

**THE LEGEND OF A  
THOUGHT, AND  
OTHER VERSES**

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The legend of a thought, and other verses by Martha Agnes Rand

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**MARTHA AGNES RAND**

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BY  
MARTHA AGNES RAND.

CHICAGO, 1889

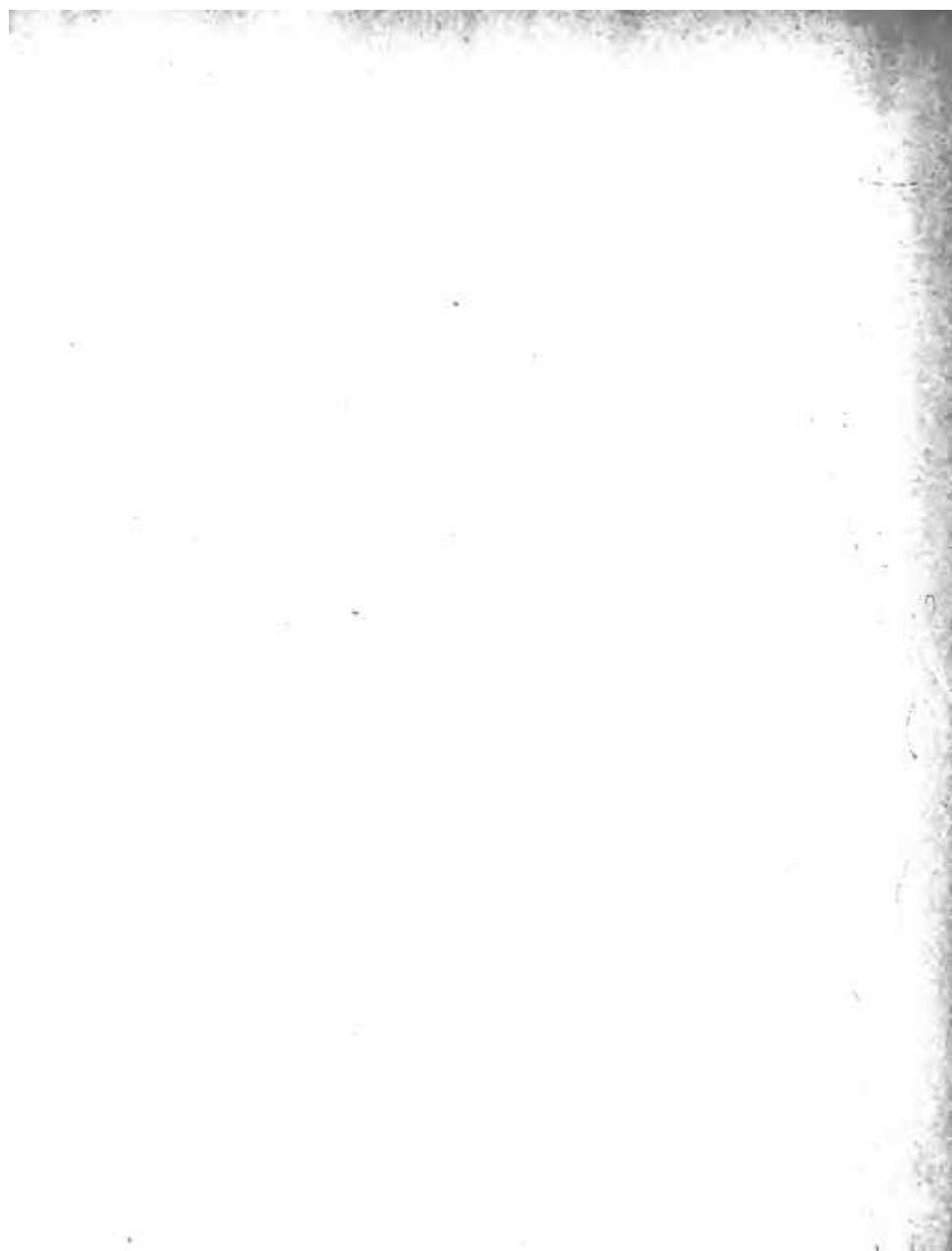
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## TO MY FATHER.

Happy those days of sojourn and of rest,  
When foreign lands allured my venturous feet;  
Of all to me one valley was the best,  
And yet my summer there was incomplete,  
Because I missed one far across the sea—  
Who once had led me, as a little child,  
Through those same woodland paths, and looked  
with me  
On those same mountain ranges, near and wild.  
He showed me where the soulful gentian dwelt,  
And broke for me the rose's thorny stem,  
And loved the graceful flowers, because he felt  
And loved the unseen hand that fashioned them.  
And so there came to me an idle whim  
That I would pluck stray flowers, from time to time,  
Along thought's road, that I might take to him  
A little nosegay from the realms of rhyme.  
And if my flowers prove but homely weeds  
From out a soil of immaturity,  
Still he, I know, will pardon as he reads,  
And love them, for the love they bear from me.





## THE LEGEND OF A THOUGHT.

### I.

Once, long ago, in a glassy stream,  
Where never a ripple wrought,  
With the pictured flush of the morning's gleam,  
And the azure sky and the sun's soft beam,  
There was mirrored a human thought.

It had taken the form of a fragile bird,  
Of all God's living things ;  
Pure white it looked; but, as it stirred,  
It could be seen the little bird  
Had dark spots on its wings.

For not all pure as snowflake white  
That thought, not free from stain;  
Yet eagerly it sought the right,  
Aspired to know truth's purest light,  
Deep wisdom to attain.

High, high it soared, and higher still,  
From morning's dawn till even,  
And earth grew dim and space grew chill,  
Yet on it soared, nor paused until  
It reached the gates of Heaven.

There long without it strove to bide,  
One little glimpse to win  
Of what the golden gates denied  
(For Heaven's gates were high and wide),  
It could not see within.  
At length, despairing of the things  
For which it long had striven,  
It ceased its vain imaginings,  
And beat its little tired wings  
Against the gates of Heaven.

## II.

Before Jehovah's presence brought  
The white-robed heavenly host  
Their festal offerings, and sought  
Which of the gifts their love had wrought  
Might please the Father most.  
Fair tokens laid they at his feet,  
So rich, so passing rare,  
No mortal eye their forms may meet,  
And flowers of such a perfume sweet  
As wafts but heavenly air.  
Then, as with song and sacred rite  
They praised Jehovah's name,

With one accord they cast their sight  
Adown the path of shining light  
Where, lo, the Christ child came!

A gift he bore, a burden sweet,  
Held closely to his breast,  
While now and then the baby feet  
Stood halting, then with trust complete  
Again they forward pressed.

Before his Lord, with troubled smile,  
He paused, as fearful still  
The snow-white altar to defile,  
And lisped, half falteringly the while,  
As little children will—

“Dear Lord, ’t is but a wayward thing,  
An earthly gift, I know,  
But I found it sadly hovering  
Without the gates, and I let it in—  
Because—I loved it so.”

Then forward all the angels pressed;  
No faintest sound was heard  
As from its safe and cozy nest  
Within the little Christ-child’s breast  
There fluttered forth a bird!