

**A FEW
LITTLE LIVES**

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A Few Little Lives by Clara Thropp

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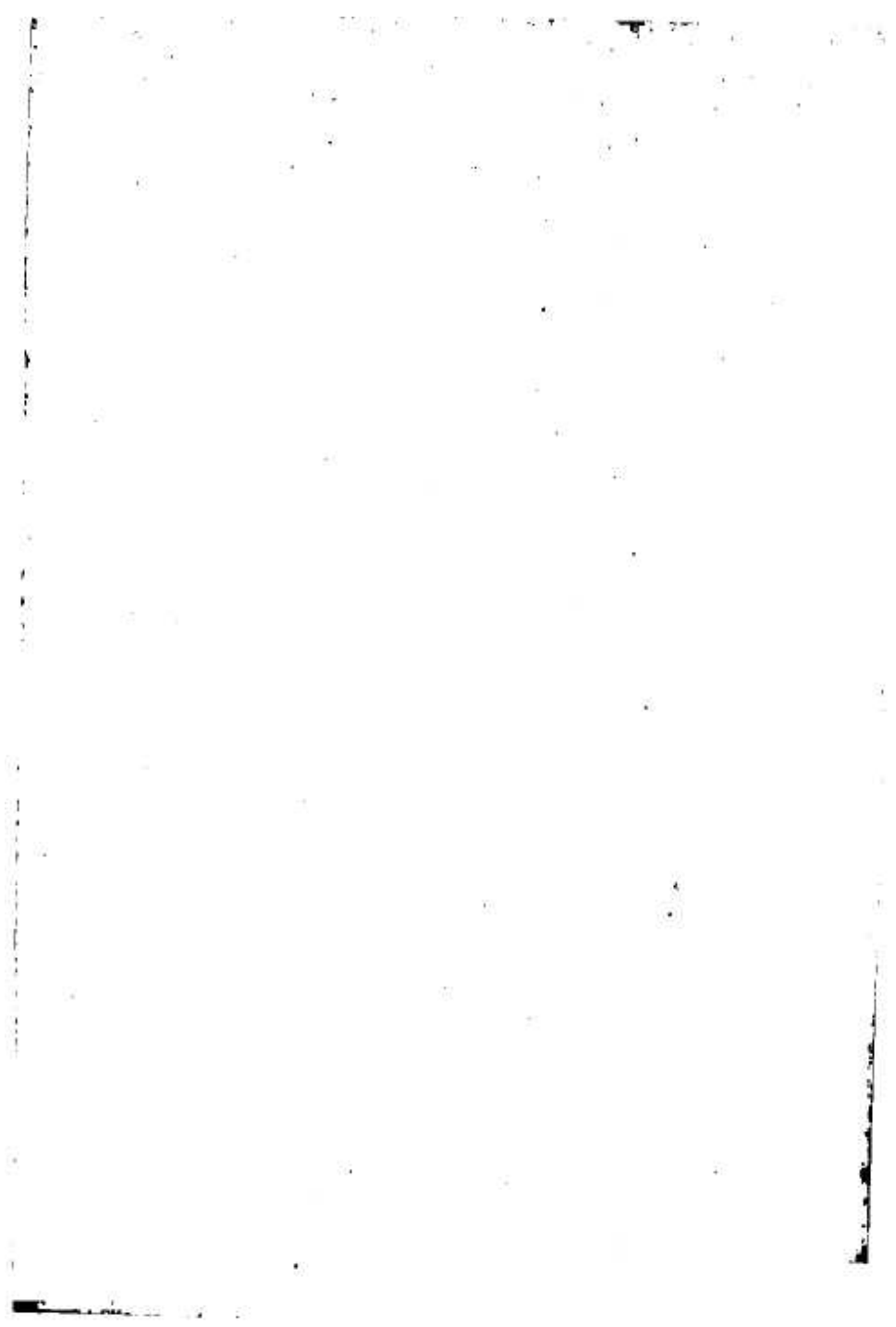
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CLARA THROPP

**A FEW
LITTLE LIVES**



Anna Thomas



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BY
CLARA THROPP

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARCHIE GUNN

NEW YORK
1896

36 + 1.5 = 25

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A FEW LITTLE LIVES.

CHAPTER I.

"What is it to be wise?

'Tis but to know how little can be known,
To see all others' faults and feel our own."

—*Pope.*

"BE careful of that hole in the carpet at the door-ledge, old man. I'll have to put a few tacks in that as soon as I've time. Well, how do you like my sanctum sanctorum?" and, after throwing his hat and coat on a shabby-looking sofa, Jack Wheatleigh stalked to the mantel and took down two very dilapidated looking pipes and a pouch of tobacco, and placed them on the table in front of his friend, Leonard Gray. "Have a pipe, old fellow? Ah, at last my best effort is before the public. I don't think that dealer hung it quite as well as that daub of Larkins, do you? Larkins calls himself an impressionist. They always do when they don't know how to paint. Never mind, it's for sale at last, and that canvas is about all I shall have to live on this winter."

"Heard nothing from your rich old aunt, eh?" asked Leonard, carelessly, looking about the room and examining some old books that lay piled in a corner.

"If God's poet is silence, my aunt has grown divine. She will never forgive me for not loving her squint-eyed ward. It may be a failing of mine, Leonard, but I distinctly dislike homely people."

"I say, Jack, why do you put your slippers on the mantel?"

"Well, you see, I'm a little short of bric-à-brac, and, as antiques are now in vogue, I thought my slippers would give the mantel an air of—of—"

"Carelessness?"

"No, harmony, with that other useful antique beside them," pointing to a weary, ill-used looking little gas-stove. "But I'll confess that this stove has taken from me much of my respect for antiques. It can produce more smoke than any soft-coal furnace in existence, and cook less than an Egyptian brazier. I don't know what I should do were it not for Matilda."

"Matilda! Jack, you don't mean to say——"

"Oh, don't be alarmed. Matilda Fleming was a dear old friend of my mother's, and her interest in me is decidedly maternal.