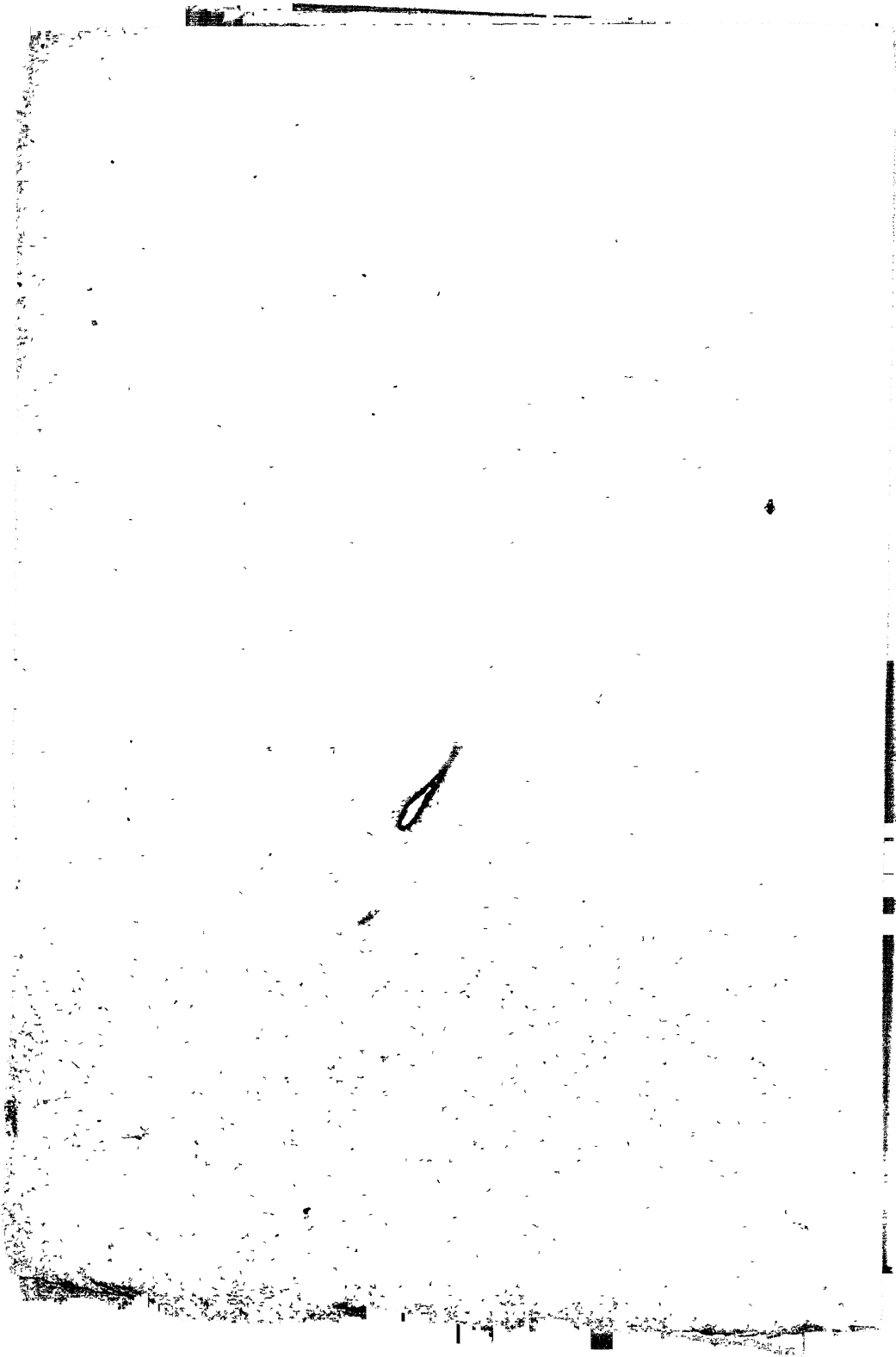


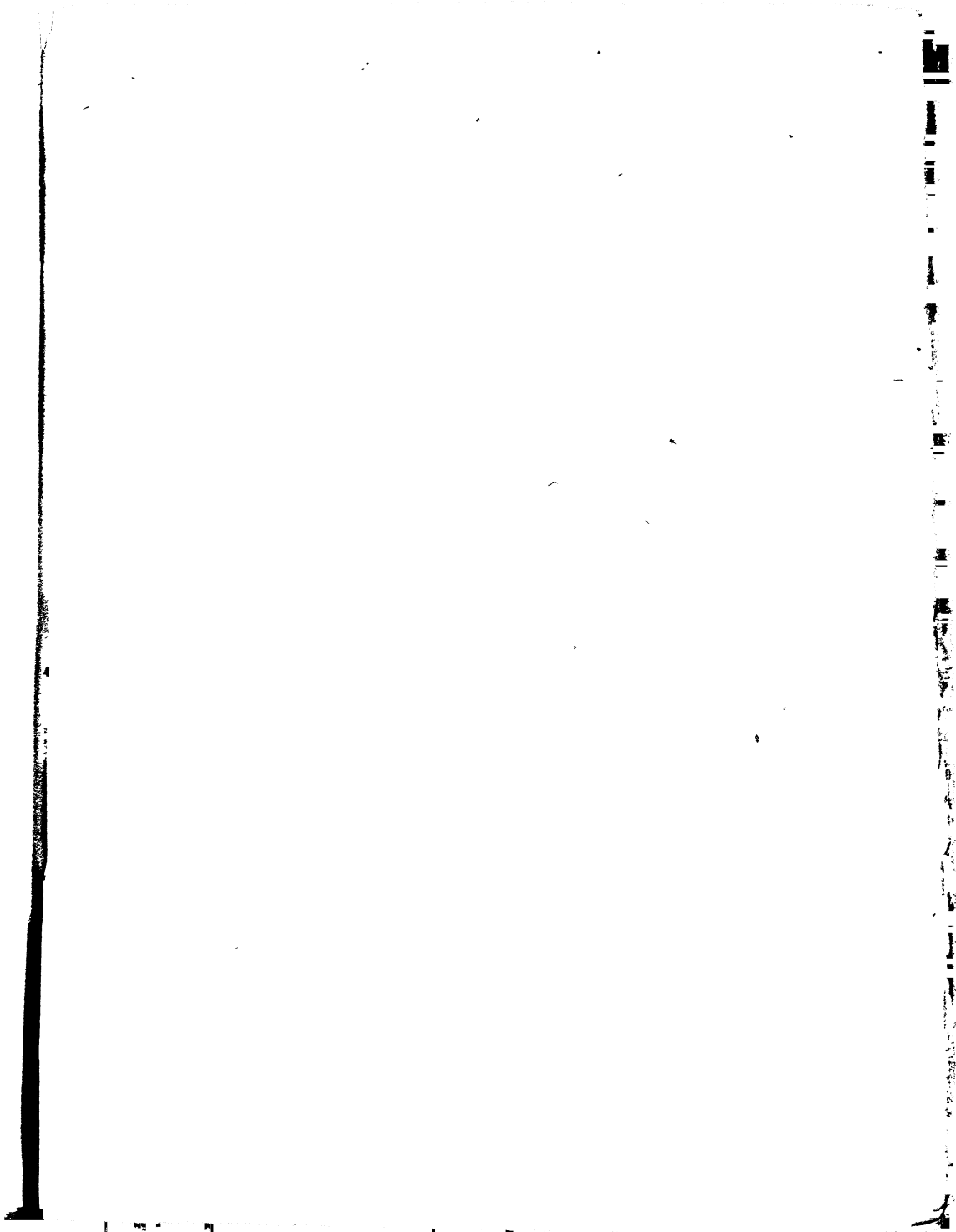
IN MEMORABILIA MORTIS

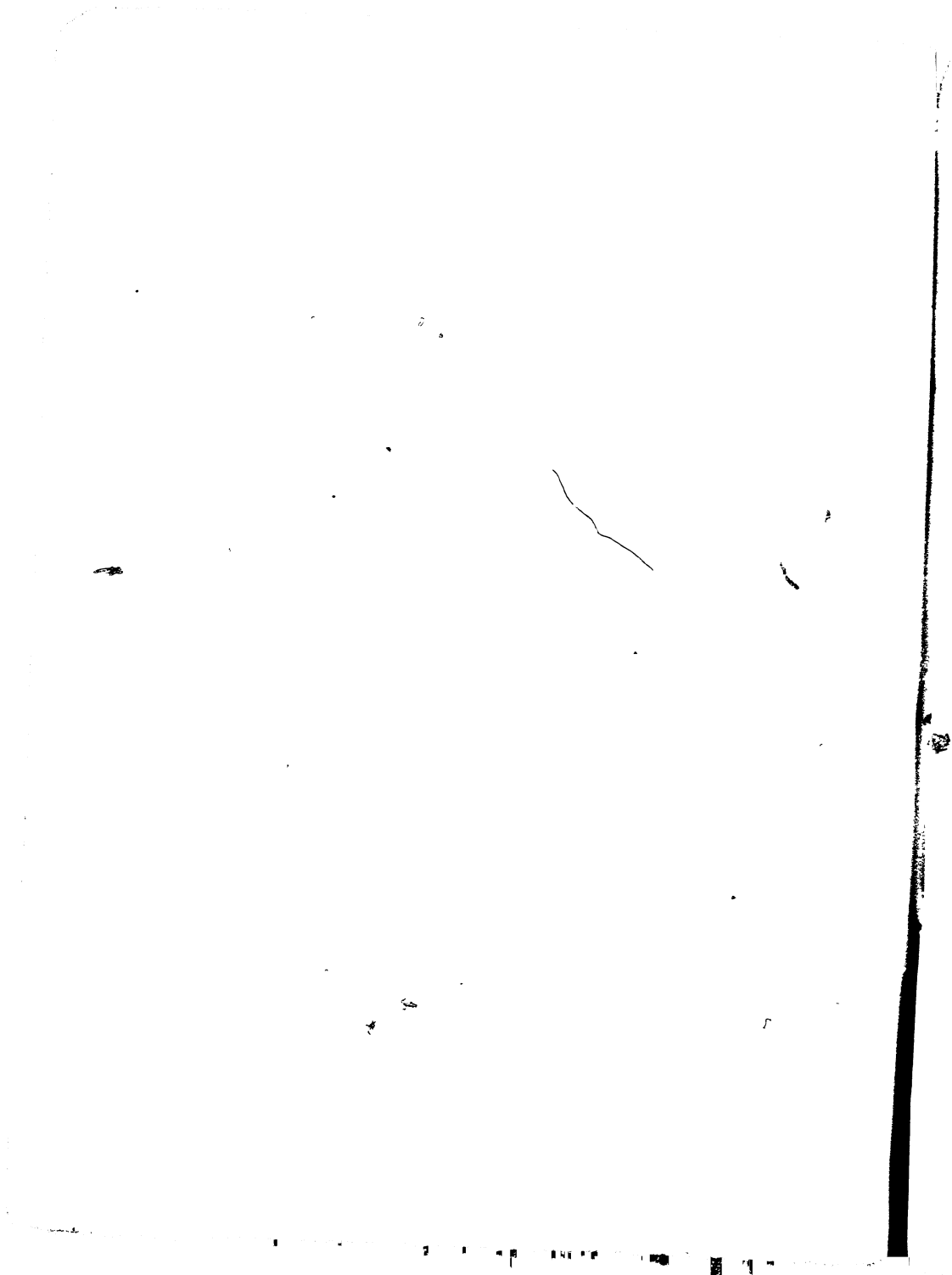




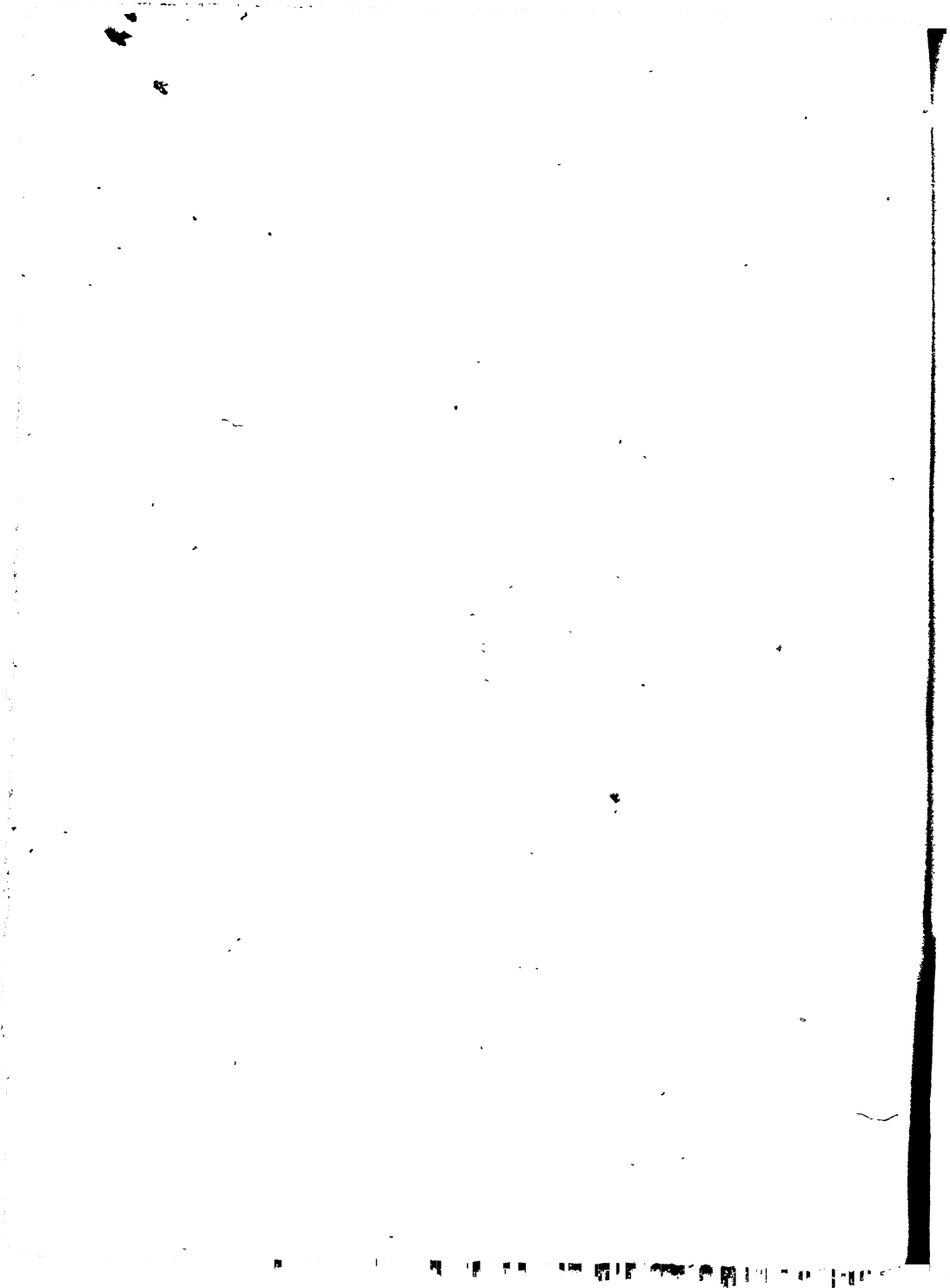
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IN MEMORABILIA MORTIS



IN MEMORABILIA MORTIS
BY FRANCIS SHERMAN



M DCCC XCVI

**“BUT YE—SHALL I BEHOLD YOU
WHEN LEAVES FALL,
IN SOME SAD EVENING OF THE
AUTUMN-TIDE?”**





IN MEMORABILIA MORTIS

I



MARKED the slow
withdrawal of the year.
Out on the hills the
scarlet maples
shone—

The glad, first herald
of triumphant dawn.
A robin's song fell
through the silence—
clear

As long ago it rang
when June was here.

Then, suddenly, a few grey clouds were drawn
Across the sky; and all the song was gone,
And all the gold was quick to disappear.
That day the sun seemed loth to come again;
And all day long the low wind spoke of rain,
Far off, beyond the hills; and moaned, like one
Wounded, among the pines: as though the Earth,
Knowing some giant grief had come to birth,
Had wearied of the Summer and the Sun.

II



WATCHED the slow
oncoming of the Fall.
Slowly the leaves fell from
the elms, and lay
Along the roadside; and the
wind's strange way
Was their way, when they
heard the wind's far call.
The crimson vines that
clung along the wall

Grew thin as snow that lives on into May;
Grey dawn, grey noon,—all things and hours
were grey,
When quietly the darkness covered all.
And while no sunset flamed across the west,
And no great moon rose where the hills were low,
The day passed out as if it had not been:
And so it seemed the year sank to its rest,
Remembering naught, desiring naught,—as though
Early in Spring its young leaves were not green.

III



LITTLE while before the
Fall was done
A day came when the frail
year paused and said:
"Behold! a little while and
I am dead;
Wilt thou not choose, of all
the old dreams, one?"
Then dwelt I in a garden,
where the sun

Shone always, and the roses all were red;
Far off, the great sea slept, and overhead,
Among the robins, matins had begun.
And I knew not at all it was a dream
Only, and that the year was near its close;
Garden and sunshine, robin-song and rose,
The half-heard murmur and the distant gleam
Of all the unvext sea, a little space
Were as a mist above the Autumn's face.

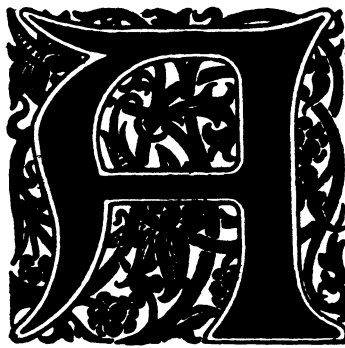
IV



AND in this garden sloping
to the sea
I dwelt (it seemed) to watch
a pageant pass,—
Great Kings, their armour
strong with iron and brass,
Young Queens, with yellow
hair bound wonderfully.
For love's sake, and because
of love's decree,

Most went, I knew; and so the flowers and grass
Knew my steps also: yet I wept Alas,
Deeming the garden surely lost to me.
But as the days went over, and still our feet
Trod the warm, even places, I knew well
(For I, as they, followed the close-heard beat
Of Love's wide wings who was her sentinel)
That here had Beauty built her citadel
And only we should reach her mercy-seat.

V



AND Ye, are ye not with me
 now alway?—
 Thy raiment, Glauce, shall
 be my attire!
 East of the Sun I, too, seek
 my desire!
 My kisses, also, quicken
 the well-wrought clay!
 And thou, Alcestis, lest my
 little day

Be done, art glad to die! Upon my pyre,
 O Brynhild, let thine ashes feed the fire!
 And, O thou Wood Sun, pray for me, I pray!
 Yea, ye are mine! Yet there remaineth one
 Who maketh Summer-time of all the year,
 Whose glory darkeneth the very sun.
 For thee my sword was sharpened and my spear,
 For thee my least poor deed was dreamed and done,
 O Love, O Queen, O Golden Guenevere!

VI



WHEN, suddenly, I was
 awake. Dead things
 Were all about me and the
 year was dead.
 Save where the birches
 grew, all leaves were shed
 And nowhere fell the sound
 of song or wings.
 The fields I deemed were
 graves of worshipped Kings
 Had lost their bloom : no honey-bee now fed
 Therein, and no white daisy bowed its head
 To harken to the wind's love-murmurings.
 Yet, by my dream, I know henceforth for me
 This time of year shall hold some unknown grace
 When the leaves fall, and shall be sanctified :
 As April only comes for memory
 Of him who kissed the veil from Beauty's face
 That we might see, and passed at Easter-tide.

THESE six sonnets **IN MEMORABILIA**
MORTIS, written at Fredericton, New
Brunswick, on the third day of October,
MDCCCXCVI, by Francis Sherman, are privately
printed at the University Press, in Cambridge,
Massachusetts, early in December of the same
year

