

# **THE BARREN IDEAL**

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The Barren Ideal by George Law

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**GEORGE LAW**

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BARREN IDEAL**





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By  
George Law

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Symbolic Design and Sketches  
By Mary Carlin

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The Marvimon Foundation  
Arcadia, California

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**To A. C.**

If I seem to declare my opinions upon certain open questions without due discussion from every side, it is because such discussion would distort the proportions of my design. Read me as hostilely as you will—only persist to the end and there make your judgment.







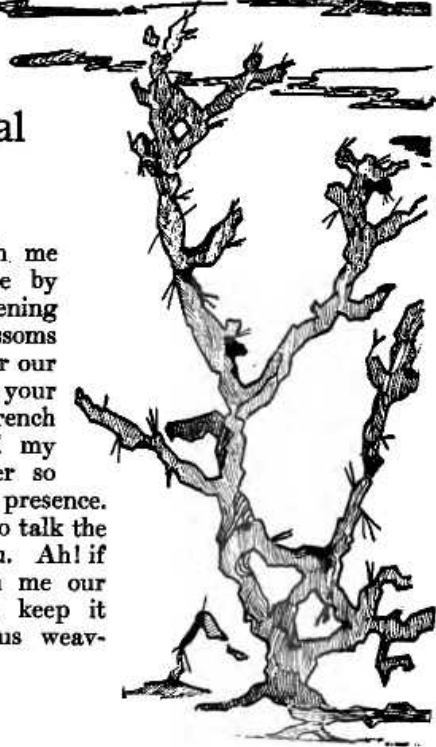
## The Barren Ideal

### I

Madame,

You supped with me this evening,—here by my window opening through plum blossoms upon a dun sky after our storm, you minced in your dainty way at the French toast and tea; and my manners were ever so much better for your presence.

Madame, I want to talk the scheme over with you. Ah! if you were only with me our conversations would keep it continually before us weav-



ing it through and through our lives, which is the only effectual way. It is all so simple and yet so complex and the whole matter so interwoven with one's own temper and custom! I may seem pessimistic; yet, in truth, a firm grasp upon my scheme transmutes it into the truest optimism. But these terms are both unsatisfactory. We should not accept or reject schemes of life on these qualifications merely. It is the old human frailty of fashioning philosophy according to desires. What is truth may and doubtless does partake—at a rough glance, before we have accustomed ourselves to it—some-what of both qualities. Optimism is that bright-eyed, athletic youth doffing his hat to Esther as she whizzes by in her friend's car, and a moment later dropping his coin with a cheery word in the hat of the legless vender of pencils on the corner. Pessimism is that lean, virtuous man standing by with his hands in the pockets of his short, black overcoat. Optimism says "I am," and having paid his tithe goes buoyantly on his way; Pessimism says "I am not, nor you, nor the beggar," and sighs in his contemplation. Both are right and both are wrong. But has not the one we are looking for the bright vigor of the first and the thoughtful virtue of the other in so serene an adjustment to actual conditions that he is free to do, and do effectively, what may lie within his