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1925

Franklin Booth

To our Mutual Friend
John J. Curtis

from his friends

Franklin B.

and

Edward G. Stear

Ny City February 1/1926.

FRANKLIN BOOTH

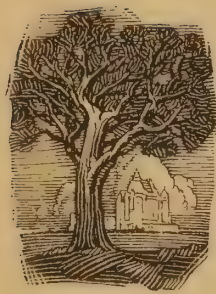


A. HARPER

FRANKLIN BOOTH

Franklin Booth

SIXTY REPRODUCTIONS FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS
WITH AN APPRECIATION BY EARNEST ELMO CALKINS
AND AN INTRODUCTION BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON



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It has been my aim from the outset to represent the work of Mr. Franklin Booth as truthfully as possible by using the best available means of reproduction. In this undertaking I have been generously assisted by the Firm and Staff of The Walker Engraving Company, who, fully realizing the importance of showing the delicacy of the line so characteristic of Mr. Booth's designs, have, in making the plates, faithfully followed the original drawings of the artist in every detail. And Mr. William Edwin Rudge, in printing this book, has taken great pains to make it worthy of the artist's work.

Thanks are also due to those for whom the original drawings were made and by whose courtesy they are here shown; their names are mentioned in the List of Illustrations.

ROBERT FRANK

THOSE who follow magazine decoration and the better aspects of advertising art are familiar with the signature of Franklin Booth. In fact, the signature is superfluous on any design by this artist because his style is so individual and so exclusively his own that everyone recognizes it at sight.

Mr. Booth is a pen-and-ink artist who produces his effects by numerous fine lines, something in the spirit of the old steel engravers but with far more freedom. His marked quality is his craftsmanship, his feeling for design. He creates an agreeable pattern, and gives his pattern its different values by his use of many fine lines of different strengths and differently spaced. He is attracted by architectural form—the architecture of Nature equally with that of man. His cathedrals suggest the grandeur of a mighty forest, while his pictures of trees bring to mind that groves were God's first temples. There is a quality in his work that enhances and spiritualizes its subject, and on that account it is employed largely by advertisers who wish to give to their advertising a tinge of the ideal. His drawings are designs rather than pictures or illustrations. They form an almost perfect setting for type. The pen lines of the artist and the faces of the type harmonize completely, especially if Mr. Booth has been allowed to select the face of type and the placing of it. The effect is exquisite and refined, and it adds a rare and decorative quality to the page.

Mr. Booth has done more than almost any one man to break down the barrier between the pure art of decoration as applied to the book or magazine page and the same art applied to the advertising page. Anything undertaken by him is approached in the same creative spirit and executed with the same sure touch. He lacks entirely the condescending attitude toward advertising art. He considers a pipe organ as glorious a subject as an oak tree, and when he has finished with it, it is. Designs, borders, decorations framing and embellishing an advertising page are in no way inferior to those applied to the enrichment of a poem or a bit of literature.

It is his sincerity, this belief in himself and in the integrity of his commission, that has kept his work on so high a plane. Designs by him made for advertising purposes are sought by collectors with the same eagerness as designs for less material purposes, for they have the same quality.

Mr. Booth possesses to a rare degree the power of expressing in design or picture an idea, an abstract conception. He illustrates not so much things as thoughts.

He is much sought after by advertisers and art directors because his peculiar

and individual style is successfully practiced by no one else. His imitators are many. They copy his technique, but they lack his inspiration.

His two great qualities are his dexterity with his pen and his imagination. His work appeals to the spirit. It has an uplifting effect. It suggests something just beyond, an ideal almost realized. His fine craftsmanship never becomes mere dexterity. It remains always, as it should be, the instrument for expressing a fine creative imagination.

EARNEST ELMO CALKINS

WHEN Franklin Booth's work first met my eye—it was something like twenty years ago—I was puzzled and mystified. The pen-and-ink sketches, hung in an exhibition of well-known illustrators and cartoonists, struck me—a layman—as distinguished by qualities not to be satisfactorily explained in terms of method and technique. I have since followed this artist's career with the greatest interest but without ever plucking the heart from the mystery. Nor does it greatly matter, for it is probably best to accept his creations with gratitude for the delight to be found in them without troubling to explain their charm or a certain haunting quality which is beyond any mere trick of draughtsmanship. However, after turning the leaves of this collection, I am moved to remark that Nature probably intended Booth for a poet of the contemplative order, but, in a perverse mood, changed her mind and bade him exercise his talents in line rather than in rhyme and meter. But even on this assumption the great mother suffered at least partial defeat, for the poet was not silenced but utters himself unmistakably in this medium, of which he has made himself a master.

It is consoling to find in this age of realism fresh and stimulating proof of the contention of Keats that beauty and truth are interchangeable terms. Mr. Booth's veracity is never to be questioned; he is almost uncannily accurate; what he sees he presents truthfully and vividly; but with the realization of this comes at once a consciousness of the mystical, the inescapable suggestion of something elusive and indefinable that is the charm of all that he produces. He has, for example, so treated a modern city—lifted and idealized—as to suggest the capital of some island—valley of Avalon or an unattainable Carcassonne. Perhaps in the terminology of music rather than in that of art or literature one might more readily find appropriate and descriptive words for Booth's talent. If he were a musician the violin would, we are sure, be his instrument.

It is amazing that line, unaided by color, can be so employed as to touch the imagination as Booth rarely fails to touch it. The restrictions of his medium are no hindrance to the indication of space and distance. In the architectural pieces, in which perhaps his talent speaks most authoritatively, he communicates with singular felicity the sense of height and breadth and of the play of light and shadow fading into the light that never was on sea or land.

We have in these drawings no mere sketchiness or trifling memoranda, but in every instance a satisfying completeness and adequacy. With all his delicacy, which can be that of the cobweb's fineness, Booth imparts remarkably the sense of solidity—in a wall, a pillar or the trunk of a tree. It may be that full justice has not

been done to the landscape of that Indiana of which Booth is a native son as a stimulus to the imagination and the sense of beauty. Lincoln's spirit must have drawn something from it in those fourteen formative years through which he dreamed his dream in the Hoosier forest. The great number of votaries who had poured libations at the altar of literature in Indiana have obscured the considerable company of artists who knew the world of beauty first as they caught hints of it in the Hoosier fields, hills and woodlands. William M. Chase, Eugene Savage and Wayman Adams are of this company and, of the same fellowship, Booth is not without his debt to the fugitive spirit of place as it hovers along the Wabash and Tippecanoe and has found such interpreters in song as James Whitcomb Riley and Maurice Thompson.

While living on the farm Booth began contributing illustrations, accompanied with light verse, to the *Indianapolis News*. This was followed, a year later, by three months of study at the Art Institute of Chicago and the next year by about three months of work at the Art Students' League in New York. Then came a year and a half of newspaper work and a summer in Europe. An artist's biography is best read in his work, and, remembering Mr. Booth's first drawings, launched from the farm on which he was born and where he spent twenty-six years of his life, I am moved to remark that in fields of ripening corn and in the mixed forests about the old homestead, he found not only his inspiration but was, in a manner of speaking, instructed by Nature in person in the value of line and in the infinite possibilities of light and shadow. Franklin Booth, it may be said, has perfected his own method. His drawings seem so effortless—the mark of the tool is so hidden—that they impart a conviction of spontaneity, as if they had not been “done”, but had appeared magically upon the paper.

Here, indeed, is a most companionable collection of drawings, a book for frequent meditative recurrence, recording and interpreting a remarkable variety of beguiling scenes and episodes. His work illustrates the poverty of a camera where it is necessary to capture the impressions and moods of a questing and poetic spirit. It is Mr. Booth's high achievement that he satisfies not only the visual sense but indicates so often as to establish a characteristic, a consciousness of gracious and beautiful things—of “meadows never won nor wandered in” or the poignant echoes of a solemn recessional fading to silence in some vast cathedral.

MEREDITH NICHOLSON



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The figures indicate the sizes of the original drawings in inches. In italics are shown names of the firms for whom the drawings were made and by whose courtesy they are here used. The vignette on this page was made for the title page of "The Flying Islands of the Night," by James Whitcomb Riley, published by The Bobbs Merrill Company.

1	COVER DESIGN . $3\frac{1}{2}$ x $7\frac{1}{4}$. Booklet	<i>Hickey-Freeman</i>
2	THE PINES . $10\frac{1}{2}$ x $11\frac{1}{4}$. Poem	<i>Scribner's Magazine</i>
3	THE WOODLAND . $10\frac{1}{4}$ x $14\frac{1}{4}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
4	PROSPECT . 10 x $12\frac{1}{2}$. Advertisement	<i>Montgomery Ward & Co.</i>
5	ADVENTURE . $7\frac{1}{4}$ x $10\frac{1}{2}$. Poem	<i>Sunday Magazine</i>
6	HAPPINESS . $9\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 . Advertisement	<i>N. W. Ayer & Son</i>
7	CHURCH . $8\frac{1}{4}$ x $12\frac{1}{4}$. Advertisement	<i>Estey Organ Co.</i>
8	BURIAL HILL . $10\frac{1}{4}$ x $11\frac{1}{4}$. Poem	<i>Collier's Weekly</i>
9	ILLUSTRATION . 8 x $11\frac{3}{4}$. Story	<i>American Magazine</i>
10	THE DREAM . $10\frac{1}{4}$ x $14\frac{1}{4}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
11	ECHOES . $11\frac{1}{2}$ x $14\frac{3}{4}$. Advertisement	<i>Estey Organ Co.</i>
12	LINCOLN, AFTER BORGLUM . 11 x $14\frac{1}{4}$. Advertisement	<i>Billings & Spencer</i>
13	STEPS TO THE TOMB . 11 x 16 . Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . *Continued*

14	DOMESTICITY . $6\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$. Article	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
15	ARTS AND CRAFTS . $6\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$. Article	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
16	THE LITTLE HOUSE . $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
17	NEIGHBORS . $8\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
18	THE HOUSE OF RIMMON . $5\frac{1}{4} \times 10$. Poem	<i>Scribner's Magazine</i>
19	THE HOUSE OF RIMMON . $5\frac{1}{4} \times 10$. Poem	<i>Scribner's Magazine</i>
20	THE END OF THE WAY . $9\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{4}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
21	THE LILIES . $9\frac{1}{4} \times 14$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
22	WELCOME . $11 \times 14\frac{3}{4}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
23	MEMORIAL . $16\frac{3}{4} \times 21\frac{3}{4}$. Newspaper	<i>L. Bamberger & Co.</i>
24	THE PLANTATION . $8\frac{3}{4} \times 9$. Poem	<i>Scribner's Magazine</i>
25	SOLITUDE . $10\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
26	LAMENTATION . $10\frac{1}{2} \times 14$. Study in Charcoal	
27	UNSEEN FOUNDATIONS . $10\frac{3}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{4}$. Study in Wash	
28	THE GATES . $10\frac{1}{4} \times 14$. Study in Pen-and-ink and Crayon	
29	ORGAN . $11\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$. Advertisement	<i>Estey Organ Co.</i>
30	NIPPON GARDEN . $10\frac{3}{4} \times 13$. Story	<i>Scribner's Magazine</i>
31	NIPPON GARDEN . $5\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$. Story	<i>Scribner's Magazine</i>
32	RURAL ROMANCE . $8 \times 8\frac{1}{4}$. Story	<i>American Magazine</i>
33	A REMEMBERED DREAM . $8\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$. Poem	<i>Scribner's Magazine</i>
34	BARTHELMESS . $10\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$. Advertisement	<i>First National Pictures</i>
35	THE POND . $4\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$. Fiction	<i>Gems of Russian Literature</i>
36	BURIAL . $9 \times 9\frac{3}{4}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
37	AT PRAYER . $11 \times 15\frac{1}{2}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
38	A REMEMBERED DREAM . $9\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
39	WAR . $8\frac{3}{4} \times 9$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
40	HUNTING THE TIGERS . $5\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$. Story	<i>McClure's Magazine</i>
41	HUNTING THE TIGERS . $9\frac{3}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{4}$. Story	<i>McClure's Magazine</i>
42	THE HEALED ONES . $8\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$. Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS • *Continued*

43	CHEATED . 10 x 14½ . Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
44	HARBOR IN THE MORNING . 4½ x 6 . Story	<i>Century Magazine</i>
45	MARSEILLES . 5½ x 6½ . Story	<i>Century Magazine</i>
46	GARDEN AT PONTA DELGADA . 5¼ x 8¾ . Story	<i>Century Magazine</i>
47	THE NEW HOUSE . 11½ x 16 . Poem	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
48	ORGAN . 10½ x 13½ . Advertisement	<i>Estey Organ Co.</i>
49	FLUTES . 10½ x 13½ . Advertisement	<i>Estey Organ Co.</i>
50	EASTER PRAYER . 5¾ x 9¼ . Editorial	<i>Pictorial Review</i>
51	WOMEN AND WAR . 6½ x 9 . Article	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
52	DAWN . 9 x 12 . Poem	<i>Smithsonian Institution</i>
53	HAND OF THE WORLD . 9 x 14¼ . Article	<i>American Magazine</i>
54	WHEATFIELD . 9½ x 10½ . Advertisement	<i>Procter & Gamble</i>
55	THE HILLS OF HOLLAND . 7¾ x 12 . Poem	<i>Harper's Magazine</i>
56	HARVEST TIME . 5 x 10¼ . Article	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
57	HARVEST TIME . 5 x 10¼ . Article	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>
58	BORDER DESIGN . 11¾ x 17 . Editorial	<i>Collier's Weekly</i>
59	COVER DESIGN . 5½ x 9 . Booklet	<i>Hickey-Freeman</i>
60	DECORATION . 4 x 9 . Advertisement	<i>Paramount Pictures</i>

ILLUSTRATIONS



I COVER DESIGN



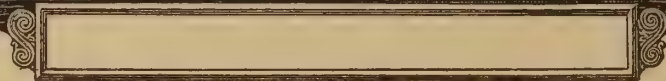
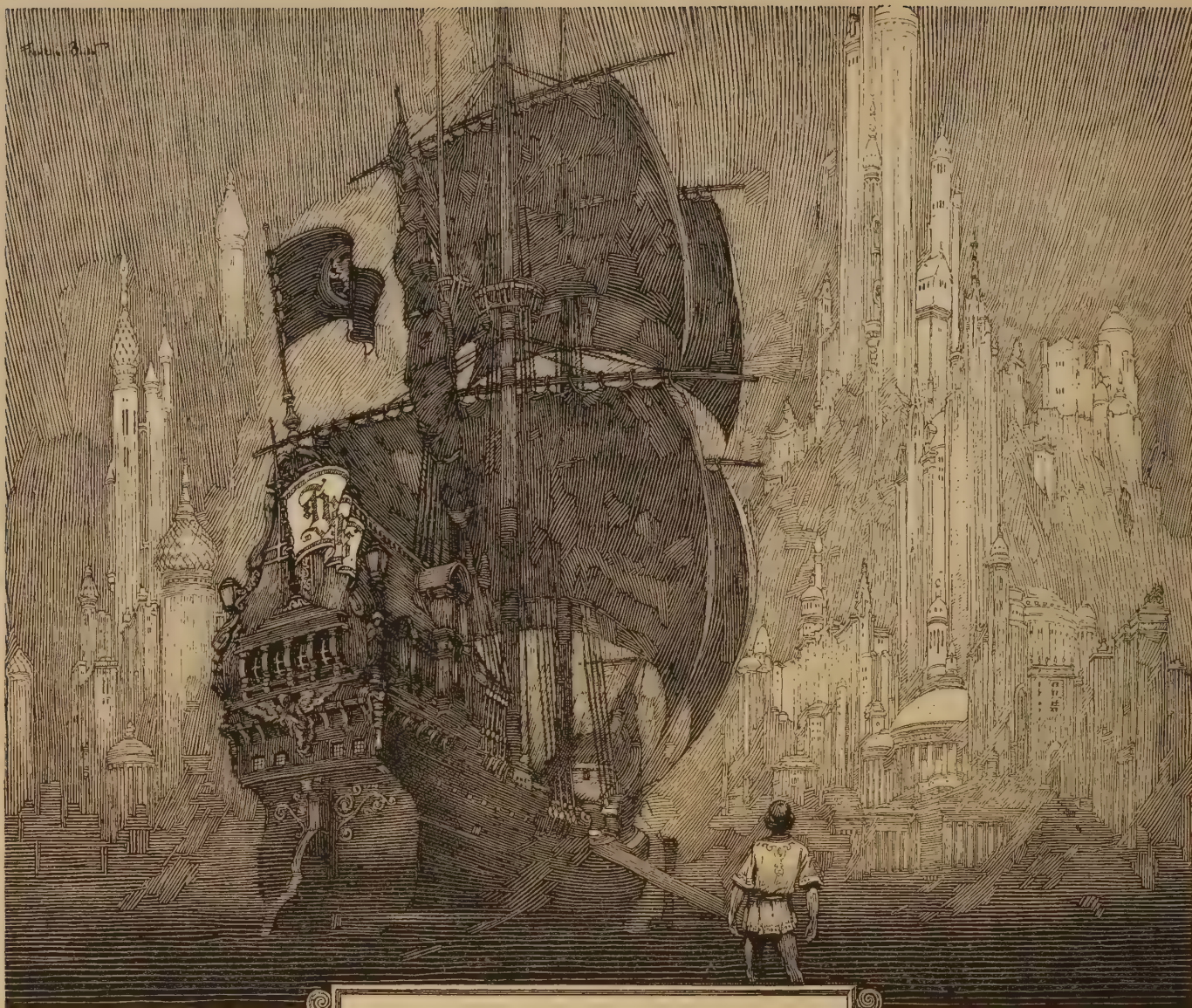
2 THE PINES

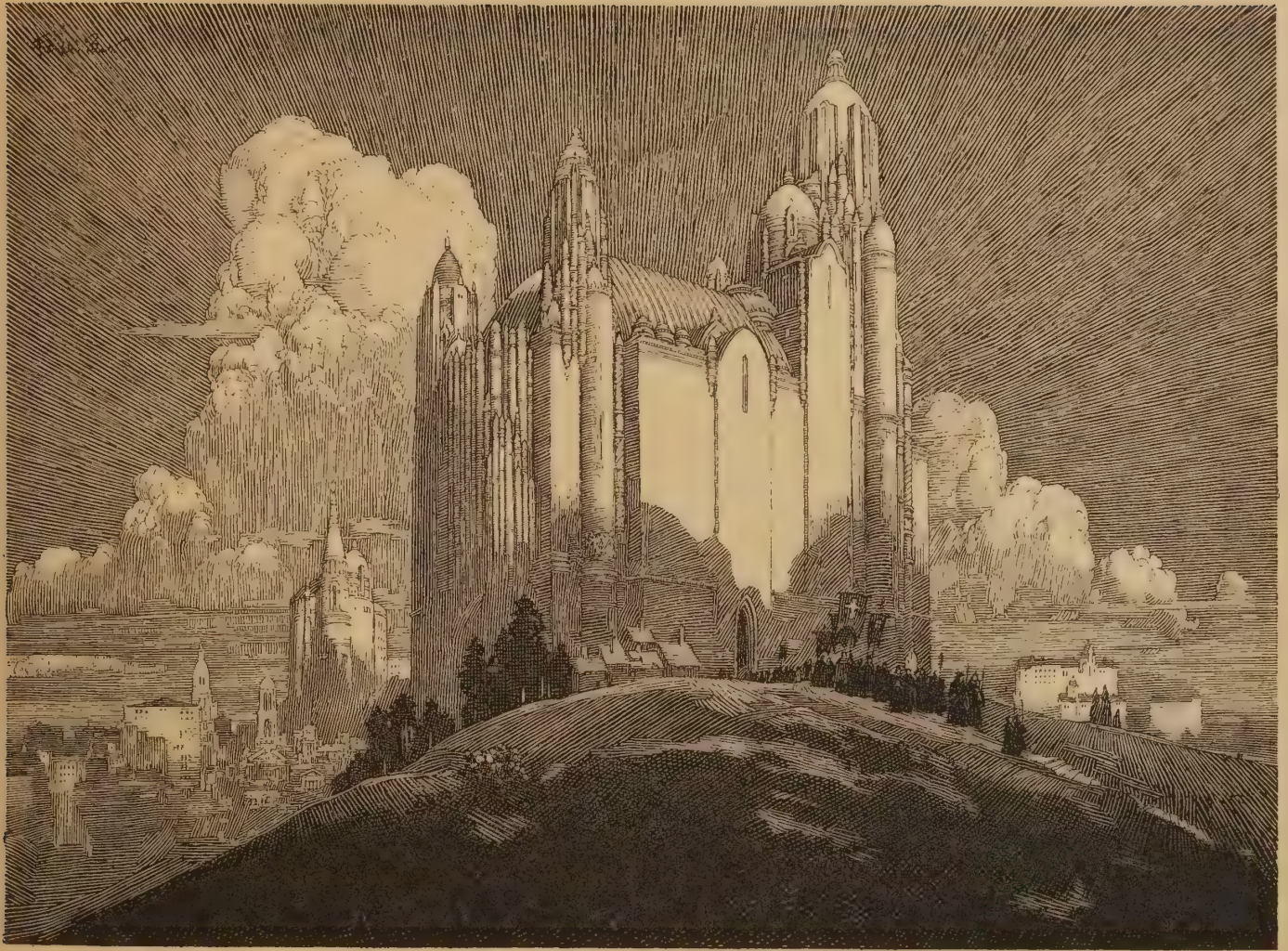






5 ADVENTURE





7 CHURCH



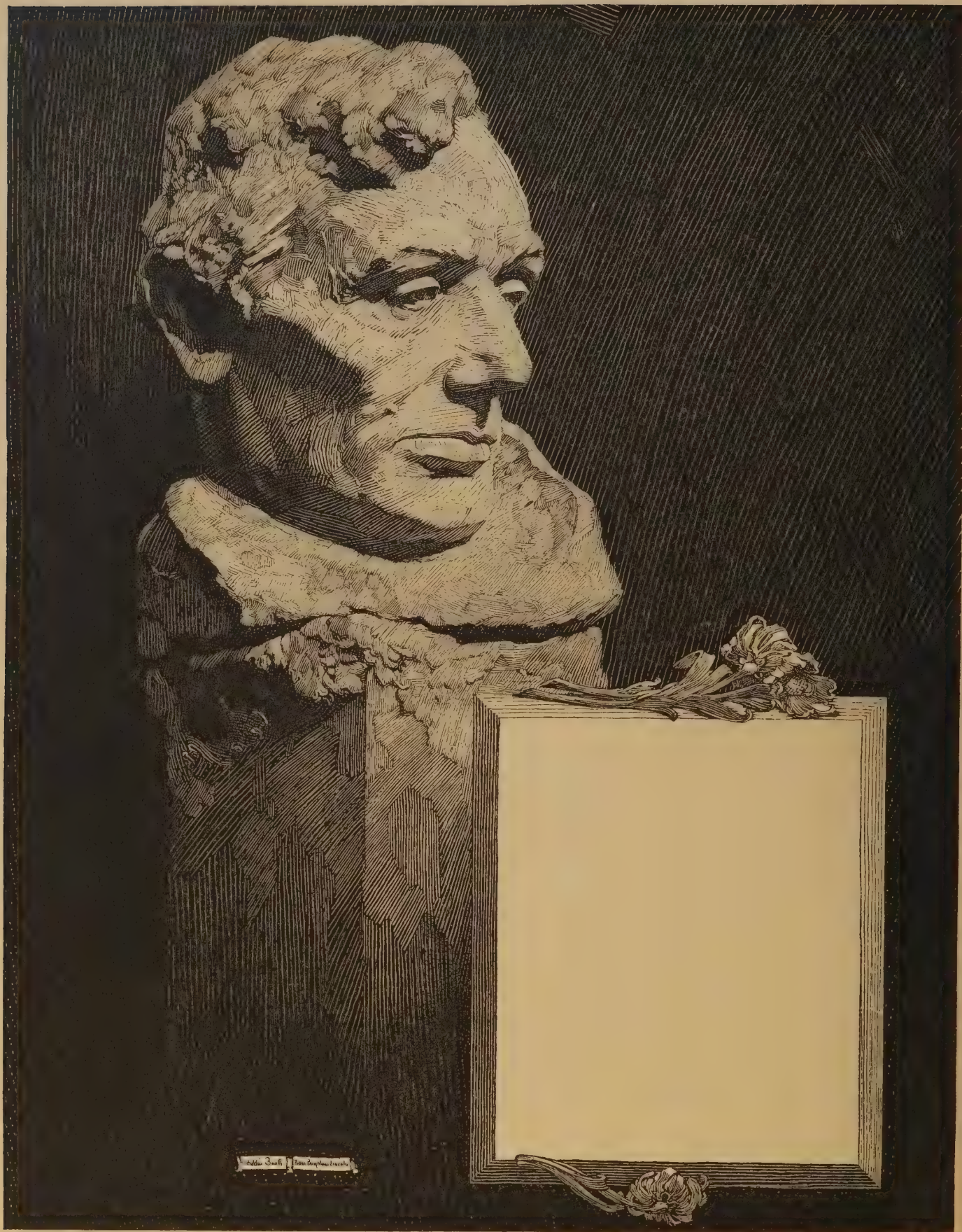
8 BURIAL HILL







II ECHOES





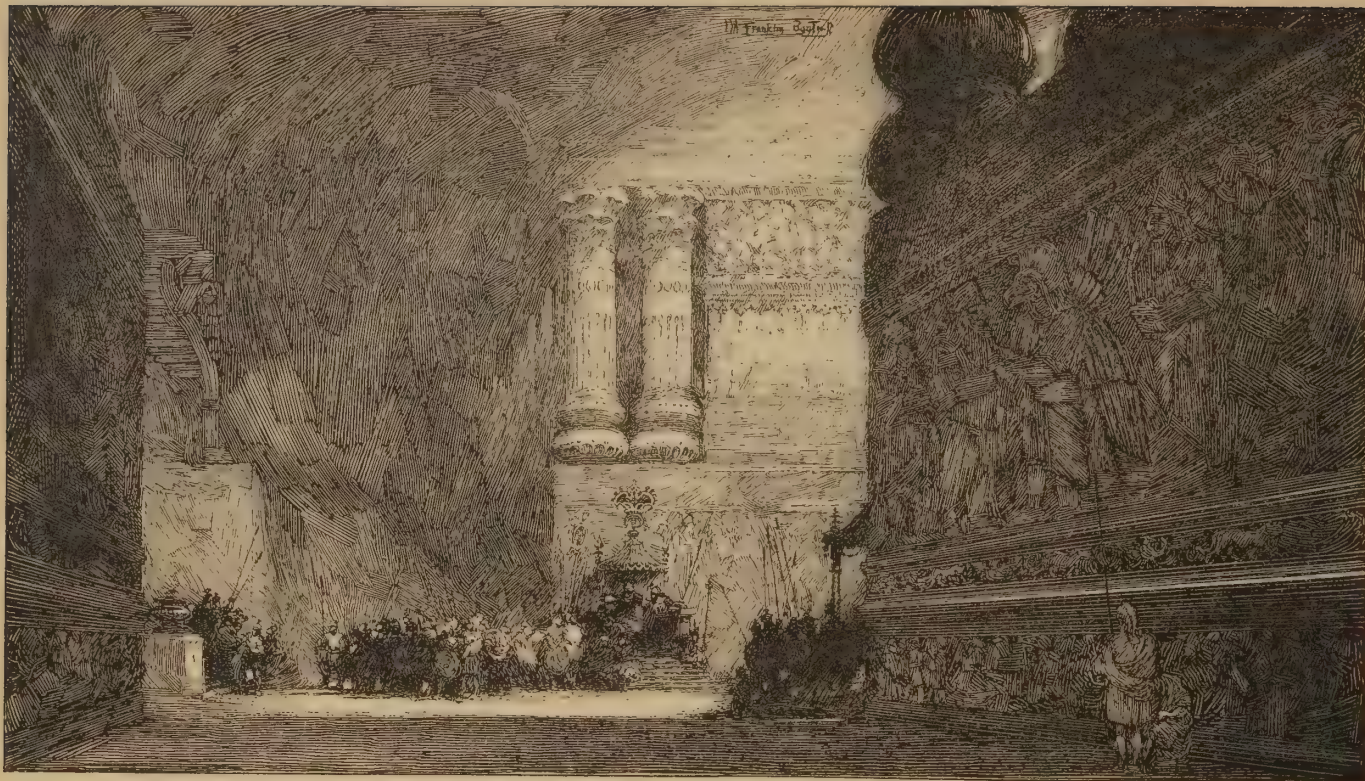




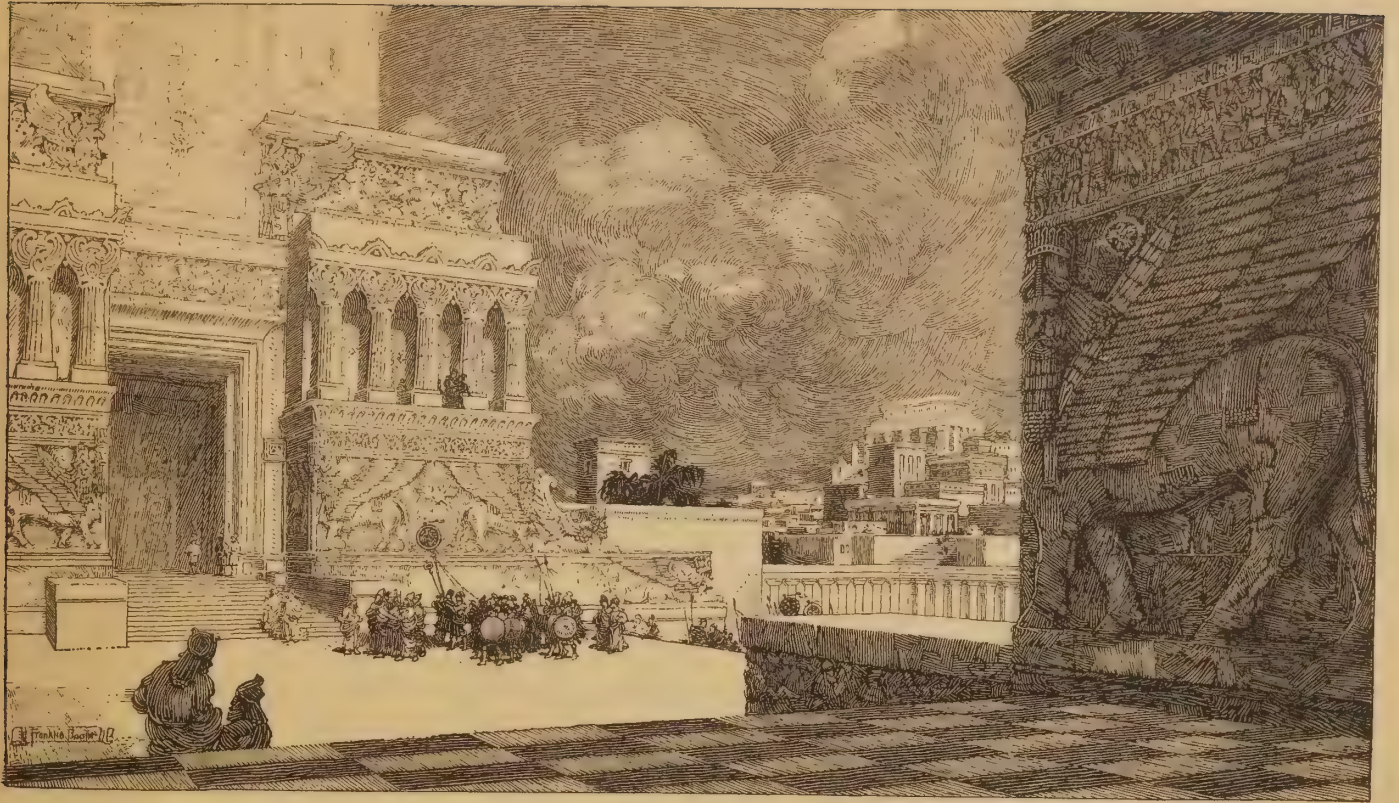


16 THE LITTLE HOUSE





18 THE HOUSE OF RIMMON

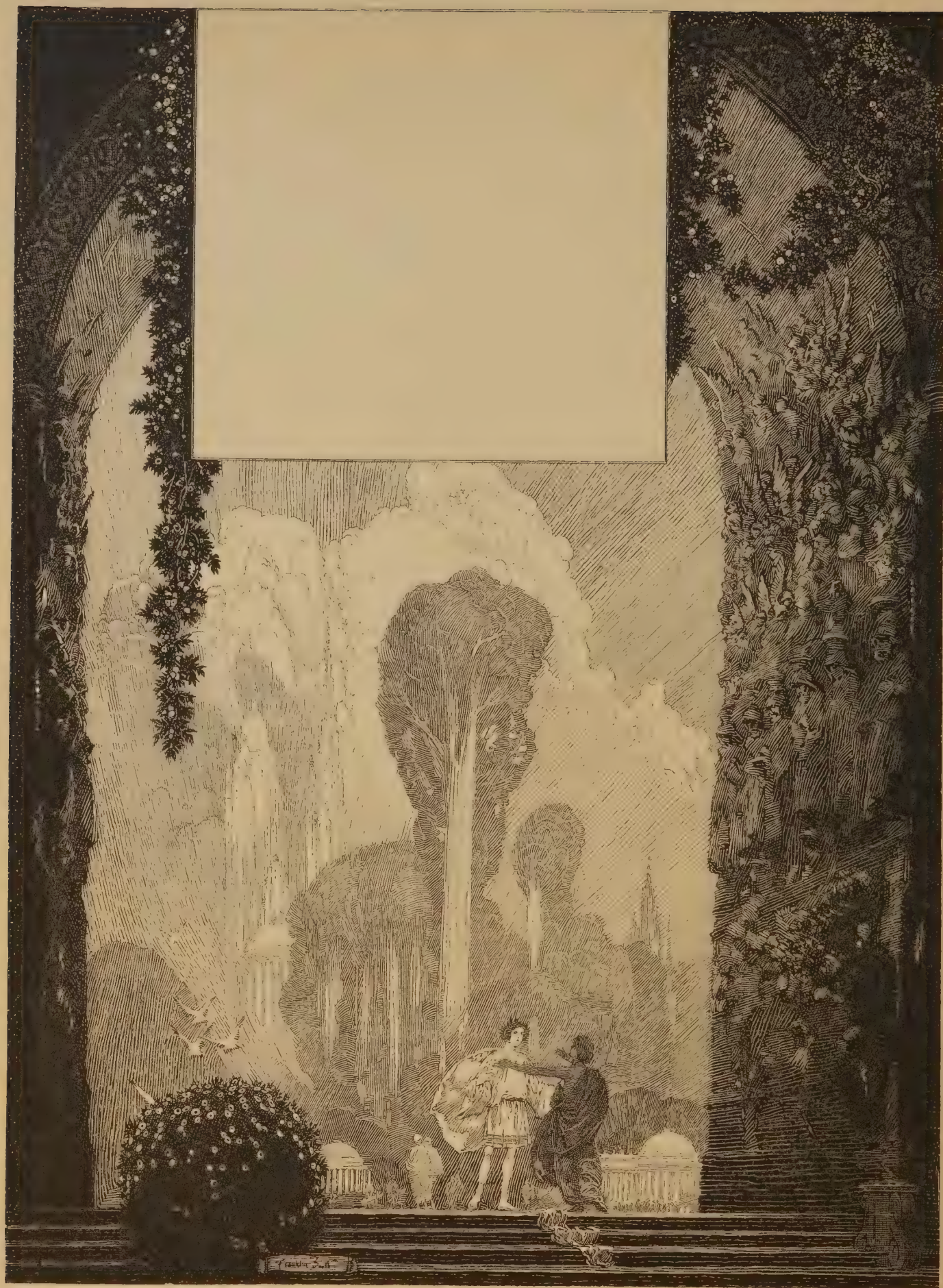


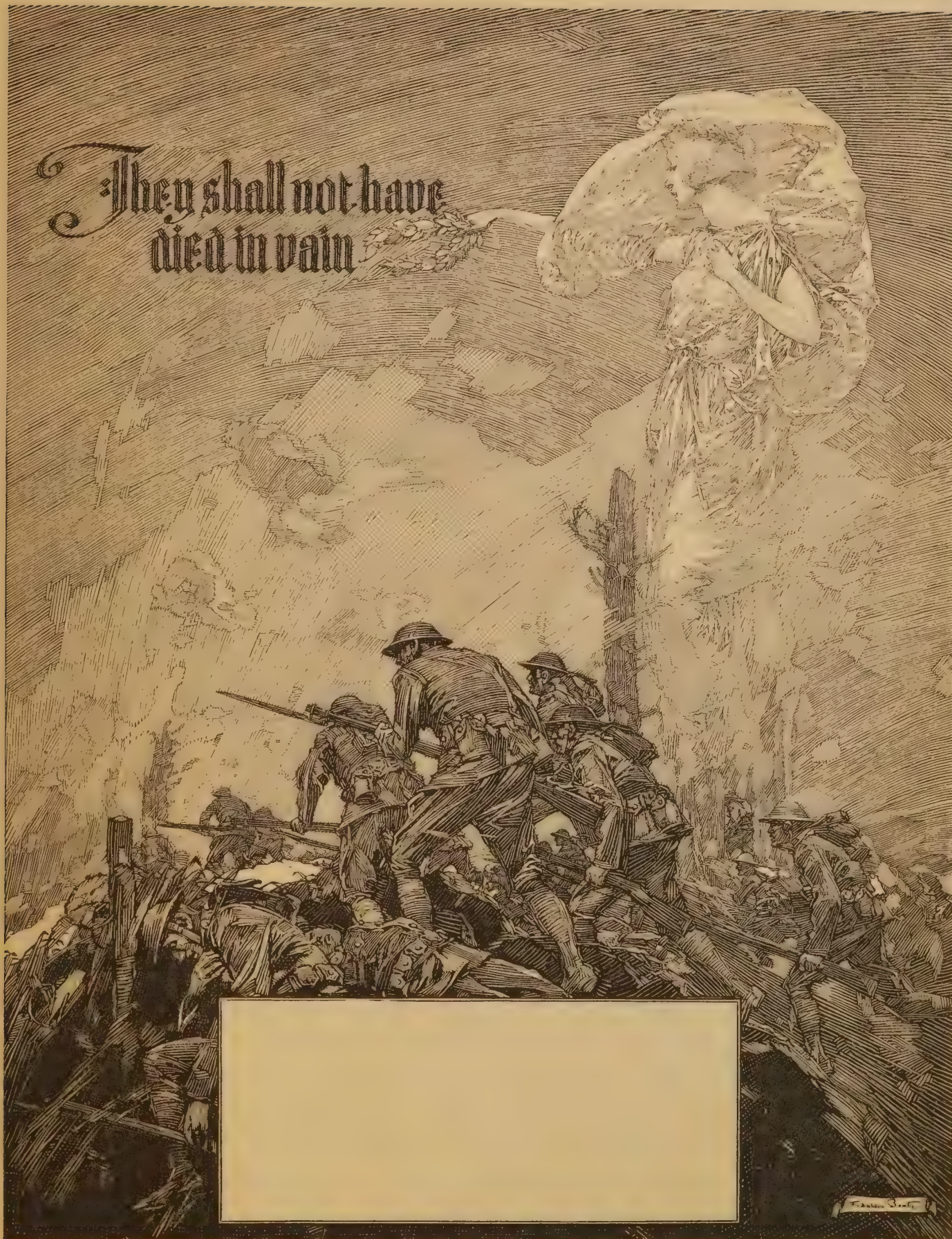
19 THE HOUSE OF RIMMON





21 THE LILIES



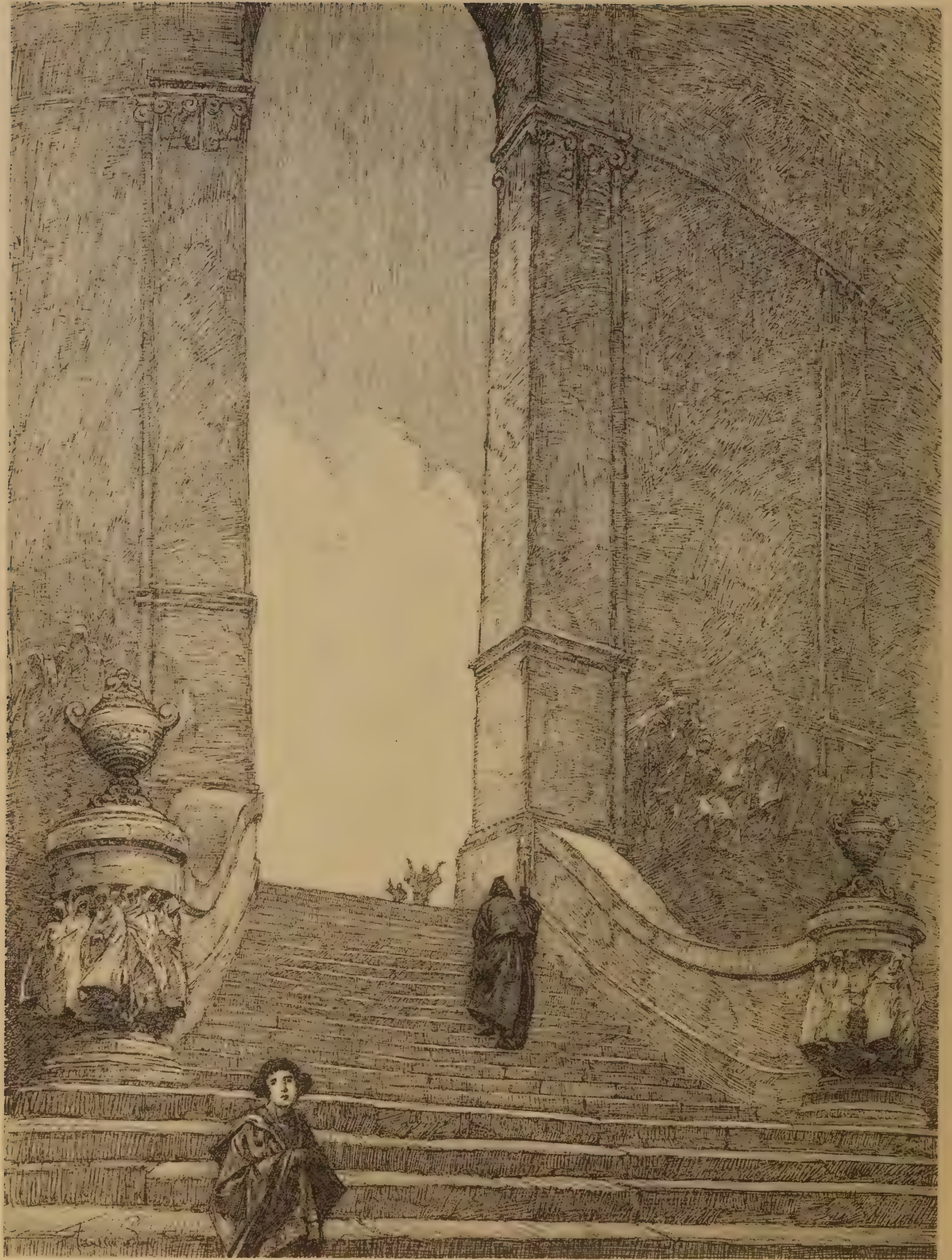


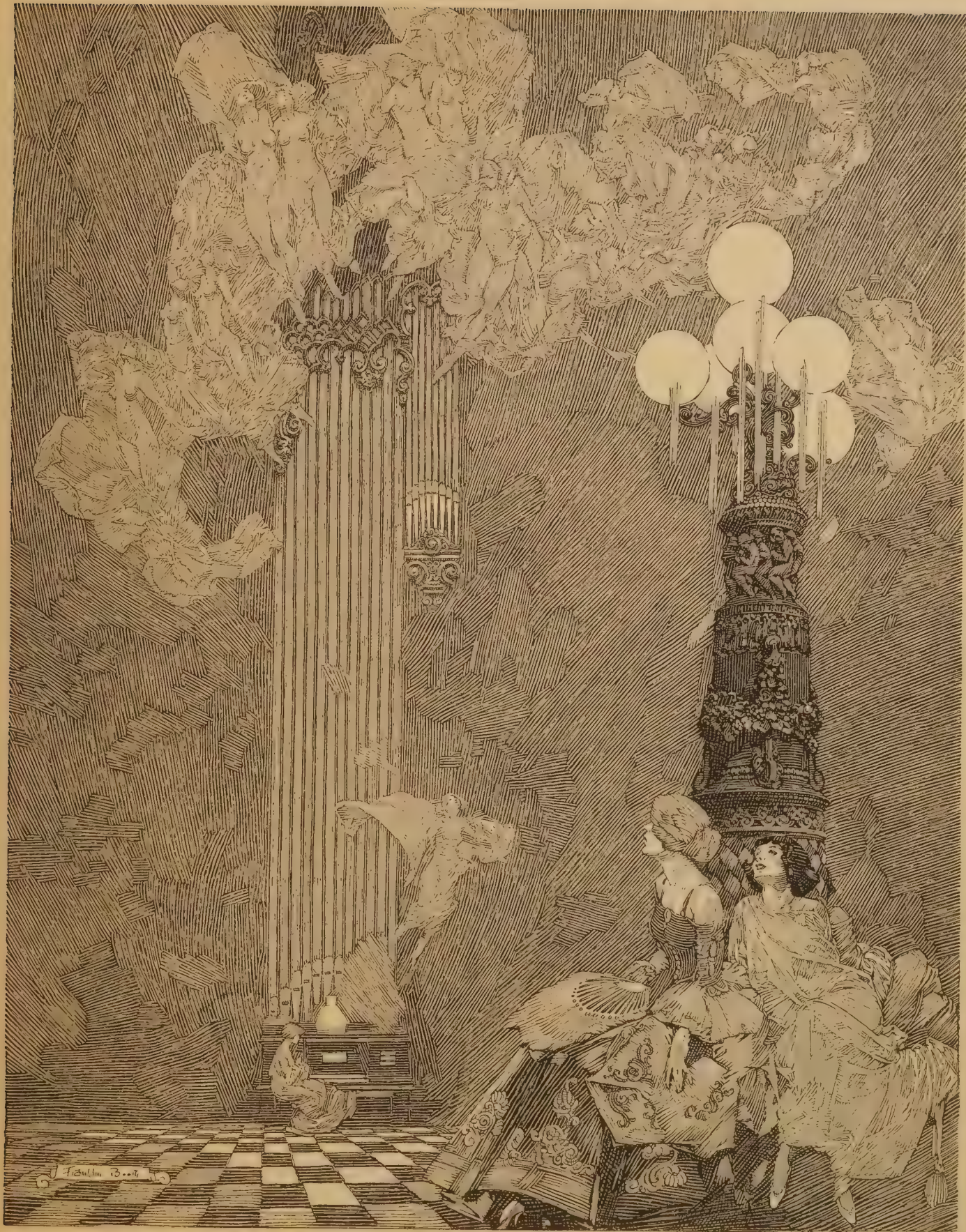












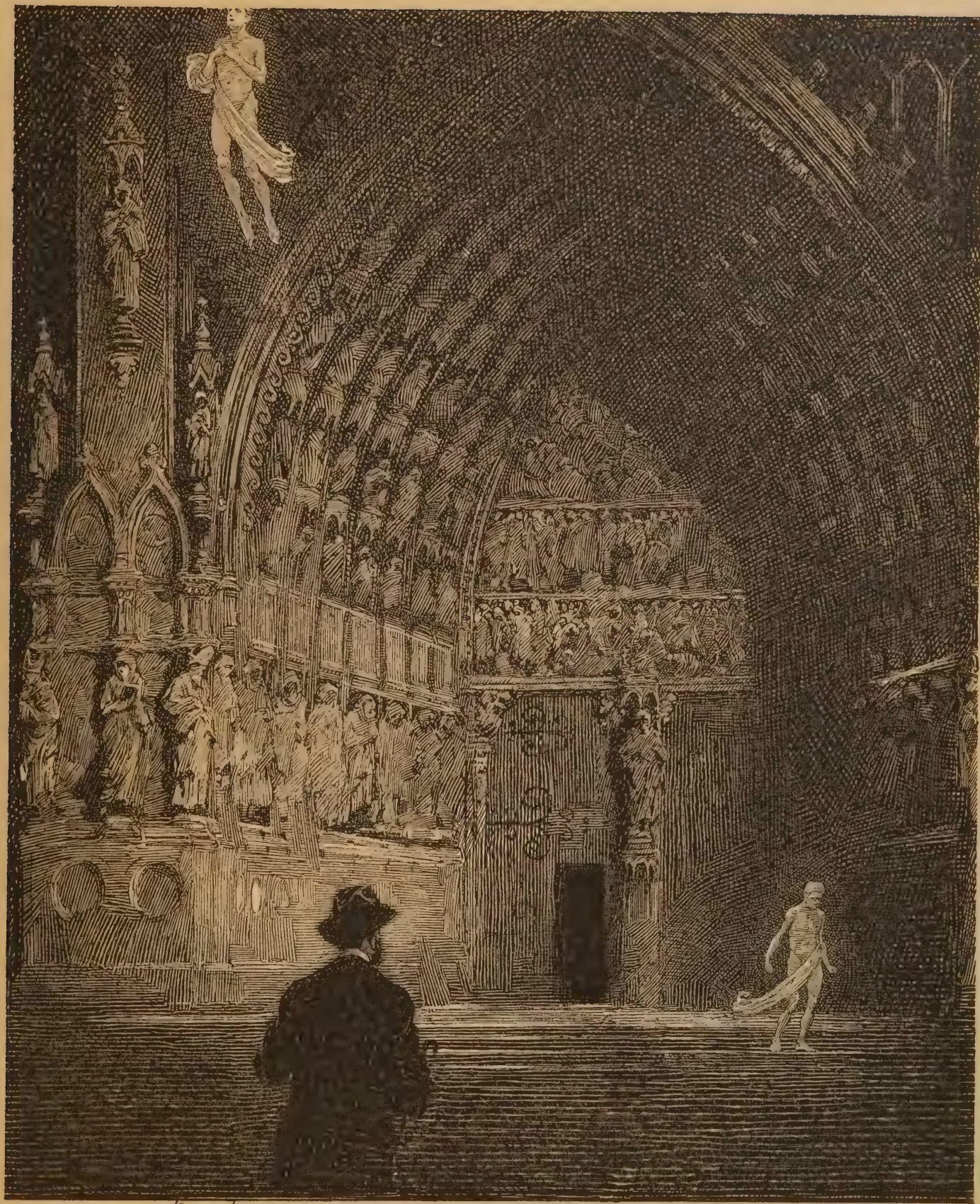


F. B. W. S. 18 - 5



Frederick S. S. S.





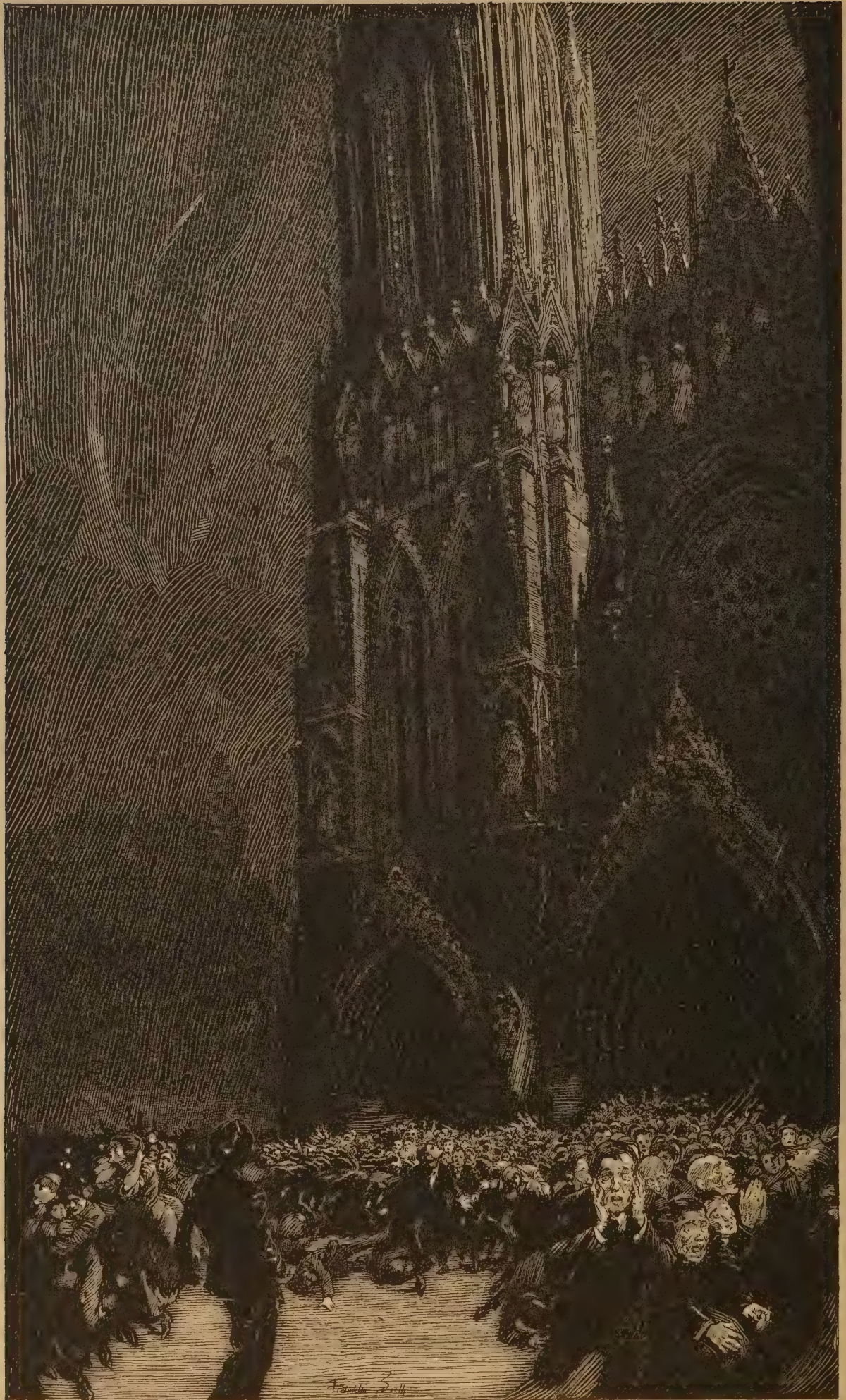
Franklin South.







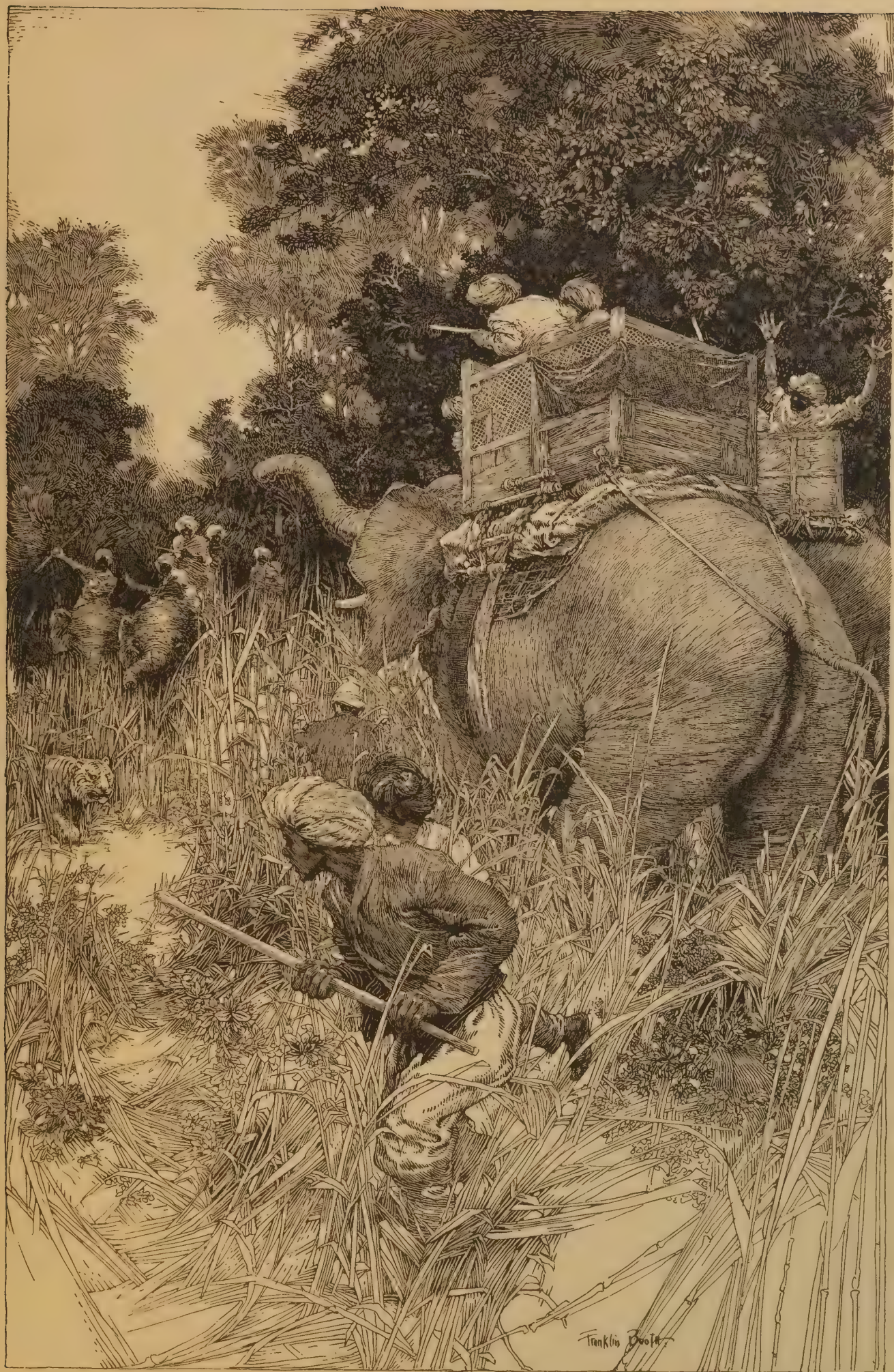








40 HUNTING THE TIGERS







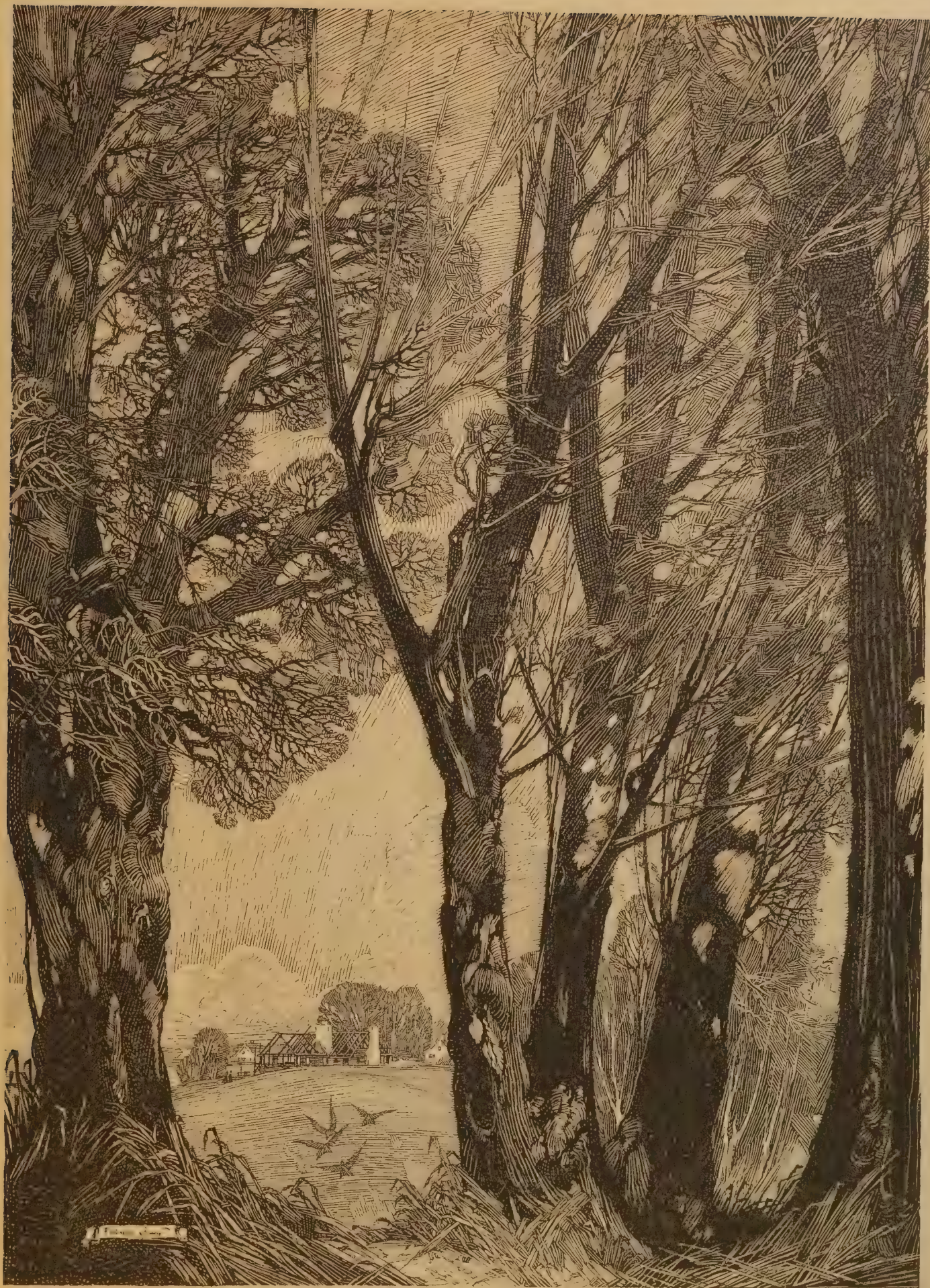


44 HARBOR IN THE MORNING





46 GARDEN AT PONTA DEL GADA





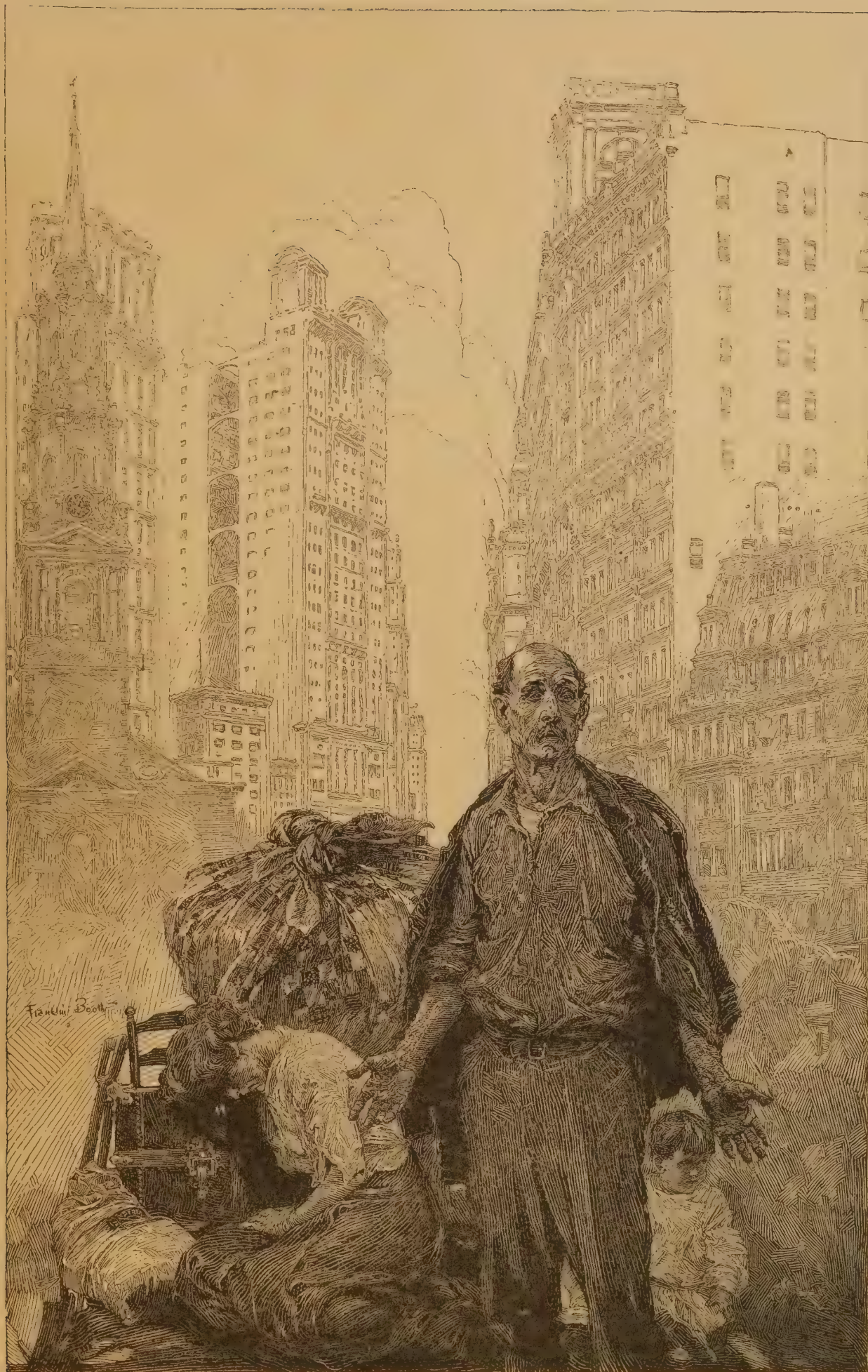


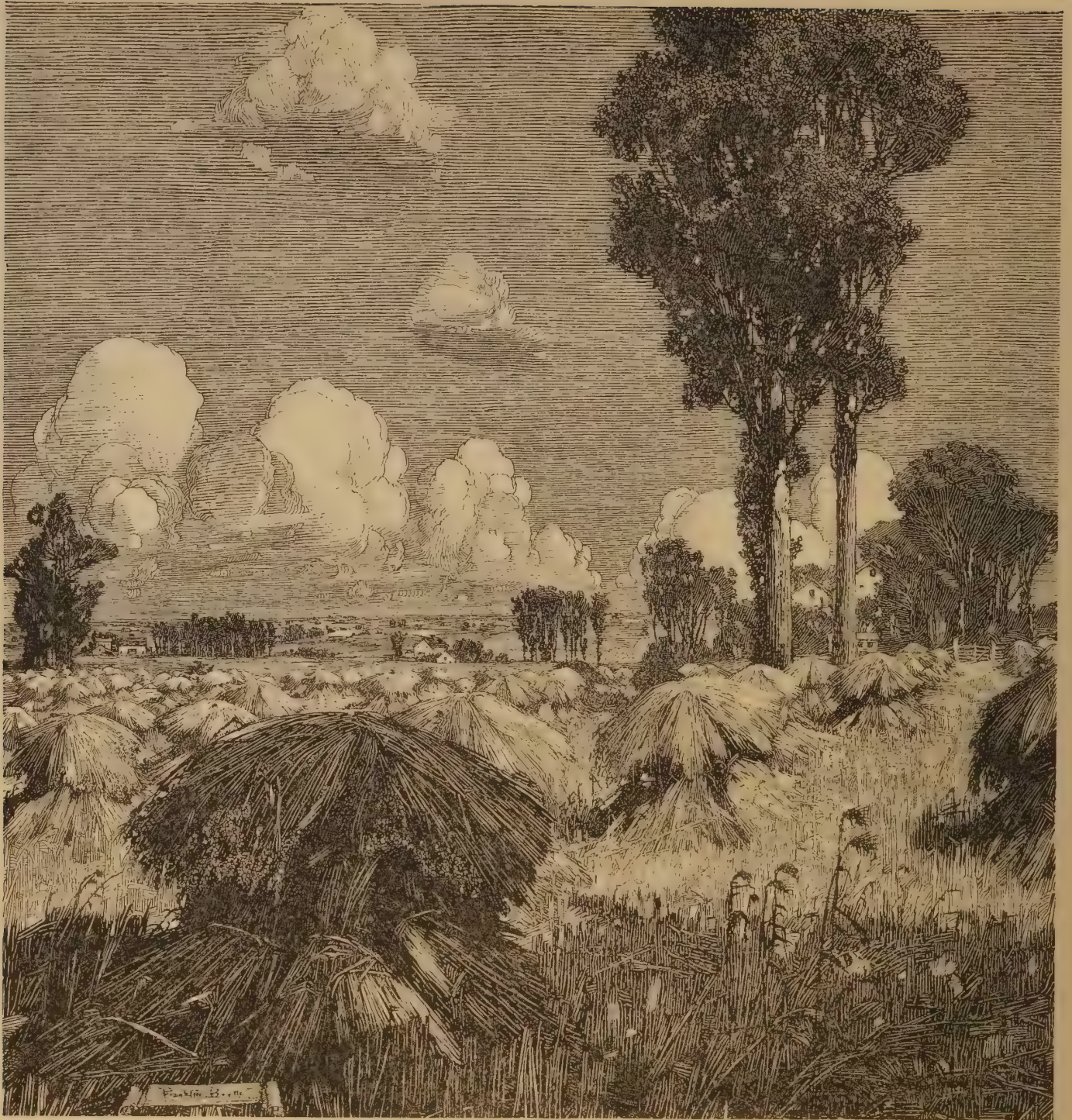


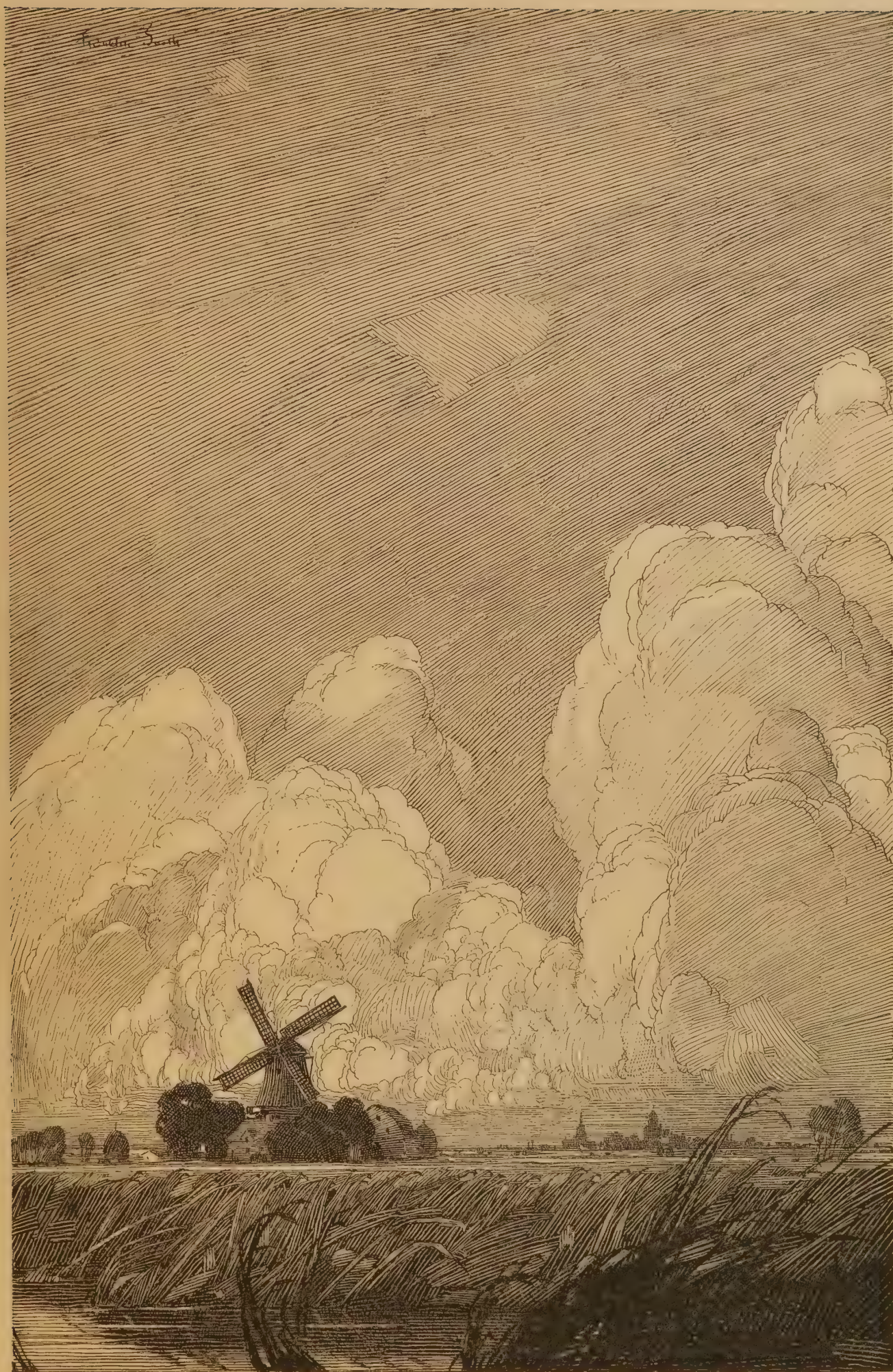
50 EASTER PRAYER





















60 DECORATION

Jan Amick



GETTY CENTER LIBRARY



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