

**THE RENAISSANCE;  
STUDIES IN  
ART AND POETRY**

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The renaissance; studies in art and poetry by Walter Pater

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**WALTER PATER**

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BY

WALTER PATER

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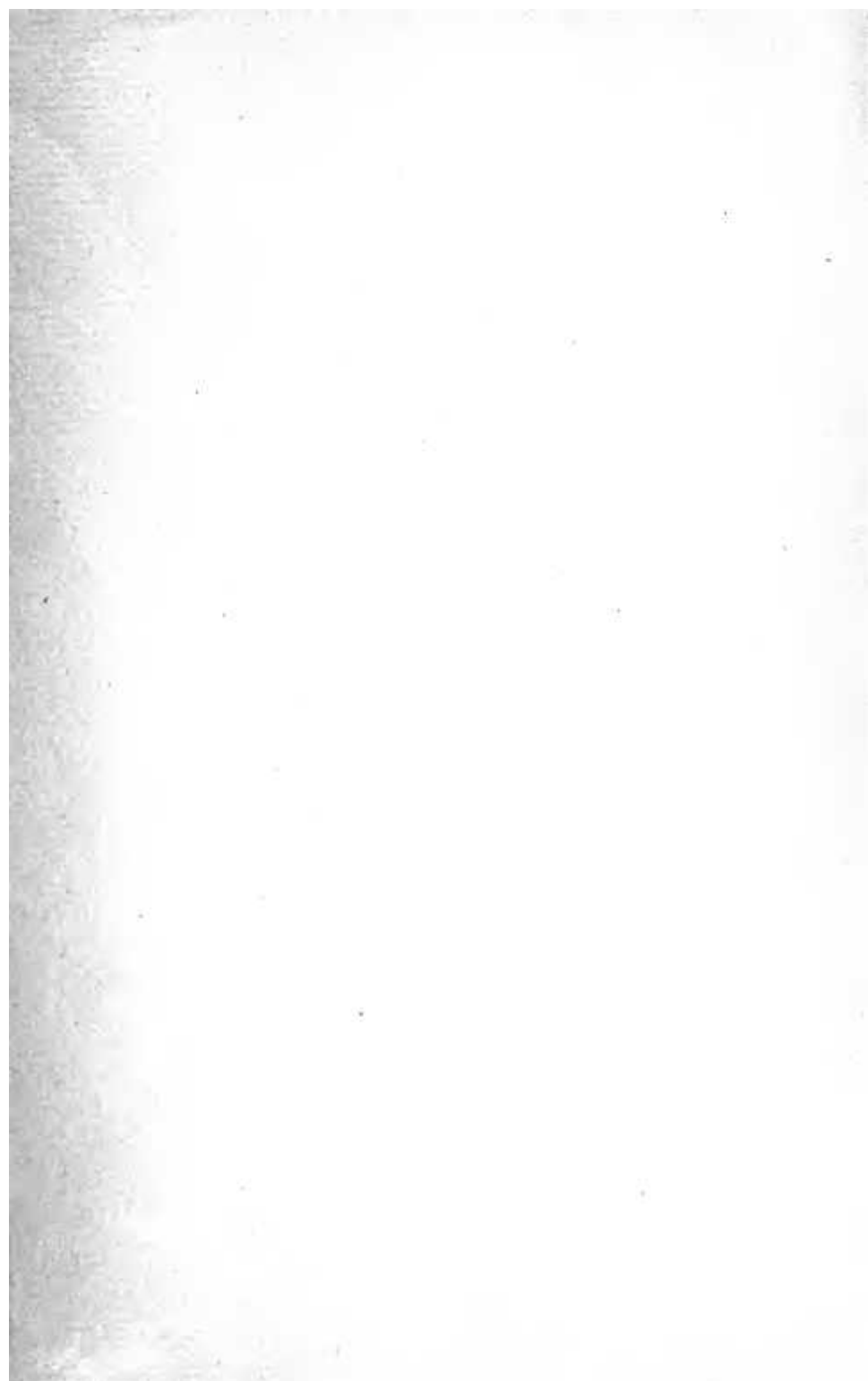
DEDICATION

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TO

C. L. S.

FEBRUARY 1873



## PREFACE

MANY attempts have been made by writers on art and poetry to define beauty in the abstract, to express it in the most general terms, to find some universal formula for it. The value of these attempts has most often been in the suggestive and penetrating things said by the way. Such discussions help us very little to enjoy what has been well done in art or poetry, to discriminate between what is more and what is less excellent in them, or to use words like beauty, excellence, art, poetry, with a more precise meaning than they would otherwise have. Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness. To define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find not its universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that