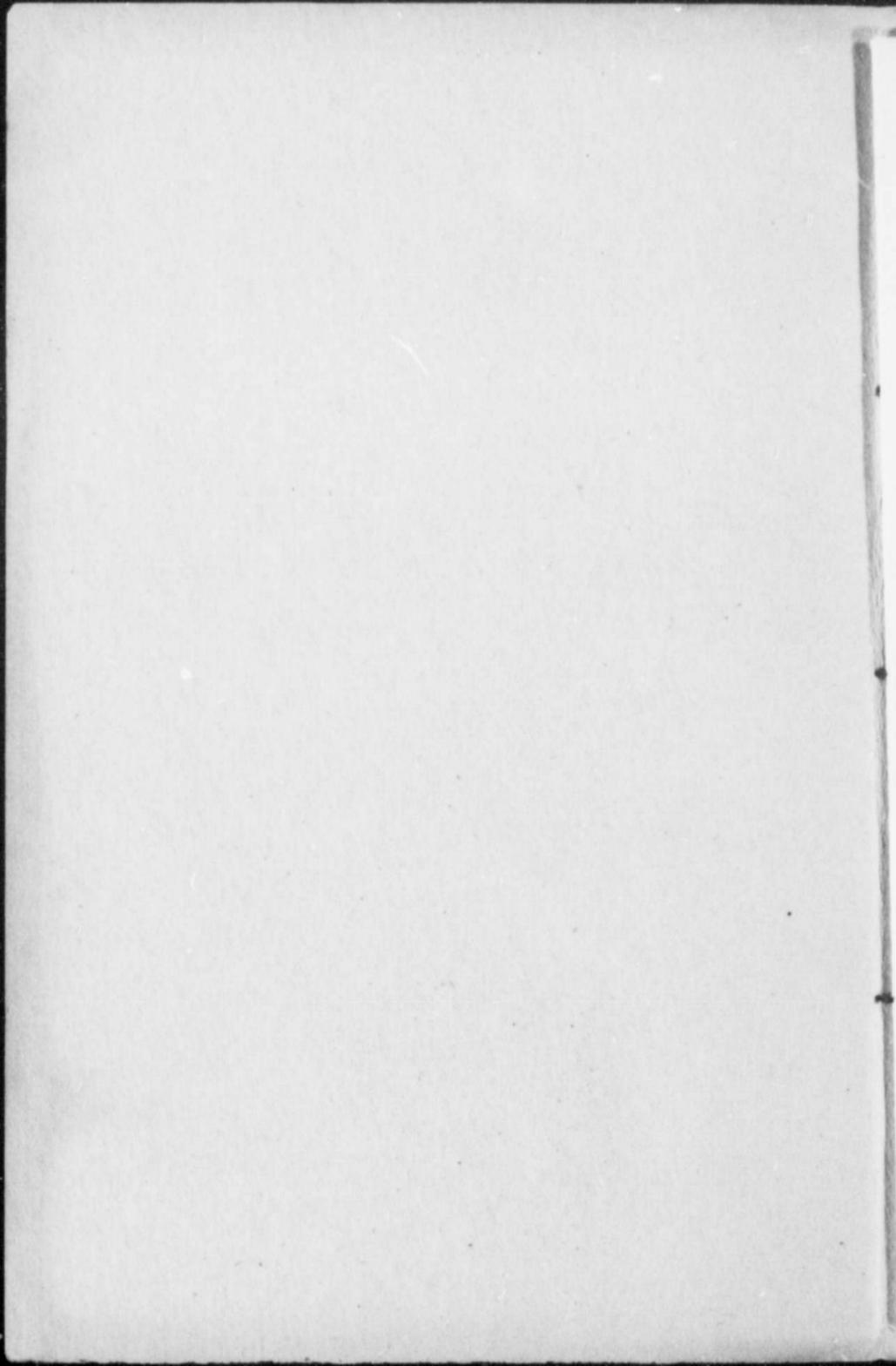


# Siwash Rock A Legend



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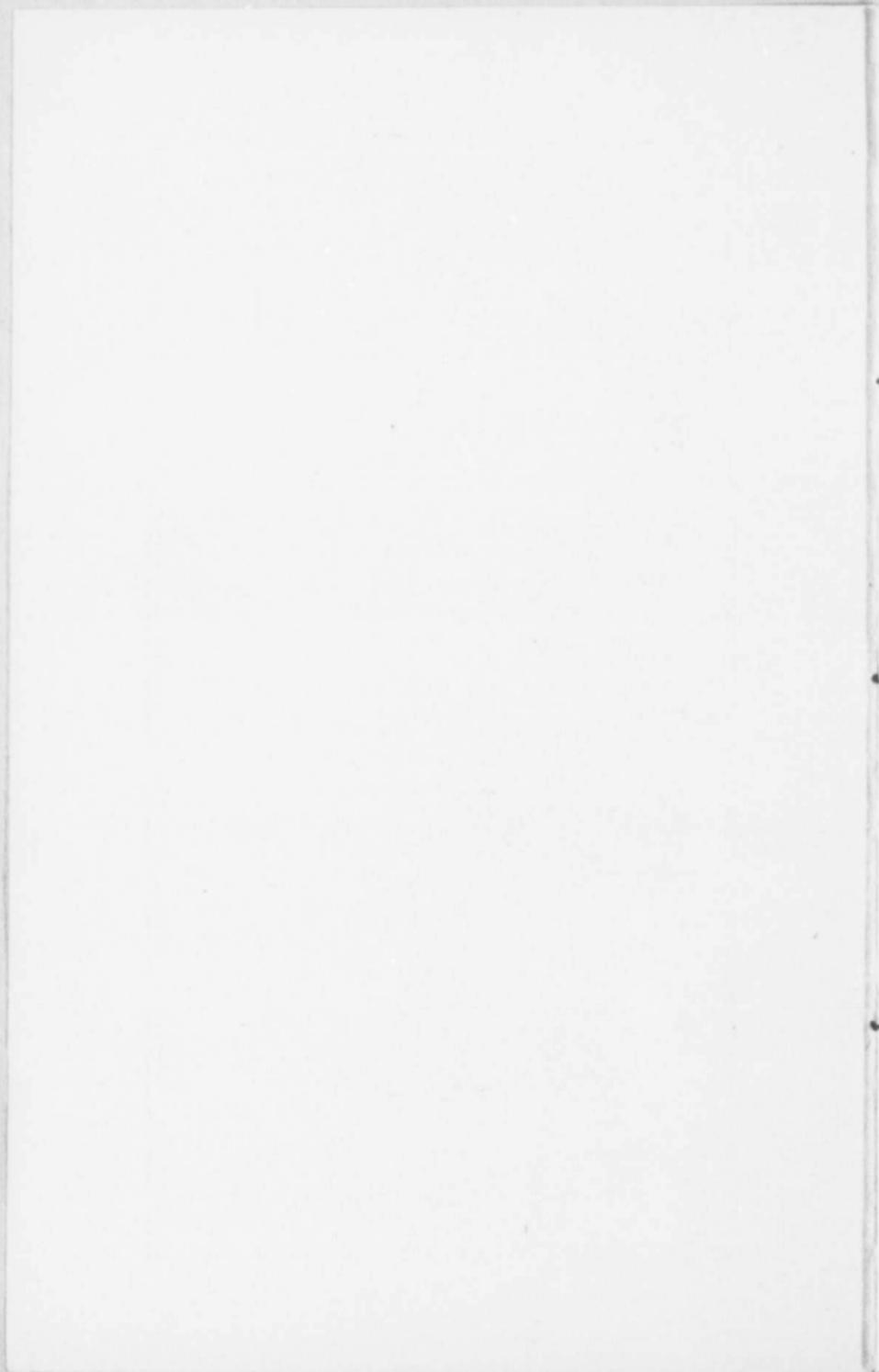
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Legend



Arthur James Smith





## Siwash Rock:

### A Legend.



VEN those who only occasionally visit Burrard Inlet, that magnificent harbor lying in front of the city of Vancouver, must have noticed at one time or other a curious detached piece of granite, separated from Stanley Park by a narrow, but dangerous stretch of water, and known as Siwash Rock. Standing out but a short distance from the mainland, it is still rendered extremely noticeable by its curious shape. Rising to a height of some seventy-five feet above the deep, swirling waters, its sides steep and bare, and its crest crowned by a single pine tree, it seems to frown down majestically upon the huge stones on the beach, and any visitor, who, bolder than the rest, ventures down from the surrounding cliffs to the sands below. On a fine day the tourist, standing on the mainland, can see far out across the boundless Pacific to the horizon. The two points of the capes that guard the outer harbor, like great horns, seem to offer their sharp front to any invader, and to effectually protect the inner waters. The sun, setting in a great glow after a summer's day, throws a mesh of gold over the outlying islands and harbor, and lends an indescribable enchantment to the whole scene. Now and then some ship, creeping in from the blue and golden ocean, casts a long smoke wreath across the sky, and darkens for a moment that wonderful golden mesh that the sun has thrown over everything, as

though to take the fairy scene with him into the mysterious realms of twilight.

¶ Long before any one ever thought of a city covering the slopes that surround the harbor, and when the deer and moose browsed there undisturbed, the Metlatas, a tribe from the north, paddled in their canoes around one of the great horns that shelter the harbor, and saw before them the grand inner waters. They had paddled many miles in search of suitable camping grounds until the arms of the young men were weary, and they longed for rest. Once among the most powerful tribes of the north lands, the Metlatas were now sadly depleted in ranks by war and sickness, and no longer able to defend their camps against the fierce raiders from the interior. Thus it was that they moved far to the south, and settled inside the harbor, where the seas were thrown back by the cape. There they built their huts, fished and hunted, and prospered for many seasons.

¶ Among the young men of the Metlatas, the chief's son, Quatlatka, was by far the greatest hunter, and the best at all manly sports. In friendly competition with the men from the Capilanos, who lived near the wide mountain stream near by, Quatlatka was always first. Soon his fame spread around the neighboring tribes, and many sought to excel him, but without success.

¶ It chanced that Quatlatka loved, as only one of his noble nature could love, Miwasa, the daughter of

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A LEGEND

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Watlichin, chief of the Capilanos, and a maiden whose beauty had set on fire the hearts of many of the bravest men in all the tribes. Each night Quatlatka would brave the dangers of the tides that rush through the narrow entrance to the harbor to meet Miwasa on the shore by the river. There, hidden securely from her father's tribe, he would woo her while the moon peeped from behind the towering mountains behind them, and made long white paths across the dark waters. He told of his love while the river murmured in their ears, and its waters hurried from the dark shadows of the gloomy forest out into the bright moonlight, gurgling as though joyful of its escape from the mountain fastness, and the terrors of the pathless wilds.

¶ Time passed, and still Quatlatka paddled by night to meet Miwasa. Watlichin, father of Miwasa, had long ago refused to allow the young chief to carry off his daughter to his dwelling. Miwasa, he said, had been promised to the chief of a powerful tribe, whom he feared to offend. But for that he would gladly have given the flower of the Capilanos to such a renowned young warrior as Quatlatka.

¶ To any one but Quatlatka the answer might have been sufficient, and to a less devoted maiden than Miwasa separation from her lover might have been possible, but without each other the young couple had no desire to live. So one night, while they strolled together on the sands, and the millions of beautiful

pebbles at the water's edge reflected many colors in the moonlight, Quatlatka proposed a plan so daring, even for him, that Miwasa gazed at him in surprise. But, as she listened to her lover, her lovely eyes lit up with enthusiasm, and he, looking tenderly down into them, read her consent there. To such proud spirits as the lovers' the restriction that was placed upon their love seemed only to fan its glowing furnace.

¶ Thus it happened that Quatlatka, son of a chief who was once mighty in the land, asked Miwasa, daughter of a powerful ruler, to leave her father's tribe, and go with him where chance might take them, in search of happiness. In some place, the daring warrior whispered to her, they could live together and love, whether Watlichin looked upon them with favor or not. Somewhere they could be happy, with the birds singing for them alone, and every voice of nature echoing their love. Then, with their hearts beating quickly in their bosoms, the lovers made their way hand in hand to the canoe, bound for the land of their fancy, which their devotion painted in the brightest colors.

¶ By his lonely fire old Watlichin brooded late that night. Several times he rose and walked impatiently to the door of his hut. Miwasa, the light of his old age, had departed an hour since, and as yet her light footstep and merry voice had not fallen upon his ears. The chief had long ago suspected his daughter's secret meetings with her lover. Had not he won his

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A LEGEND
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own bride, Miwasa's mother, in that manner, after her stern father had listened to his words with scorn? But she had died many years ago, and as Watlichin thought of her he determined more than ever to keep Miwasa by his side to comfort his failing years.

¶ Even as he brooded over the thought it struck his mind that Miwasa might even now be keeping her vigil with Quatlatka, and might have yielded to his pleadings to leave her father's fireside, and journey far beyond his reach. Watlichin bounded to his feet, as he did in days of his youth, when he led his tribe to battle, and, calling many of the young men to his side, rushed to the canoes. In a few moments two huge craft, full of armed warriors, were out on the dark waters, and Watlichin looked eagerly for signs of the truant lovers. There, some distance ahead of them, a canoe, with two in it, was dancing rapidly across a patch of water made light as day by the moon, and, as the old chief recognized his daughter and her lover even at that distance, he shouted savagely to his warriors. The war canoes fairly flew over the waters in pursuit of the fugitives, and Quatlatka, glancing behind, saw that they would be caught before they could make their escape in the open. Less than half a mile in front of him, the great mass of granite, now known as Siwash Rock, loomed out of the water, its bulk, magnified in the darkness, seeming to offer a sheltering haven. Quatlatka knew it well, he alone being able to climb to its summit, and for its sheltering sides he paddled desper-

ately. Once on its lofty top he could defy pursuit and perhaps force Watlichin to some agreement.

¶ But the war canoes, propelled by the strong arms of the lusty warriors, were gaining rapidly, and, when the lovers reached the base of the rock, they were close behind. Quatlatka, undaunted, sprang from the canoe, and assisted Miwasa to the rock. Once, while dreaming of capturing Miwasa, he had prepared a ladder of stout leathern thongs, and up this he now urged the girl. As she reached the top, Watlichin's canoes rounded the corner of the rock, and Quatlatka started up the ladder. But he was too late. Watlichin, with hatred and vengeance in his heart, stood up in his canoe and hurled a spear at the unfortunate young lover. It struck between his shoulders, passing through his body until the point rang against the rock. Quatlatka, shouting Miwasa's name for the last time, fell headlong into the water.

¶ From her station on the rock Miwasa saw her lover killed. Then, as Watlichin and his followers watched, terrified and powerless, she poised for an instant on the edge of the rock, and threw herself to the water below. As she fell, her wild, sweet cry, calling Quatlatka's name, fluted far across the water, and mingled with Watlichin's shriek of horror. Then the swirling eddies swallowed her form, and the men of her tribe saw her no more.

¶ This all took place long before the memory of the oldest man or woman in the scattered remnants of the

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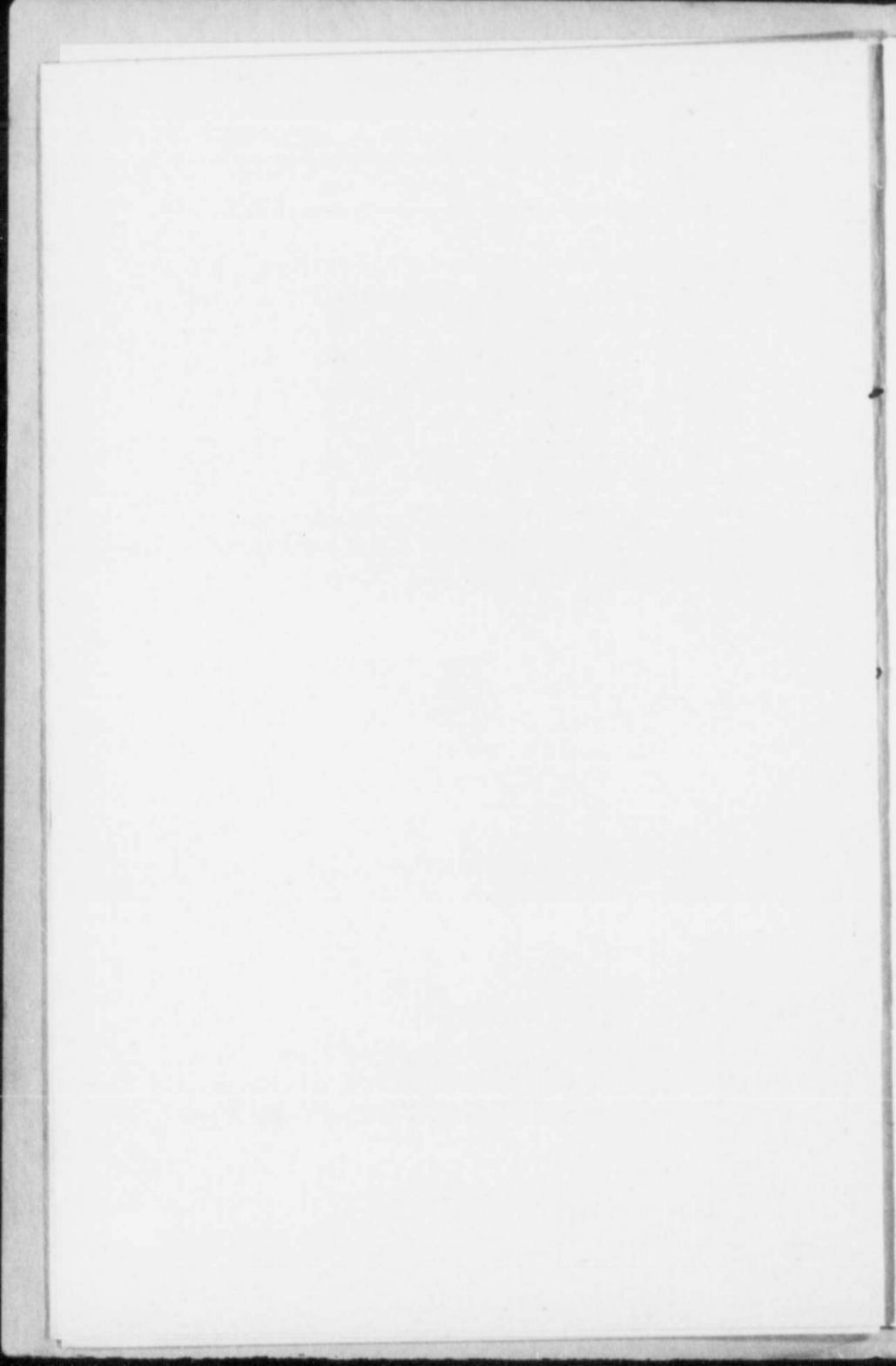
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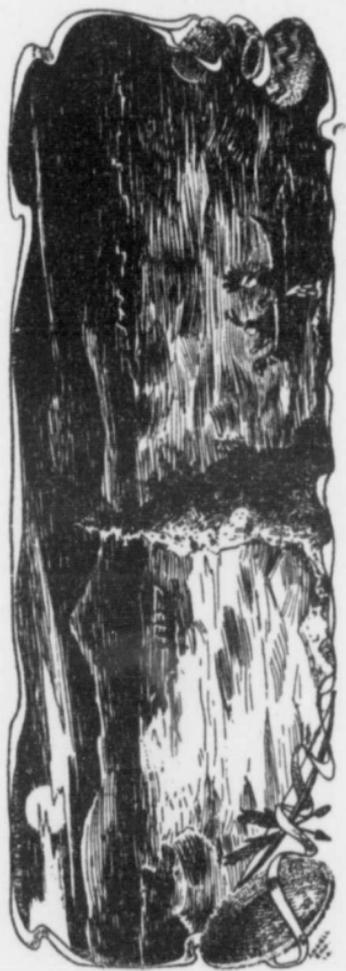
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tribes, generations ago, according to tradition. But, on certain nights, when the moon lights up great patches of the water, Miwasa's last cry can be heard as plainly, the Indians say, as when she leaped from the great rock to join in death the lover whom she was not to have in life. Like the mournful cry of some sweet-throated bird its full tone rises high and clear, seeming to hush all sound to listen. Then it dies away, and nothing is heard save the lapping of the cold water on the rocky beach, and the wind sobbing in the trees as it grieves for poor Miwasa.







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