

THE FEATHER

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The feather by Ford H. Madox Hueffer

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FORD H. MADDOX HUEFFER

THE FEATHER

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THE FEATHER.

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"BUT THE EAGLE HAD THE BEST OF IT
AFTER ALL."



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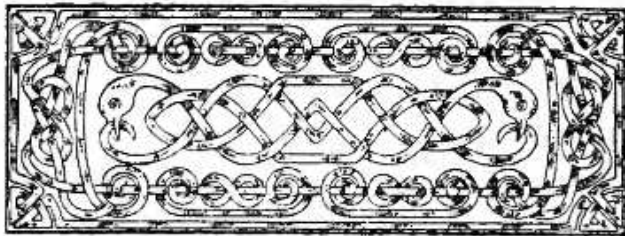
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1892

MAIN

TO JULIET

*' True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is as thin of substance as the air.'*



THE FEATHER

ONCE upon a time there was a King who reigned over a country as yet, for a reason you may learn later on, undiscovered—a most lovely country, full of green dales and groves of oak, a land of dappled meadows and sweet rivers, a green cup in a circlet of mountains, in whose shadow the grass was greenest ; and the only road to enter the country lay up steep, boiling waterfalls, and thereafter through rugged passes, the channels that the rivers had cut for themselves. Therefore, as you may imagine, the dwellers in the land were

little troubled by inroads of hostile nations ; and they lived peaceful lives, managing their own affairs, and troubling little about the rest of the world.

Now this King, like many kings before and after him, had a daughter who, while very young, had, I am sorry to say, been very self-willed ; and the King, on the death of his wife, finding himself utterly unable to manage the Princess, handed her over to the care of an aged nurse, who, however, was not much more successful—but that is neither here nor there.

For years everything went on smoothly, and it seemed as if everything intended to go on smoothly until doomsday, in which case this history would probably never have been written. But one evening in summer the Princess and her nurse, who had by this time become less able than ever to manage her charge, sat on a terrace facing the west. The Princess had been amusing herself by