

THE HOUSE ON CHARLES STREET

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The House on Charles Street by Anna Robeson Brown Burr

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ANNA ROBESON BROWN BURR

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CHARLES STREET**

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**THE HOUSE
ON
CHARLES STREET**

[Burr, Anna Robeson (Brown)]



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CONTENTS

BOOK I

	PAGE
THE END OF THE BEGINNING	1

BOOK II

NEW TRAILS	41
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BOOK III

ADVENTURE	91
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BOOK IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE END	215
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Book I
THE END OF THE BEGINNING

1

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CHAPTER I

MOST of us who had read our lives by the dying sunset of the nineteenth century, probably accepted the generalizations that after evolution comes dissolution, and after intellectual advance there is bound to be emotional reaction. But none of us expected to witness this dissolution, or to experience this reaction. Crises have a way of diffusing themselves so that they are only recognized after they are passed; and few societies in the world's history have had self-consciousness enough to realize the significance of what befell them. Once or twice, however, in human affairs, it has been otherwise: and mankind has undergone an unforgettable crisis in beholding—with complete realization of what it means—the portentous operation of Natural Law. In this vast convulsion all human atoms are affected, many are engulfed, many shaken from the place where they had clung like limpets to the rock, to be whirled about, hither and yon by the upheaval, never knowing when or where they shall be stayed.

Sometimes the expected happens. In this beautiful high valley there was only one sign of it, only one visible token that this day was not as other days. It was a Sunday afternoon in midsummer, clear and hot. After weeks of icy showers, the weather had settled and only a few wisps of vapour clung to the heights, above which there hung the dazzling whiteness, the immutable frozen cloud of Mont Blanc. The blue of the sky above that again was the blue of the high Alpine passes. There was no wind. A regiment of pines stood motionless, in rows, and seemed to look over each others' shoulders down