

THE HERB-MOON: A FANTASIA

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The herb-moon: a fantasia by John Oliver Hobbes

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JOHN OLIVER HOBBS

**THE HERB-MOON:
A FANTASIA**

THE HERB-MOON.

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LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN.

THE HERB-MOON

A FANTASIA

BY

John Oliver Hobbes

AUTHOR OF

SOME EMOTIONS AND A MORAL

A STUDY IN TEMPTATIONS

THE SINNER'S COMEDY

A BUNDLE OF LIFE



SECOND EDITION

LONDON

T. FISHER UNWIN

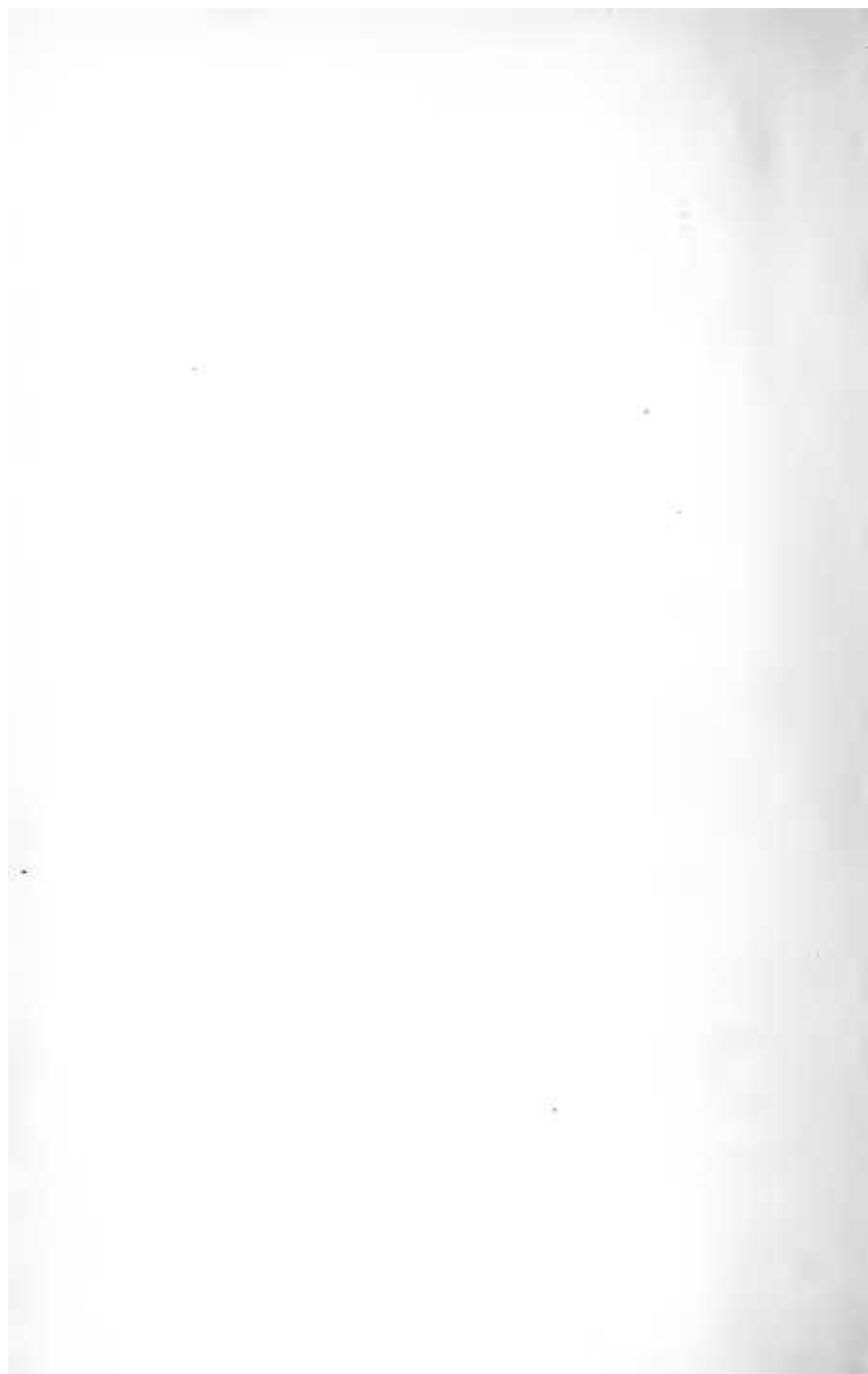
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THE HERB-MOON.

A FANTASIA.



CHAPTER I.

WHICH EXPLAINS A SITUATION.

MISS CRECY, the rich brewer's only daughter, threatened to walk if her ponies did not trot faster.

"Whip the little creatures," she told her coachman, "but do not hurt them!"

They ambled through long winding roads hedged with white-thorn and black-thorn; past wheat-fields, bean-fields, fields of barley; past wide stretches of meadow enamelled with buttercups and clover; past farmyards and little houses facing lawns; past inns and churches and the cemetery where *sheep's-parsley*—with its long green stems and white delicate flowers—waved

over the graves, almost as high as the headstones. There were windmills and many small cottages to be seen either near or in the distance ; and lanes, marked out by tall poplars or young elms, ash and maple. Overhead the sun shone out with a sleepy brilliance, and, grey clouds, like a swarm of fantastic pigeons, roamed, driven by the breeze, across the sky.

As the phaeton turned a sudden corner, Miss Crecy saw, some few yards ahead, a young man, walking. He was tall, with fine square shoulders and a resolute face.

“Can I give you a lift, Mr. Robsart?” said the lady when she reached him.

“Thanks,” he replied, and stepped in beside her.

Robsart was a clerk in a cotton factory, and hoped, in time, to occupy the post of overseer, formerly held by his father, now dead. The situation demanded good sense, patience, honesty, and every long virtue ; it belonged to that graceless order of responsibilities where the least mistake causes immense confusion, and the most scrupulous attention is accepted as a matter of course. Neither enthusiasm nor vanity had the smallest play in Robsart's life :