

COWARDICE COURT

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Cowardice Court by George Barr McCutcheon & Harrison Fisher

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GEORGE BARR MCCUTCHEON & HARRISON FISHER

COWARDICE COURT





COWARDICE
COURT

BY
GEORGE BARR
M^cCUTCHEON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
HARRISON FISHER
AND DECORATIONS BY
THEODORE B. HAPGOOD

NEW YORK, 1907

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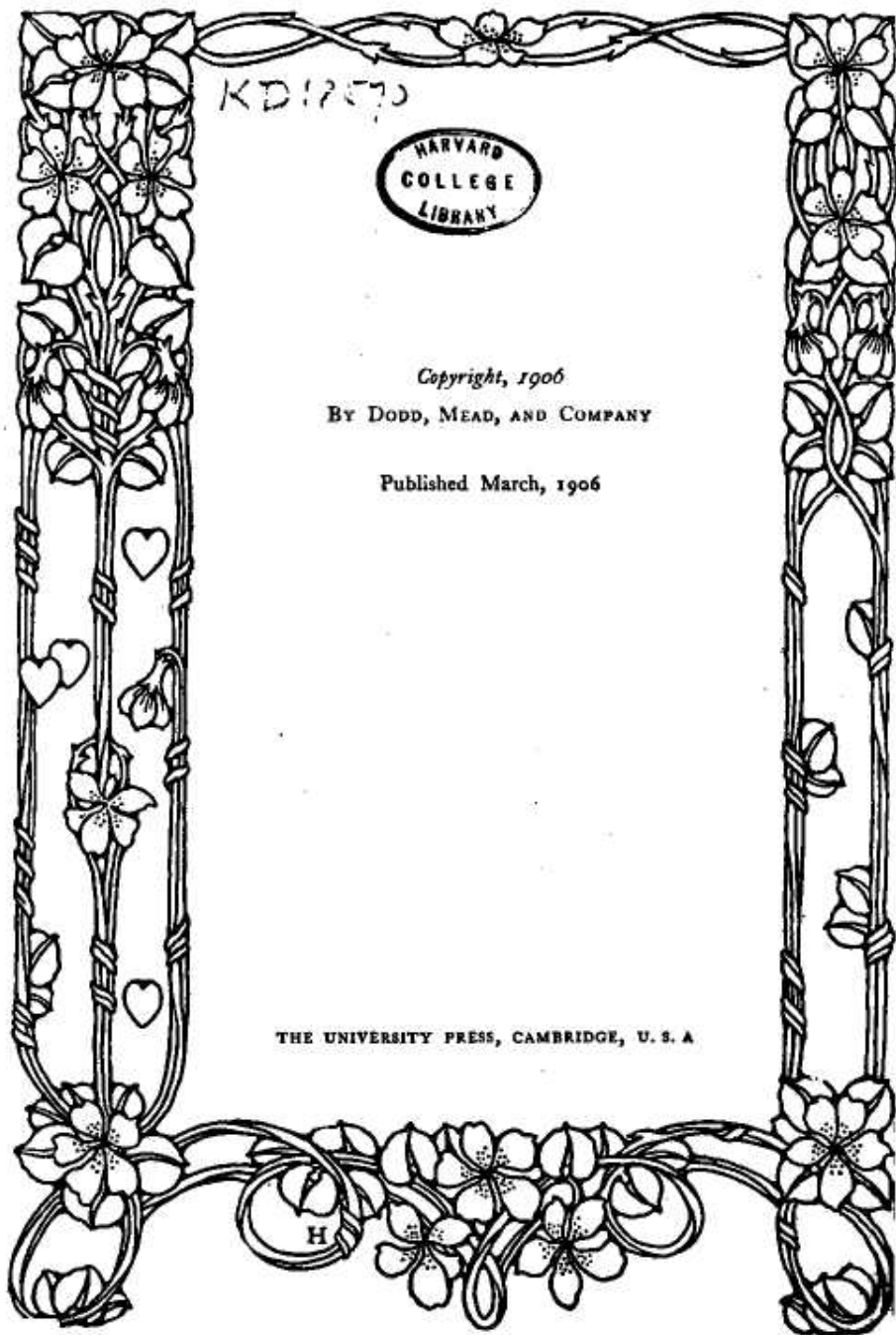


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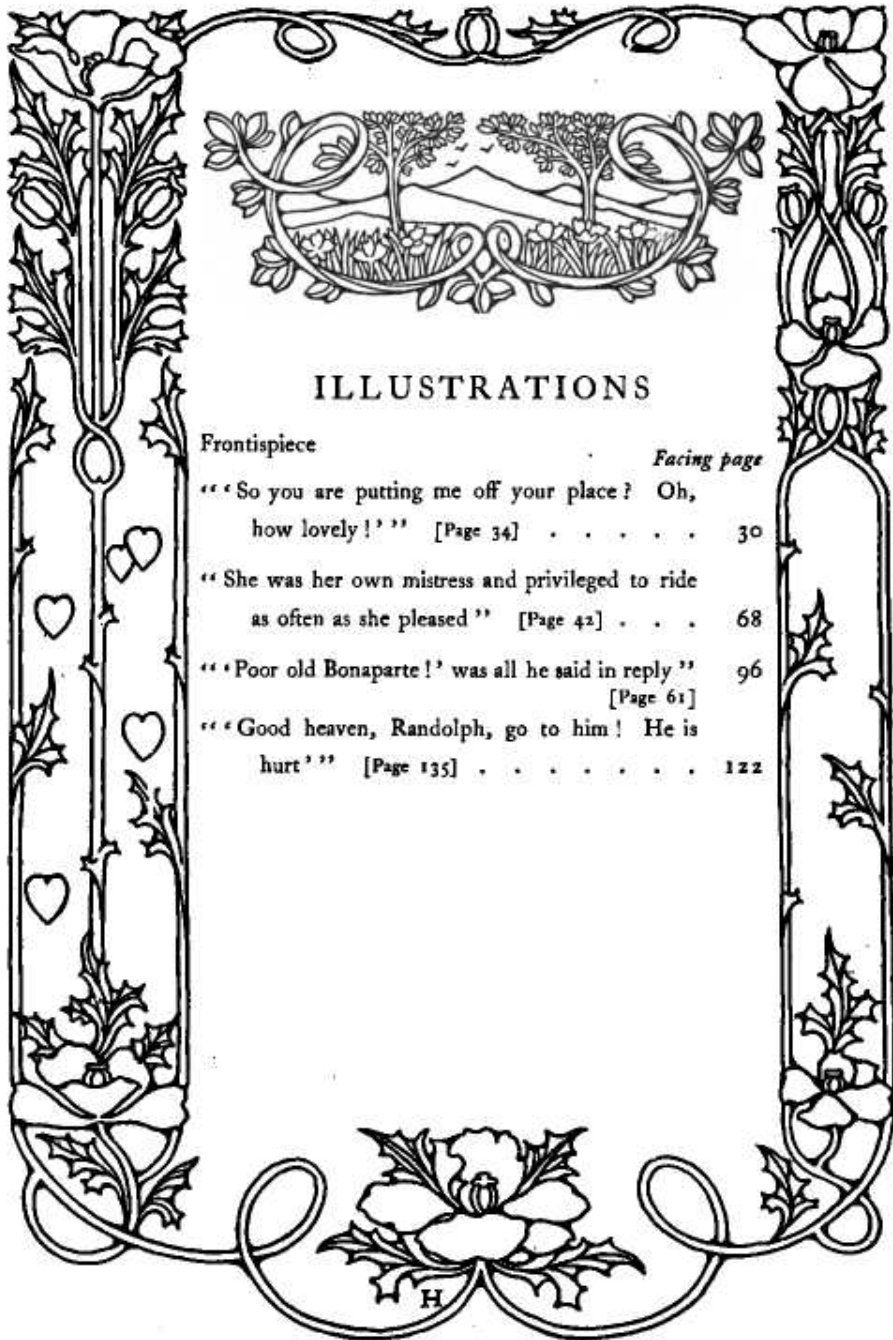
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IN WHICH A YOUNG MAN TRESPASSES	1
II. IN WHICH A YOUNG WOMAN TRESPASSES	21
III. IN WHICH A DOG TRESPASSES	42
IV. IN WHICH THE TRUTH TRESPASSES	64
V. IN WHICH DAN CUPID TRESPASSES	87
VI. IN WHICH A GHOST TRESPASSES	109
VII. IN WHICH THE AUTHOR TRESPASSES	121



ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece	<i>Facing page</i>
“ ‘So you are putting me off your place? Oh, how lovely!’ ” [Page 34]	30
“ ‘She was her own mistress and privileged to ride as often as she pleased’ ” [Page 42]	68
“ ‘Poor old Bonaparte!’ was all he said in reply ” [Page 61]	96
“ ‘Good heaven, Randolph, go to him! He is hurt’ ” [Page 135]	122



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CHAPTER I

IN WHICH A YOUNG MAN TRESPASSES

"HE'S just an infernal dude, your lordship, and I'll throw him in the river if he says a word too much."

"He has already said too much, Tompkins, confound him, don't you know."

"Then I'm to throw him in whether he says anything or not, sir?"

"Have you seen him?"

"No, your lordship, but James has. James says he wears a red coat and —"

"Never mind, Tompkins. He has no right to fish on this side of that log. The insufferable ass may own the land on the opposite side, but, confound his impertinence, I own it on this side."

This concluding assertion of the usually placid but now irate Lord Bazelhurst was not quite as momentous as it sounded. As a matter of fact, the title to the land was vested entirely in his young American wife; his sole possession, according to report, being a title much less substantial but a great deal more picturesque than the large, much-handled piece of paper down in the safety deposit vault — lying close and crumpled among a million sordid, homely little slips called coupons.

It requires no great stretch of imagination to understand that Lord Bazelhurst had an undesirable neighbour. That neighbour was young Mr. Shaw — Randolph Shaw, heir to the Randolph fortune. It may be fair to state that Mr. Shaw also considered himself to be possessed of an odious neighbour. In other words, although neither had seen the other, there was a feud between the owners of the two estates that had all the earmarks of an ancient romance.

Lady Bazelhurst was the daughter of a New York millionaire; she was young, beautiful, and arrogant. Nature gave her youth and beauty; marriage gave her the remaining quality. Was she not Lady Bazelhurst? What odds if Lord Bazelhurst happened to