

**DREAM LIFE: A
FABLE OF
THE SEASONS**

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Dream Life: A Fable of the Seasons by Donald G. Mitchell

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DONALD G. MITCHELL

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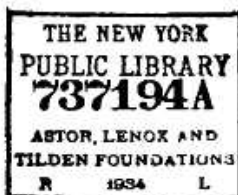
BY

DONALD G. MITCHELL.

— We are such stuff
As dreams are made of; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

TSARZZZ.

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INTRODUCTORY.

I.

With my Aunt Tabithy.

PSHAW!" said my Aunt Tabithy, "have you not done with dreaming?"

My Aunt Tabithy, though an excellent and most notable person, loves occasionally a quiet bit of satire. And when I told her that I was sharpening my pen for a new story of those dreamy fancies and half-experiences which lie grouped along the journeying hours of my solitary life, she smiled as if in derision.

—"Ah, Isaac," said she, "all that is exhausted; you have rung so many changes on your hopes and your dreams, that you have nothing left but to make them real — if you can."

It is very idle to get angry with a good-natured old lady. I did better than this, — I made her listen to me.

— Exhausted, do you say, Aunt Tabithy? Is life then exhausted; is hope gone out; is fancy dead?

No, no. Hope and the world are full; and he who

drags into book-pages a phase or two of the great life of passion, of endurance, of love, of sorrow, is but wetting a feather in the sea that breaks ceaselessly along the great shore of the years. Every man's heart is a living drama ; every death is a drop-scene ; every book only a faint foot-light to throw a little flicker on the stage.

There is no need of wandering widely to catch incident or adventure ; they are everywhere about us ; each day is a succession of escapes and joys, — not perhaps clear to the world, but brooding in our thought, and living in our brain. From the very first, Angels and Devils are busy with us, and we are struggling against them and for them.

No, no, Aunt Tabithy ; this life of musing does not exhaust so easily. It is like the springs on the farmland, that are fed with all the showers and the dews of the year, and that from the narrow fissures of the rock send up streams continually ; or it is like the deep well in the meadow, where one may see stars at noon when no stars are shining.

What is Reverie, and what are these Day-dreams, but fleecy cloud-drifts that float eternally, and eternally change shapes, upon the great over-arching sky of thought ? You may seize the strong outlines that the passion-breezes of to-day shall throw into their figures ; but to-morrow may breed a whirlwind that will chase

swift, gigantic shadows over the heaven of your thought, and change the whole landscape of your life.

Dream-land will never be exhausted, until we enter the land of dreams, and until, in "shuffling off this mortal coil," thought will become fact, and all facts will be only thought.

As it is, I can conceive no mood of mind more in keeping with what is to follow upon the grave, than those fancies which warp our frail hulks toward the ocean of the Infinite, and that so sublimate the realities of this being, that they seem to belong to that shadowy realm whither every day's journey is leading.

— It was warm weather, and my aunt was dozing. "What is this all to be about?" said she, recovering her knitting-needle.

"About love, and toil, and duty, and sorrow," said I.

My aunt laid down her knitting, looked at me over the rim of her spectacles, and — took snuff.

I said nothing.

"How many times have you been in love, Isaac?" said she.

It was now my turn to say, "Psbaw!"

Judging from her look of assurance, I could not possibly have made a more satisfactory reply.

My aunt finished the needle she was upon, smoothed the stocking-leg over her knee, and looking at me with a very comical expression, said, "Isaac, you are a sad fellow!"