

A PROPHET OF JOY

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A prophet of joy by Gamaliel Bradford

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GAMALIEL BRADFORD

**A PROPHET OF
JOY**

A PROPHET OF JOY

BY
GAMALIEL BRADFORD



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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1920

“ Cette vie, l'ai-je vécue, l'ai-je rêvée ? ”

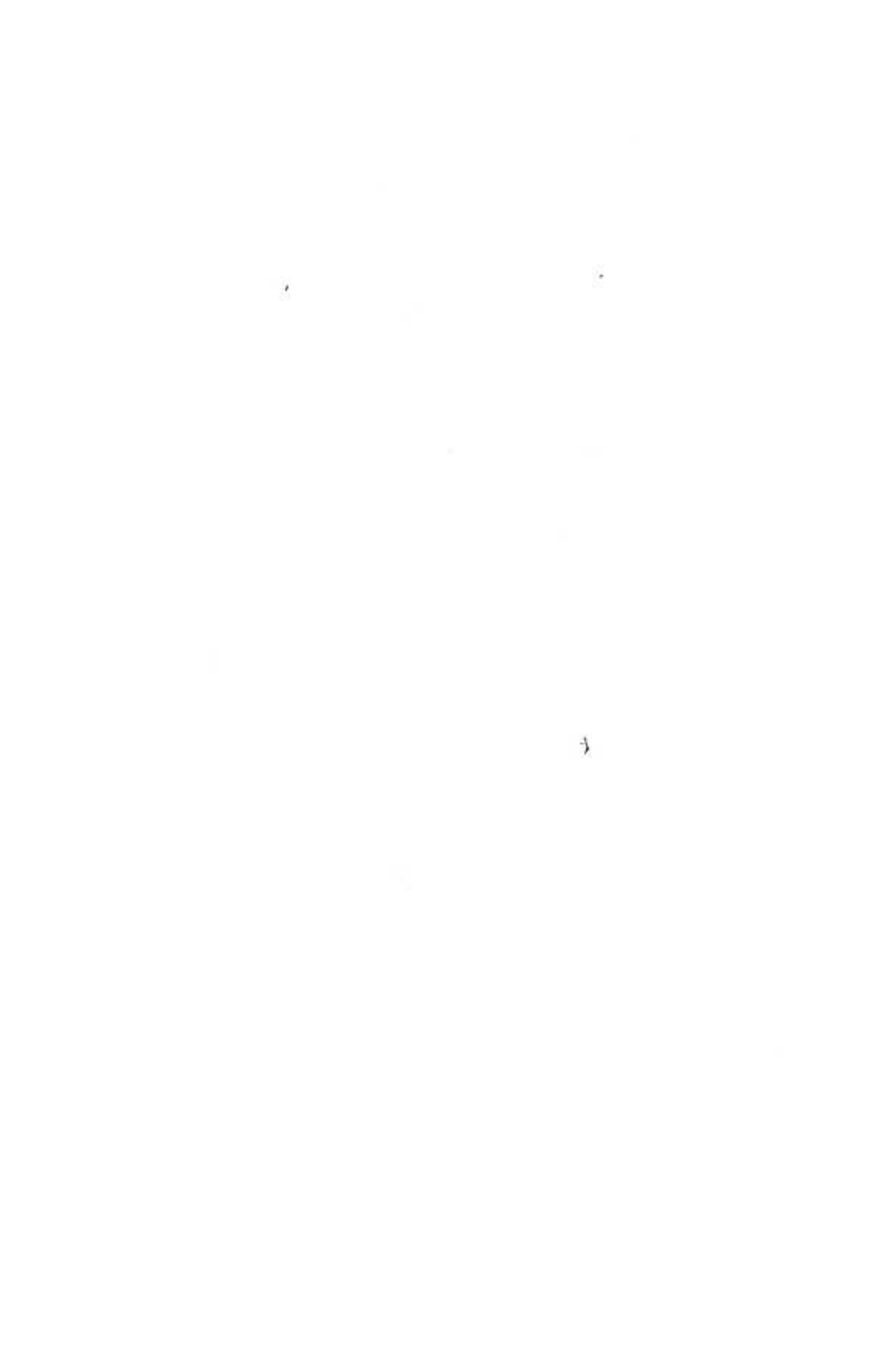
Singer of Yesterday.

“ Si la vie n'est qu'un rêve, il faut la rêver belle. ”

Singer of To-day.

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BOOK I

THEODORA

I

MISS THEODORA PERKINS was unwed
At thirty-five, yet delicately charming.
An idle and bewitching life she led,
And thought love's snares perhaps somewhat alarming.
In earlier days she had been city-bred,
Then bought a country place, and played at farming,
Had hens and cows, but did not milk, herself,
Nor touch the polished pans upon the shelf.

II

Her mother had been fair, her father wealthy.
She had the grace of one, the other's riches,
Was always merry, being always healthy,
Had maids to take all necessary stitches.
You wonder love, with his approaches stealthy
Had never touched her heart. Perhaps its niches
Were filled with dreams beyond his craft perfidious.
Surely she had the right to be fastidious.

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III

At any rate, single she was, and seemed
To the malicious even quite contented.
Her eyes were brown, and still with laughter gleamed,
Her hair was brown, and nothing yet invented
Could keep its curls in order, when they gleamed,
Like brooks in sunshine. Magdalen, repented,
Had not a rounder, more enchanting figure,
Although each year it grew a trifle bigger.

IV

A lady of laughter was she, all alone.
She laughed at pleasant thoughts and sunny fancies,
She laughed from cheerfulness when cause was none,
Also when others laughed. She went to dances
As long as sweet and twenty should have gone,
And after gravity made slow advances,
She danced with others' mirth, made merry by it,
Happy in company, content in quiet.

V

She had a charming house, which matched her heart,
A quaint old house as sunny as her laughter,
Full of rich, pleasant things in every part,
Supremely comfortable from sill to rafter :
Rugs, pictures, books, trifles of grace and art,
Tall clocks that gently ticked of the hereafter —
A sweet abode, and every object wore a
Suggestion of its mistress, Theodora.