

**THE HERMITAGE
AND
RANDOM VERSES**

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The Hermitage and Random Verses by Dayton Ervin

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DAYTON ERVIN

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BY

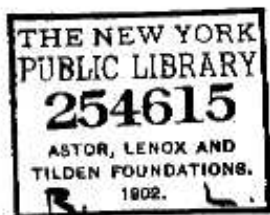
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THE HERMITAGE

THE HERMITAGE.

The maples on the hill hide there the Hermitage, the strange man's Hermitage. The thick, dark wood protects it from the northern blasts while grand is the sunside view. For twenty years this man now on the shady side of middle age, has held communion with the hills which rise across the vale in ranges high and long. For twenty years he has watched the snake-like river wind along the valley—watched the woods, the fields and here and there a village shine an alabastrine group. To eastward far away the smoked-capped mountains rise like chains of dusky clouds;—how oft he's gazed beyond to scenes in mists of tears where float perchance the clouds of disappointed life. The inward void, the want which he had felt fulfilled could have made his life complete, would see a pleading face which knew a tale of life and love which he had buried here in mystery.

In days long since gone by a maiden in the bloom of womanhood, with love for nature's voice and strong religious bent, had found in his companionship a tonic for her life. She looked for him to guide her taste in books and art, while he in turn must keep each cherished thought for her, and both had felt the stir of new-born sympathy. A hearty com-