

A QUESTION OF TIME

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A question of time by Gertrude Franklin Atherton

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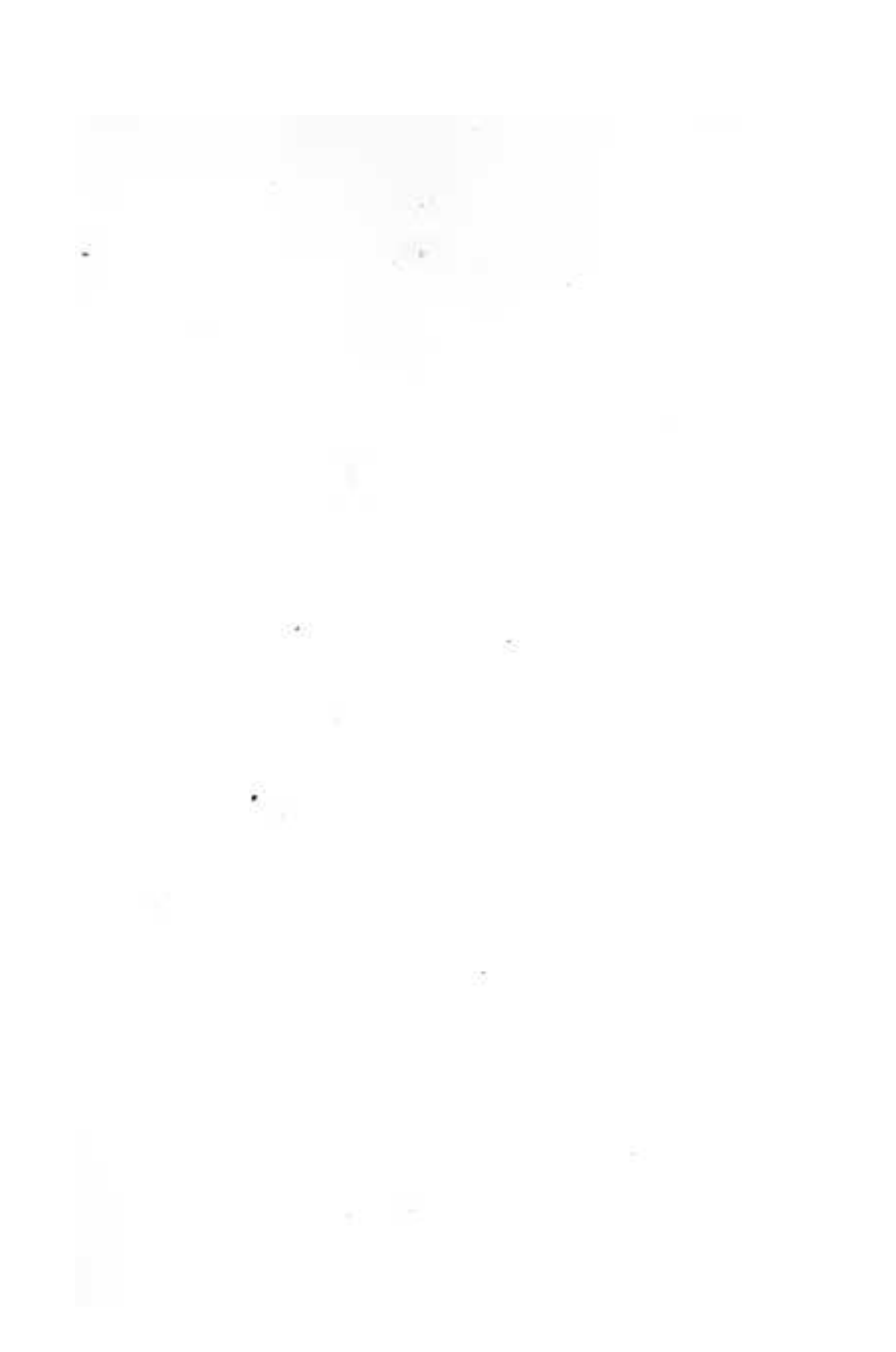
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BY

GERTRUDE FRANKLIN ATHERTON

AUTHOR OF

"WHAT DREAMS MAY COME," "HERMIA SUYDAM," "LOS CERRITOS,"
ETC., ETC.

"O God, we know not yet,
If bliss itself is not young misery,
With fangs swift growing."—GEORGE ELIOT.

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WITH APOLOGIES TO THE SHADE OF
OLIVER MADDOX-BROWN

A QUESTION OF TIME.

I.

SHE was the youngest woman in the room, and she was forty-six. Neither the word *passée*, nor yet that one of subtler insult, well-preserved, could be applied to her. She was young, as many women of her age are, because trouble had scarcely brushed her in passing, nor the world scorched her with its hot breath; because no illness had come to rift her perfect health, nor ill-placed passion to consume and wither. In a word, she had never lived, and a certain coquetry, too light for discontent, yet strong enough to guard and enhance her beauty, made her still look like a flower half bloomed, then passed by and forgotten of Time.

She rarely failed to take part in the social