

# **THE PAGEANTRY OF LIFE**

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The pageantry of life by Charles Whibley

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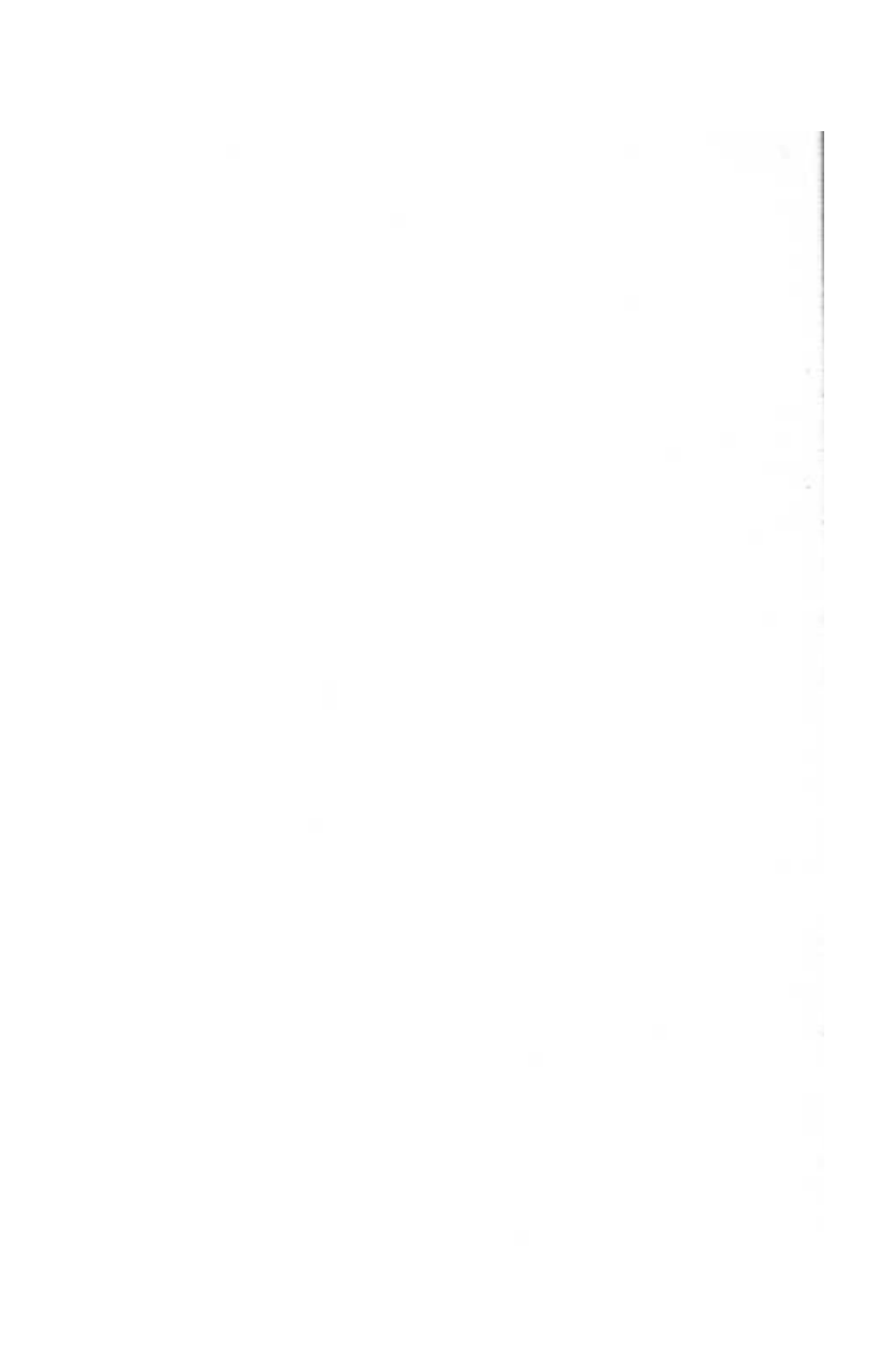
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**CHARLES WHIBLEY**

**THE PAGEANTRY  
OF LIFE**



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LIFE

BY  
CHARLES WHIBLEY

NEW YORK  
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1900

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## INTRODUCTION

THERE is an Art of Life, as there are arts of colour, form, and speech ; and what a material is theirs who practise it ! The poet or painter is perforce engrossed with a momentary aspect of this one or that ; he finds an inspiration in a passing thought or in the outward seeming of man or mountain : the cataract may haunt him like a passion, or he may attempt to simplify the mysteries of the sea. But his motive is still fragmentary ; his subject is expressed in a passing, imperfect symbol. The Artist in Life, on the other hand, need recognise no limit save death. He takes his days with all their delicate variety, and cuts them into what form he will. His smallest action is an added touch, a fresh detail in the vast design. Life is his material, enjoyment his medium, and to enhance the effect of his single masterpiece he may employ the manifold resources of gaiety and splendour. Rare wines flatter his delicate palate ; his ingenuity designs a new cravat or a coat of unwonted elegance ; wit and beauty are his constant companions ; and whate'er befall he never knows the shame of vulgar commonplace or dismal routine. Concerned only with

his own perfection, he is a miracle of selfishness : that is the first condition of success ; and it is not surprising that he too often escapes the sympathy of his fellows.

For it is no part of his design to be a good citizen, and if he do deserve well of his country, he claims her gratitude in an interval snatched from his more serious enterprise. The common ambitions are incidental to his nature, when they are not abhorrent from it. He neither controls governments nor wins battles. He despises the glory which follows a popular triumph, and he professes no greater interest in the secrets of philosophy than is becoming to a person of wit. Nor is he a shining example of the homely virtues ; with him a sense of the picturesque is more vivid than the sense of morality. He does not cut his life into a sermon ; rather he shapes it into a witty romance. The external world is his province—a dazzling appearance, discreet magnificence, the quick-exchanged repartee. Yet by a nonchalance of manner, by a proper pride of conduct, he guards his superiority over those whom the world esteems more valiant heroes ; and since he makes the rarest appearance upon the world's stage, his claim to a unique grandeur is not extravagant. There are ten generals, twenty statesmen, to balance one hero who has conquered life ; and if we may judge by results it is easier to discover a savage country or to sing an unheard melody than to design a new coat or to invent a dish untasted before. Above all the true artist in life must climb the frozen altitude of self-consciousness, a more difficult peak to scale than Chimborazo ; he must