

**THE DRAMA OF LIFE: A
SERIES OF REFLECTIONS
UPON SHAKESPEARE'S
"SEVEN AGES"**

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The drama of life: a series of reflections upon Shakespeare's "seven ages" by Thomas H. Mitchell

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THOMAS H. MITCHELL

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The Drama of Life

A Series of Reflections upon Shakespeare's
"Seven Ages"

By

THOS. H. MITCHELL, M.A., B.D.

With Introduction

by

MRS. NELLIE L. McCLUNG

*"And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages."*

"As You Like It," Act ii, Sc. 7.

THOMAS ALLEN

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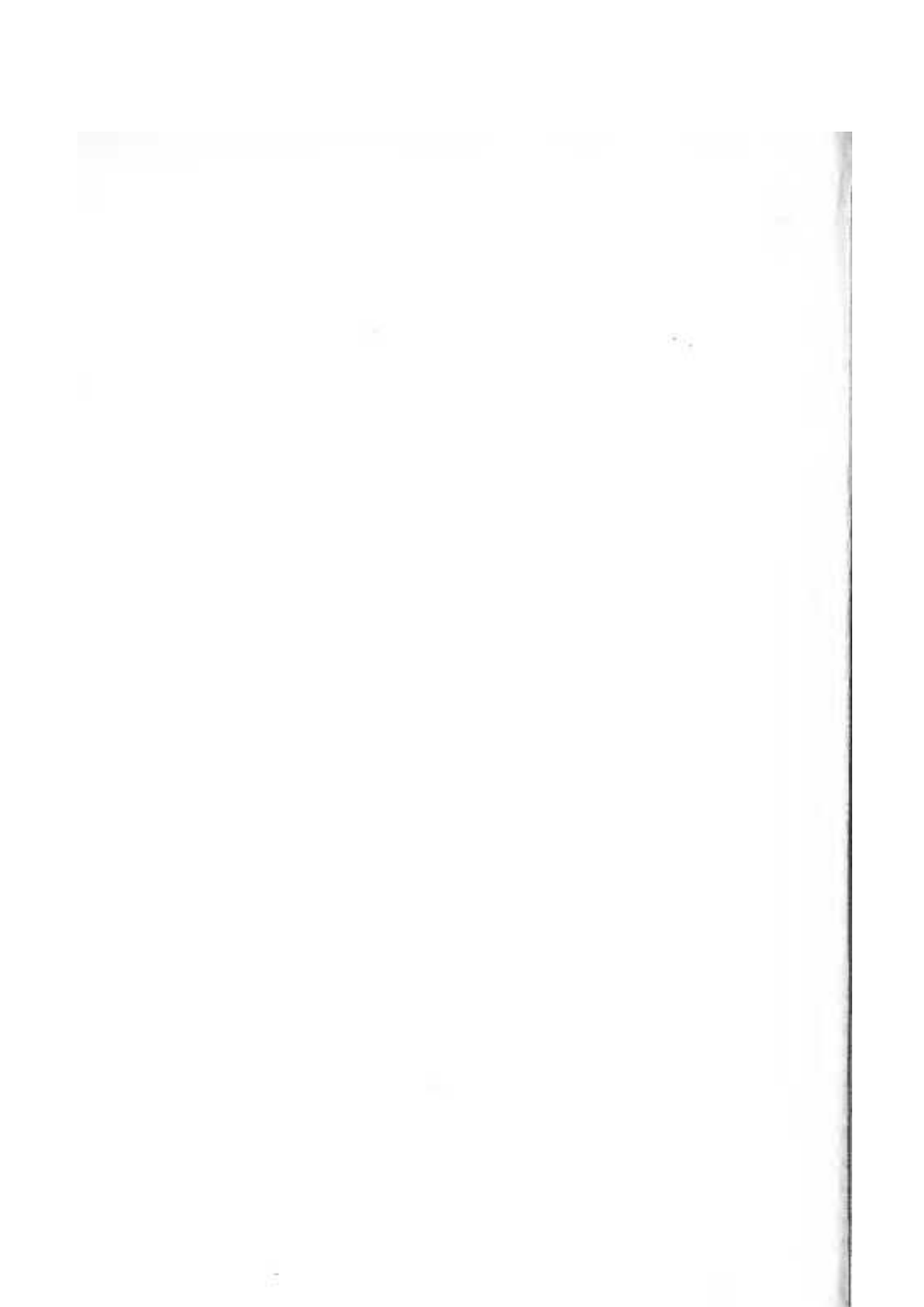
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AUG 26 1965

TO MY SISTER BELLA,

*In heartfelt gratitude for years of
companionship and helpfulness, this
little book is dedicated.*

*"There is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather,
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."*



Introduction

IN the west end of one of the western cities, on one of the finest streets, there stands a handsome church. Its lofty spire can be seen for miles. No money was spared in the building of it, for it was erected in the good days before the war when all had money, or thought they had, which is much the same. The brilliant Alberta sunshine comes in through windows of richest coloring. One of the best organs in the West pours its music on the waiting air. The oaken pews are rich in their solid brownness. The gallery has a graceful sweep. The lights are soft and shaded. The carpets are plushy to the feet. The whole structure is a delight to the eye.

For a considerable time, however, the hearts of the people who worshipped there were sorely burdened. Evil days had come upon the city which stands at the gateway of the last great North. The pipes of war had gone skirling through its streets and twelve thousand men had answered the call. Family circles had been broken. Chairs had been made vacant. The congregation had become weak. Thoughts of mortgages and of that hungry, insatiable thing called interest had so obsessed the hearts of the depleted

supporters that to the responsible officials had come the haunting question: Would it have been better if the grand church had not been built? To add to the depression the theatres were full, the golf links on Sunday mornings were crowded, and all summer long the trek to the lakes continued. Had religion lost its power? Had God failed to stand by?

In the summer of 1919 the author of these chapters visited friends in the Parish. He was requested to conduct the services for two or three weeks, and later was induced to remain as temporary supply. He was a stranger to the city and his coming, at first, aroused no enthusiasm. For a few Sundays the roads to the lakes were still black with cars, and the crowds on the golf links suffered no diminishing. Then people began to talk of the new minister, and of his sermons. Women told one another when they met at tea something he had said. His illustrations began to go around the golf course. The dentist told his patients. The man at the service-station told his patrons. It was an elevator boy who told me that I should hear the "new man," and the same day I received a letter from the East telling me not to miss him.

So it came about that a new day dawned for the big church. One Sunday the main auditorium was full, and the faithful rejoiced to behold the sight. Later the overflow went into the gallery,

and new ushers had to be appointed. Still later chairs were brought in from the school-room to accommodate the crowds. Finally that marvelous thing was seen at a church gathering—people standing all through the service, just as they do at a political meeting. I was one of those who listened to the addresses during that winter season. I tried to analyse them, and to discover why they drew us with such power. They flashed upon us with all the charm of a bed of red geraniums in the turn of a dusty road. They fell upon our ears as sweetly as the splashing of water in a burning desert. They comforted us as a wood-fire on a raw November night. And when we came away it seemed as though a well-beloved friend had tarried with us a while and had gladdened us with his delightful companionship.

I was one of those, too, who urged the lecturer to put some of his expositions into printed form so that the constituency for his sane and cheerful philosophy of life might be enlarged. They may lose something in cold type. I cannot tell. But to those of us who heard him speak each word will live again. Once more he will open to us the Scriptures. His friends, east and west, will welcome this helpful series. In many a home, in our northern city, it will be a well-thumbed volume.

NELLIE L. McCLUNG.

Edmonton, Alberta.