

**WANTED -
A CHAPERON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649209255

Wanted - a chaperon by Paul Leicester Ford

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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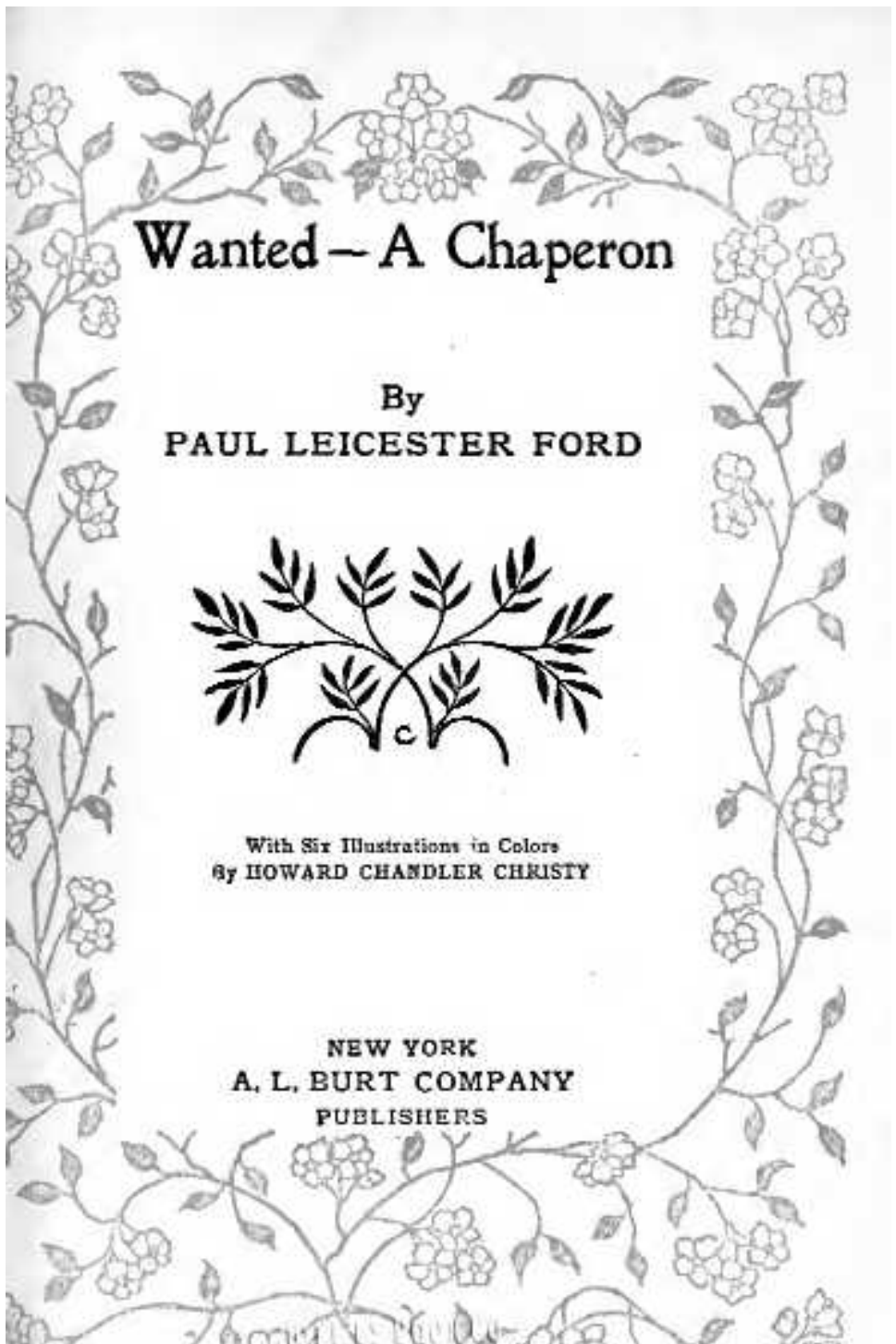
PAUL LEICESTER FORD

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A CHAPERON**



"Oh! must you, Auntie?" wailed Lydia.

—*Wanted—A Chaperon.*



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By
PAUL LEICESTER FORD



With Six Illustrations in Colors
By HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

NEW YORK
A. L. BURT COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

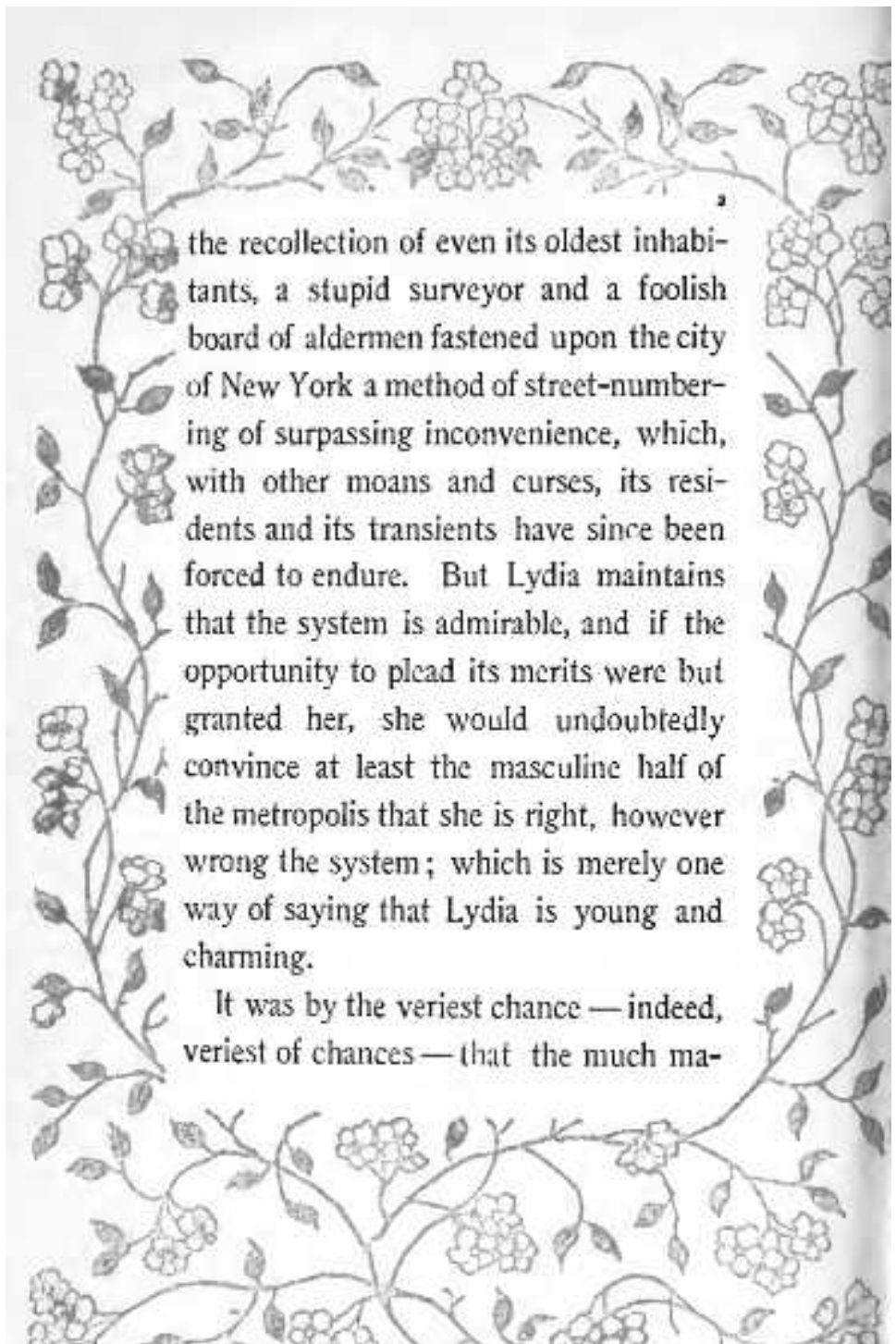
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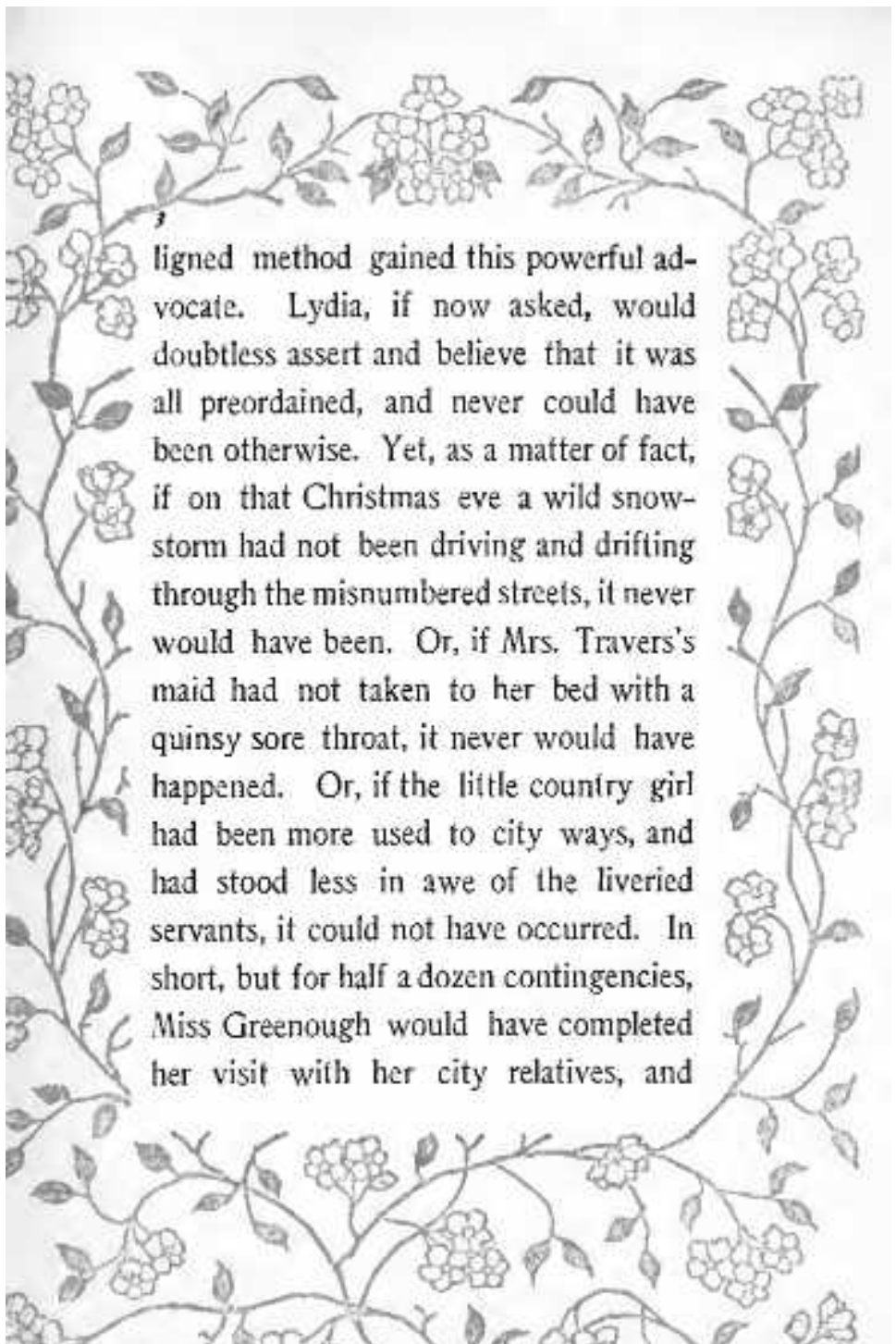
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OF all the millions who at one time or another have been compelled to burden their memories with any of the initials and figures used in naming the streets of New York, Lydia Greenough is probably the only mortal who thoroughly approves of the system. Question any one else as to its wherefore, and he or she, with either a moan or a curse (dependent, it is to be hoped, on the speaker's sex), would explain that, in a year now fading from

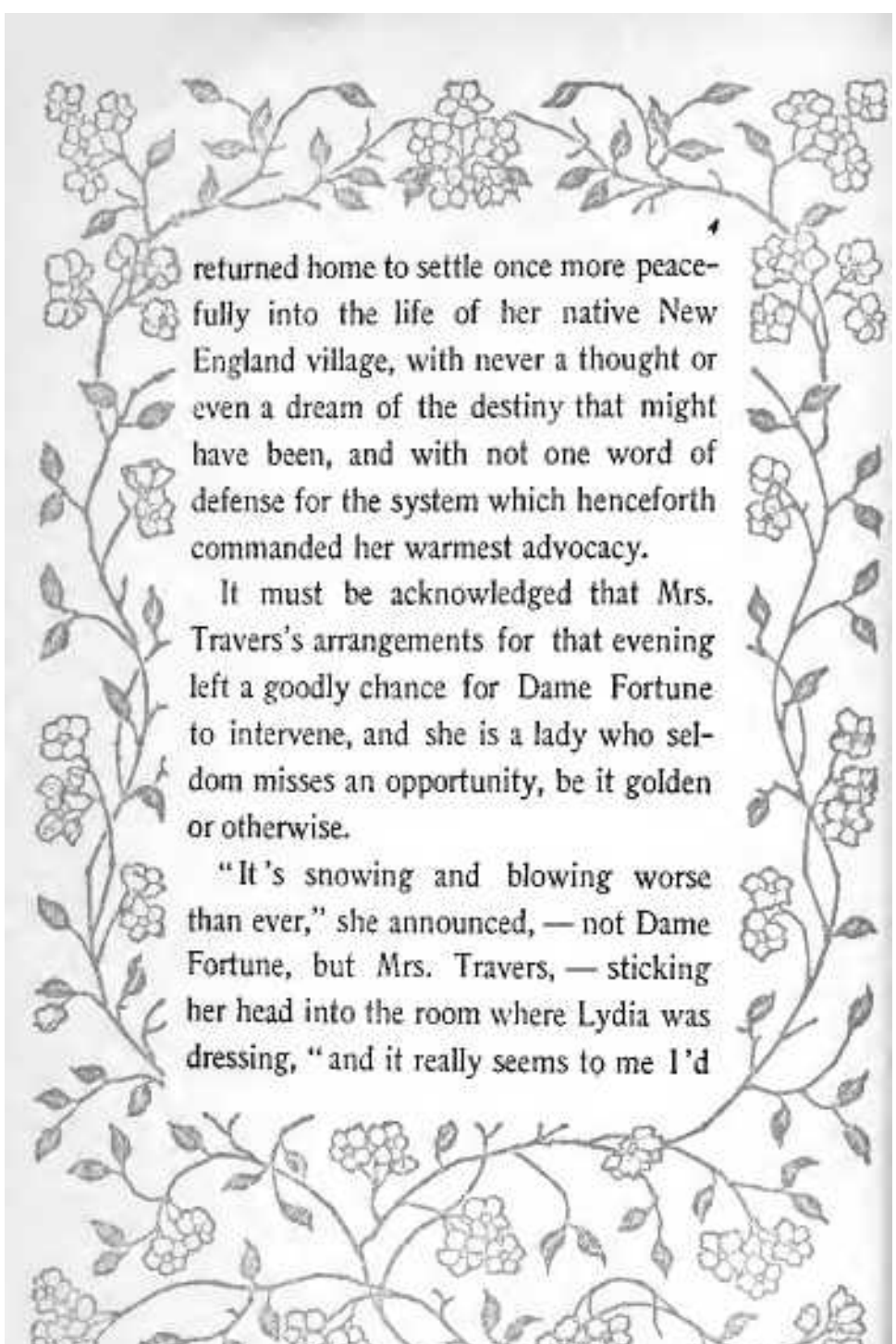


the recollection of even its oldest inhabitants, a stupid surveyor and a foolish board of aldermen fastened upon the city of New York a method of street-numbering of surpassing inconvenience, which, with other moans and curses, its residents and its transients have since been forced to endure. But Lydia maintains that the system is admirable, and if the opportunity to plead its merits were but granted her, she would undoubtedly convince at least the masculine half of the metropolis that she is right, however wrong the system; which is merely one way of saying that Lydia is young and charming.

It was by the veriest chance — indeed, veriest of chances — that the much ma-



signed method gained this powerful advocate. Lydia, if now asked, would doubtless assert and believe that it was all preordained, and never could have been otherwise. Yet, as a matter of fact, if on that Christmas eve a wild snow-storm had not been driving and drifting through the misnumbered streets, it never would have been. Or, if Mrs. Travers's maid had not taken to her bed with a quinsy sore throat, it never would have happened. Or, if the little country girl had been more used to city ways, and had stood less in awe of the liveried servants, it could not have occurred. In short, but for half a dozen contingencies, Miss Greenough would have completed her visit with her city relatives, and



returned home to settle once more peacefully into the life of her native New England village, with never a thought or even a dream of the destiny that might have been, and with not one word of defense for the system which henceforth commanded her warmest advocacy.

It must be acknowledged that Mrs. Travers's arrangements for that evening left a goodly chance for Dame Fortune to intervene, and she is a lady who seldom misses an opportunity, be it golden or otherwise.

"It's snowing and blowing worse than ever," she announced, — not Dame Fortune, but Mrs. Travers, — sticking her head into the room where Lydia was dressing, "and it really seems to me I'd