

**A HANDFUL OF STARS;
TEXTS THAT HAVE
MOVED GREAT MINDS**

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A handful of stars; texts that have moved great minds by F. W. Boreham

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F. W. BOREHAM

**A HANDFUL OF STARS;
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MOVED GREAT MINDS**

OTHER BOOKS BY MR. BOREHAM

A BUNCH OF EVERLASTINGS
THE HOME OF THE ECHOES
A REEL OF RAINBOW
THE UTTERMOST STAR
THE SILVER SHADOW
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL
FACES IN THE FIRE
MUSHROOMS ON THE MOOR
THE GOLDEN MILESTONE
MOUNTAINS IN THE MIST
THE LUGGAGE OF LIFE, ETC.

A HANDFUL OF STARS

TEXTS THAT HAVE MOVED GREAT MINDS

BY
F. W. BOREHAM



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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

IT is not good that a book should be alone: this is a companion volume to A BUNCH OF EVER-LASTINGS. 'O God,' cried Caliban from the abyss,

O God, if you wish for our love,
Fling us a *handful of stars!*

The Height evidently accepted the challenge of the Depth. Heaven hungered for the love of Earth, and so the stars were thrown. I have gathered up a few, and, like children with their beads and berries, have threaded them upon this string. It will be seen that they do not all belong to the same constellation. Most of them shed their luster over the stern realities of life: a few glittered in the firmament of fiction. It matters little. A great romance is a portrait of humanity, painted by a master-hand. When the novelist employs the majestic words of revelation to transfigure the lives of his characters, he does so because, in actual experience, he finds those selfsame words indelibly engraven upon the souls of men. And, after all, *Sydney Carton's Text* is really *Charles Dickens' Text*; *Robinson Crusoe's Text* is *Daniel Defoe's Text*; the text that stands embedded in the pathos of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the

text that Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe had enthroned within her heart. Moreover, to whatever group these splendid orbs belong, their deathless radiance has been derived, in every case, from the perennial Fountain of all Beauty and Brightness.

FRANK W. BOREHAM.

ARMADALE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

I

WILLIAM PENN'S TEXT

I

THE Algonquin chiefs are gathered in solemn conclave. They make a wild and striking and picturesque group. They are assembled under the wide-spreading branches of a giant elm, not far from the banks of the Delaware. It is easy to see that something altogether unusual is afoot. Ranging themselves in the form of a crescent, these men of scarred limbs and fierce visage fasten their eyes curiously upon a white man who, standing against the bole of the elm, comes to them as white man never came before. He is a young man of about eight and thirty, wearing about his lithe and well-knit figure a sash of skyblue silk. He is tall, handsome and of commanding presence. His movements are easy, agile and athletic; his manner is courtly, graceful and pleasing; his voice, whilst deep and firm, is soft and agreeable; his face inspires instant confidence. He has large lustrous eyes which seem to corroborate and confirm every word that falls from his lips. These tattooed warriors read him through and through, as they have trained themselves to do, and they feel that they can trust

him. In his hand he holds a roll of parchment. For this young man in the skyblue sash is William Penn. He is making his famous treaty with the Indians. It is one of the most remarkable instruments ever completed. 'It is the only treaty,' Voltaire declares, 'that was ever made without an oath, and the only treaty that never was broken.' By means of this treaty with the Indians, William Penn is beginning to realize the greatest aspiration of his life. For William Penn has set his heart on being the Conqueror of the World!

II

Strangely enough, it was a Quaker who fired the young man's fancy with this proud ambition. Thomas Loe was William Penn's good angel. There seemed to be no reason why their paths should cross, yet their paths were always crossing. A subtle and inexplicable magnetism drew them together. Penn's father—Sir William Penn—was an admiral, owning an estate in Ireland. When William was but a small boy, Thomas Loe visited Cork. The coming of the Quaker caused a mild sensation; nobody knew what to make of it. Moved largely by curiosity, the admiral invited the quaint preacher to visit him. He did so, and, before leaving, addressed the assembled household. William was too young to understand, but he was startled when, in the midst of the address, a colored servant wept aloud. The boy turned in his astonishment to his