

**A short account of the origin, symptoms, and most approved method of treating the putrid bilious fever, vulgarly called the black vomit: which appeared in the city of the Havanna, with the utmost violence, in the months of June, July and part of August, 1794. As practiced by Mr. John Holliday, an English surgeon resident in that city / [John Holliday].**

### **Contributors**

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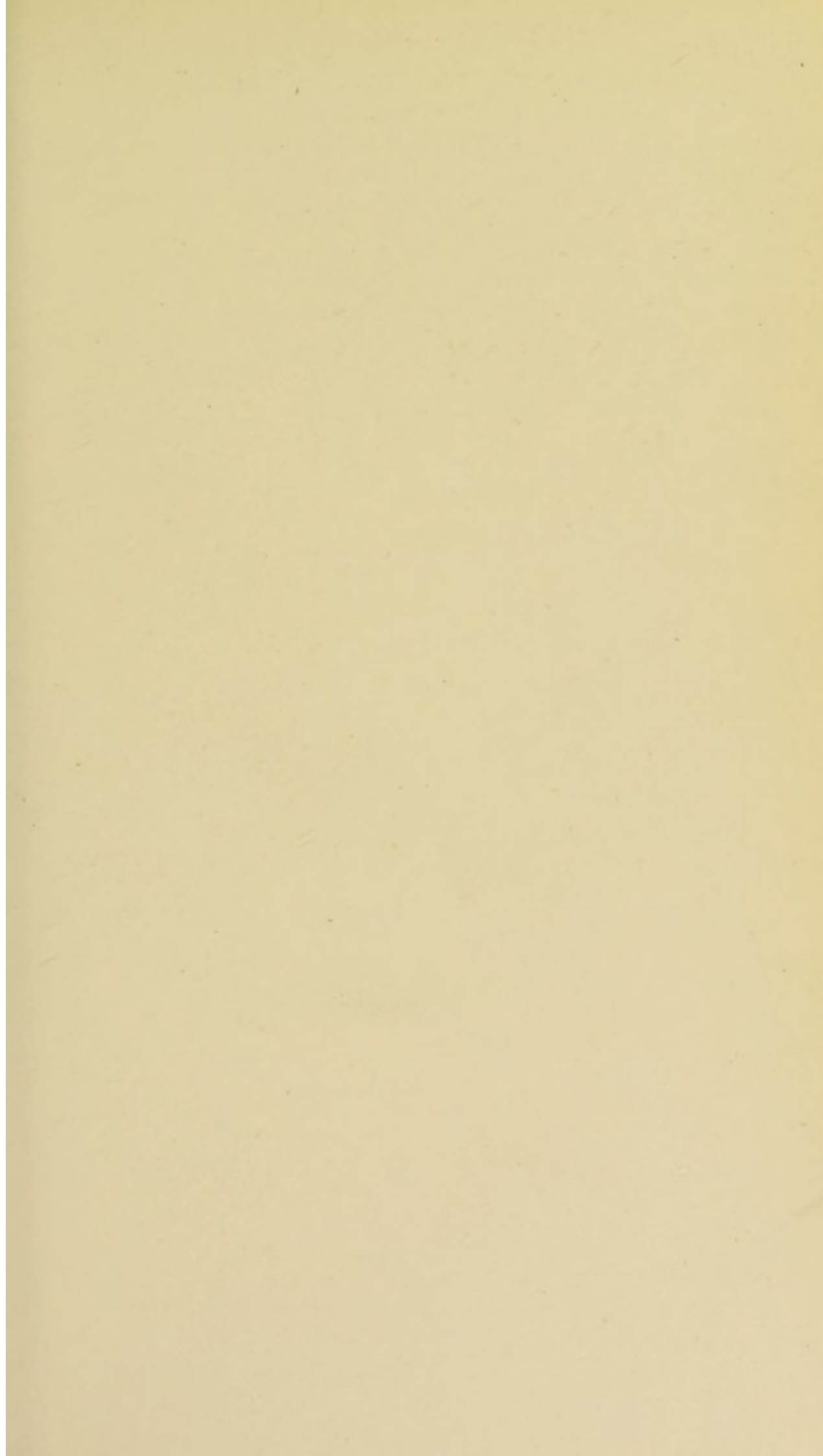
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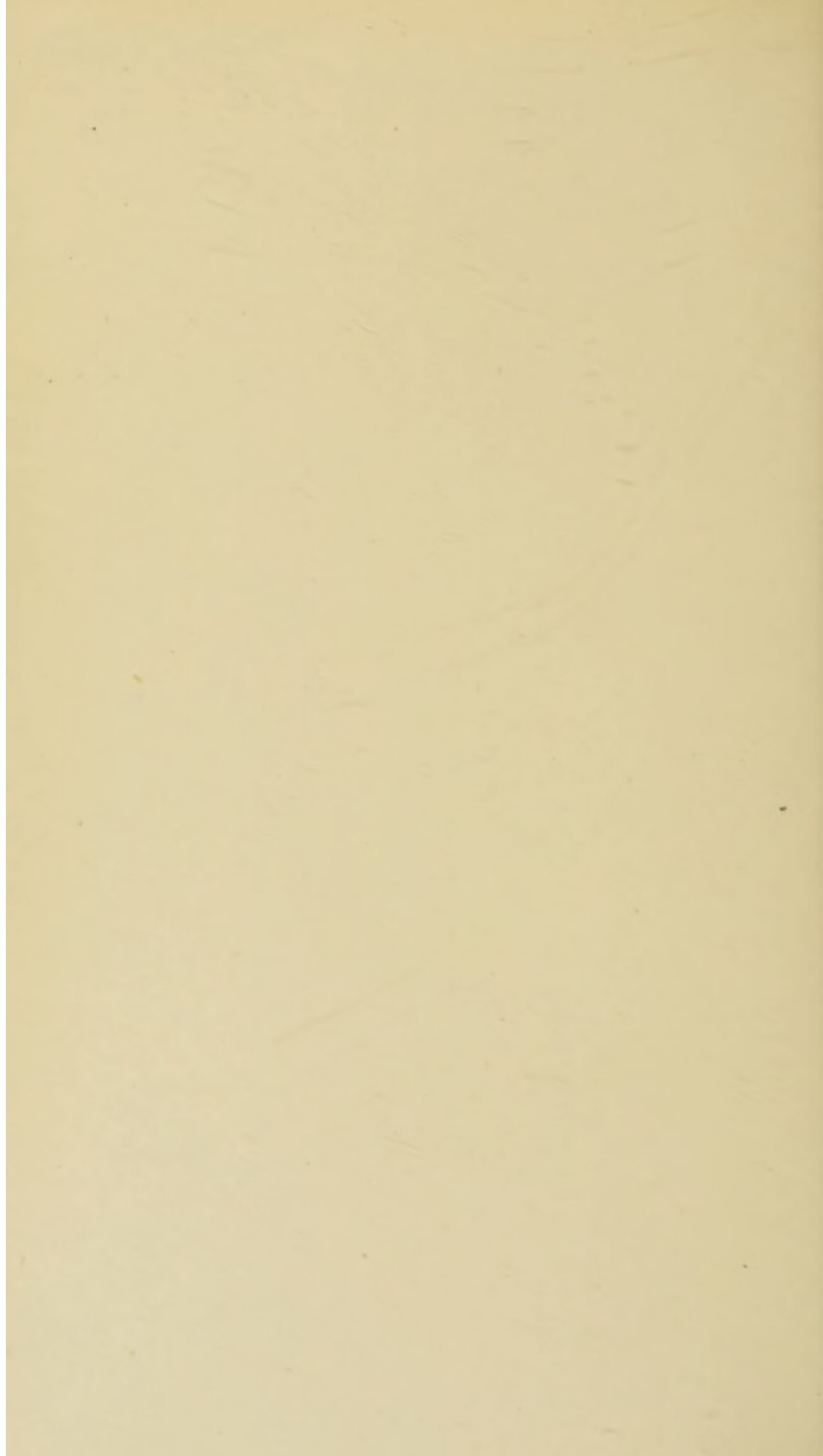


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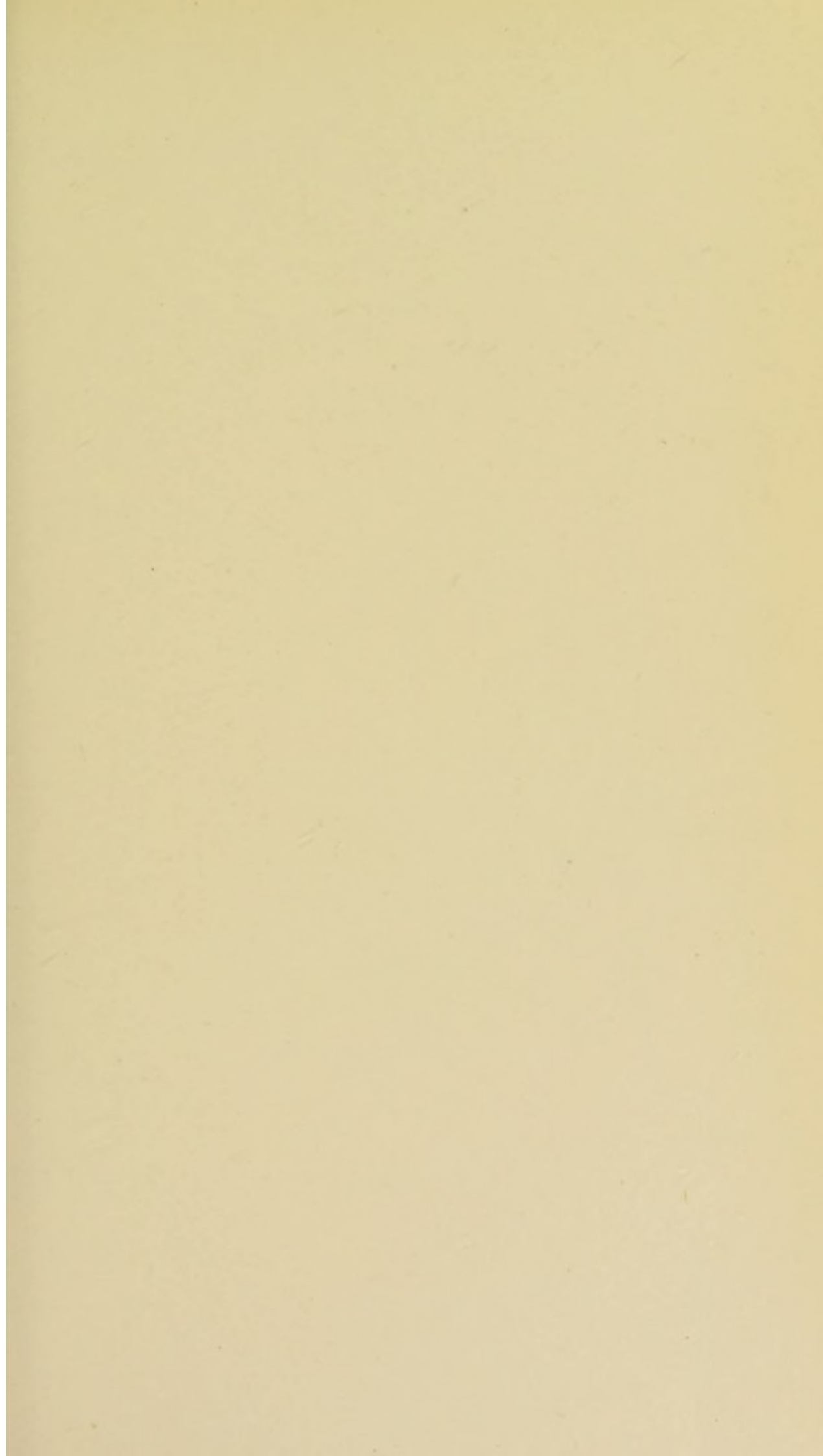
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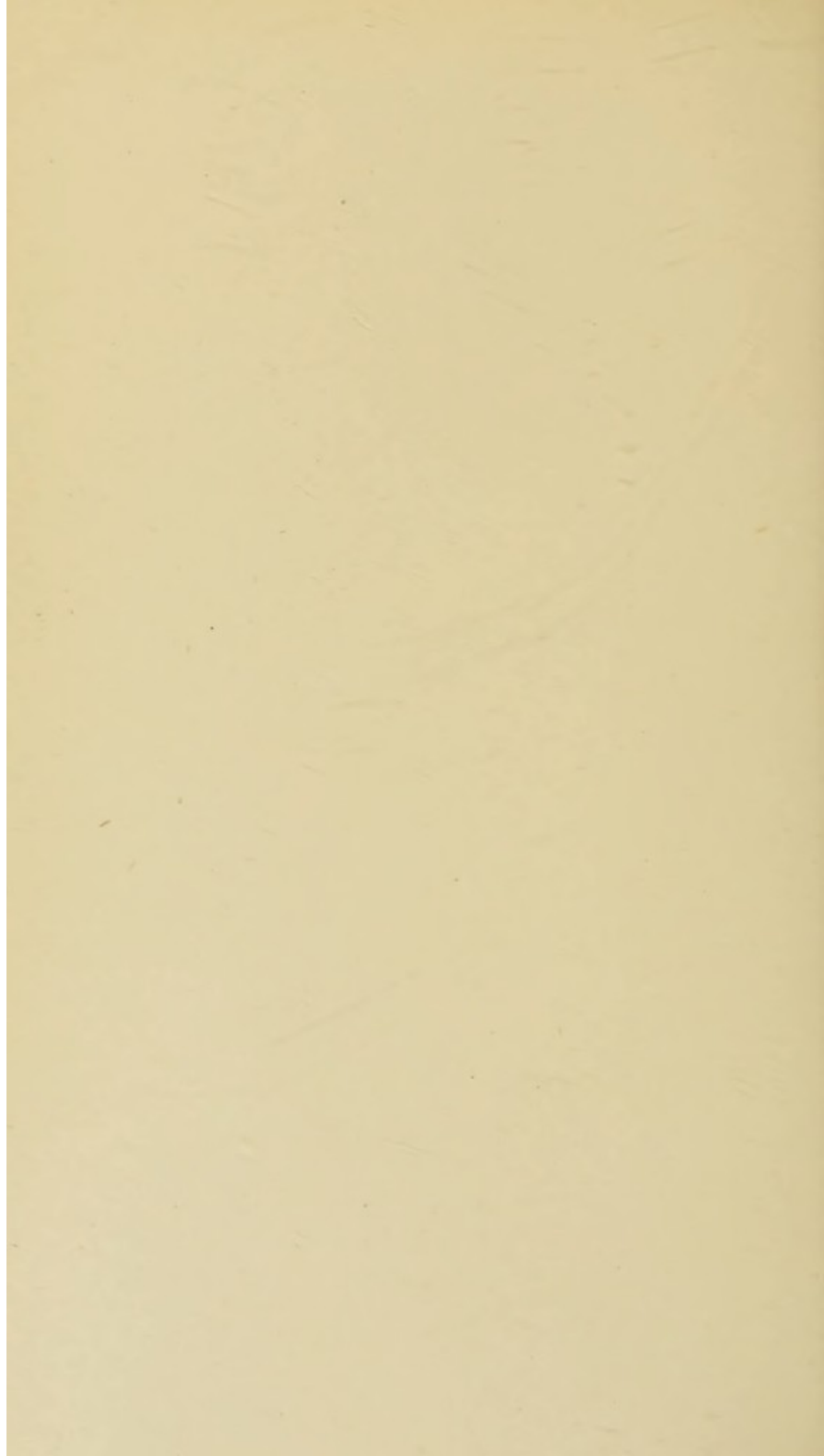
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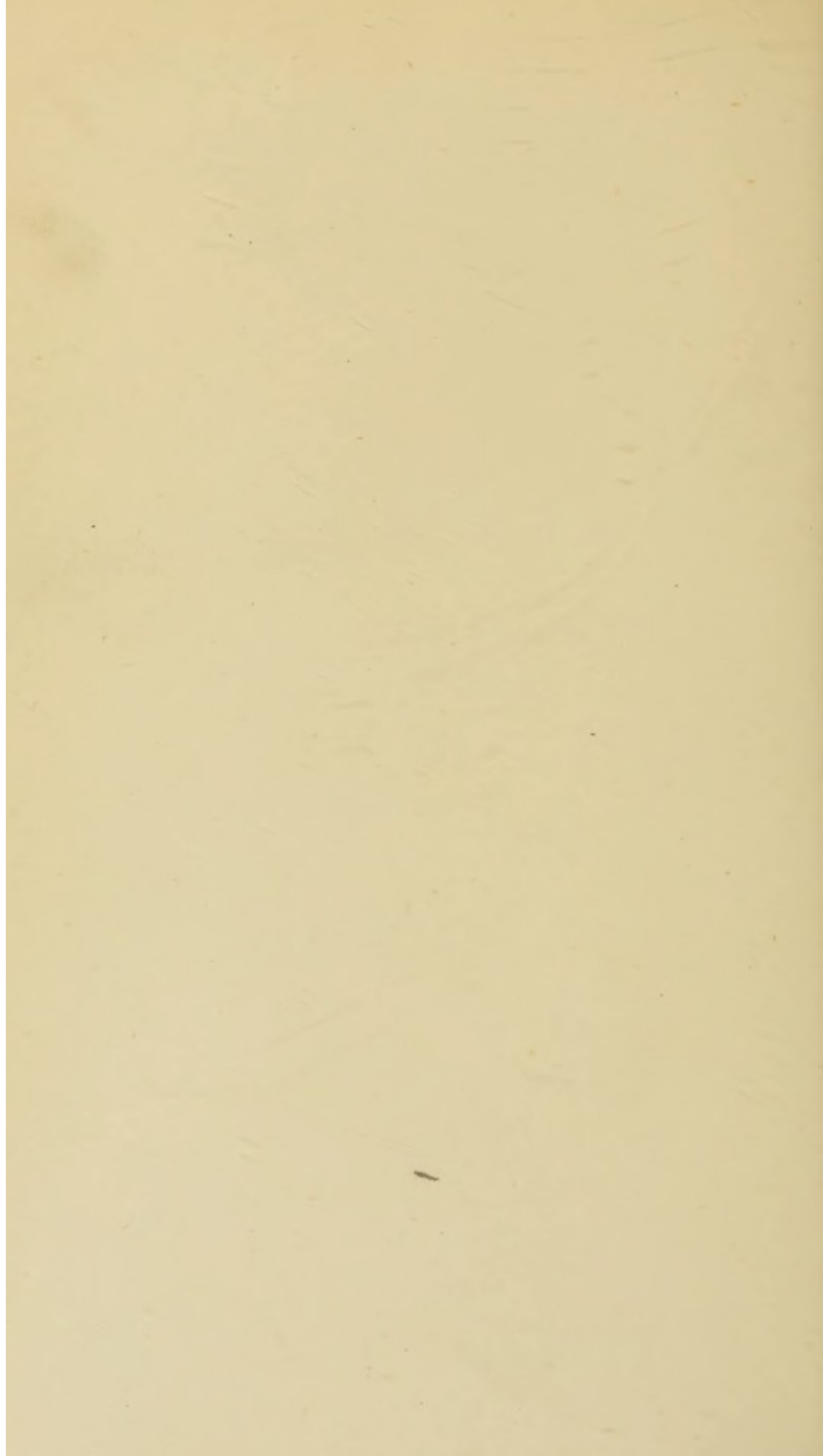


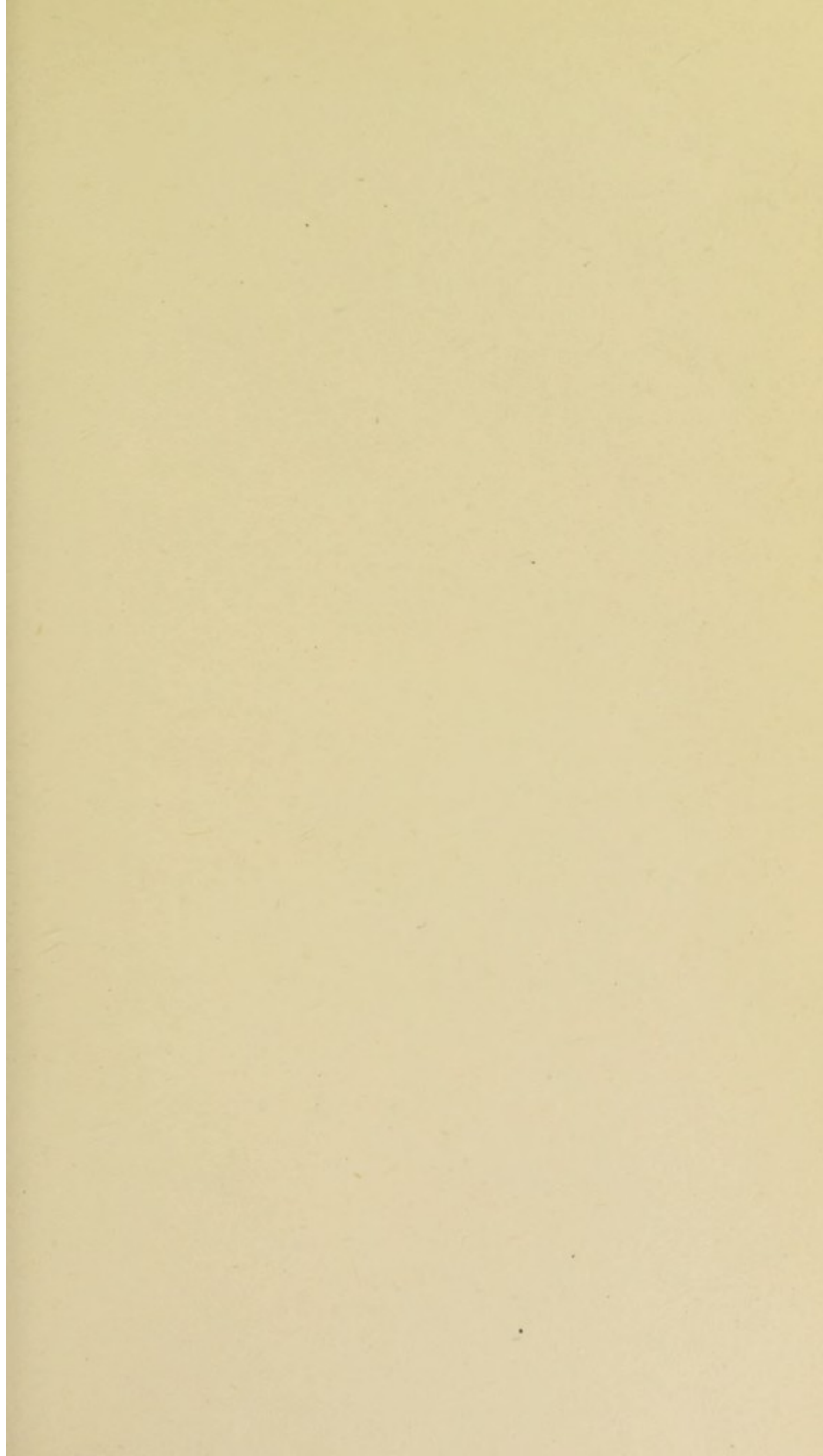


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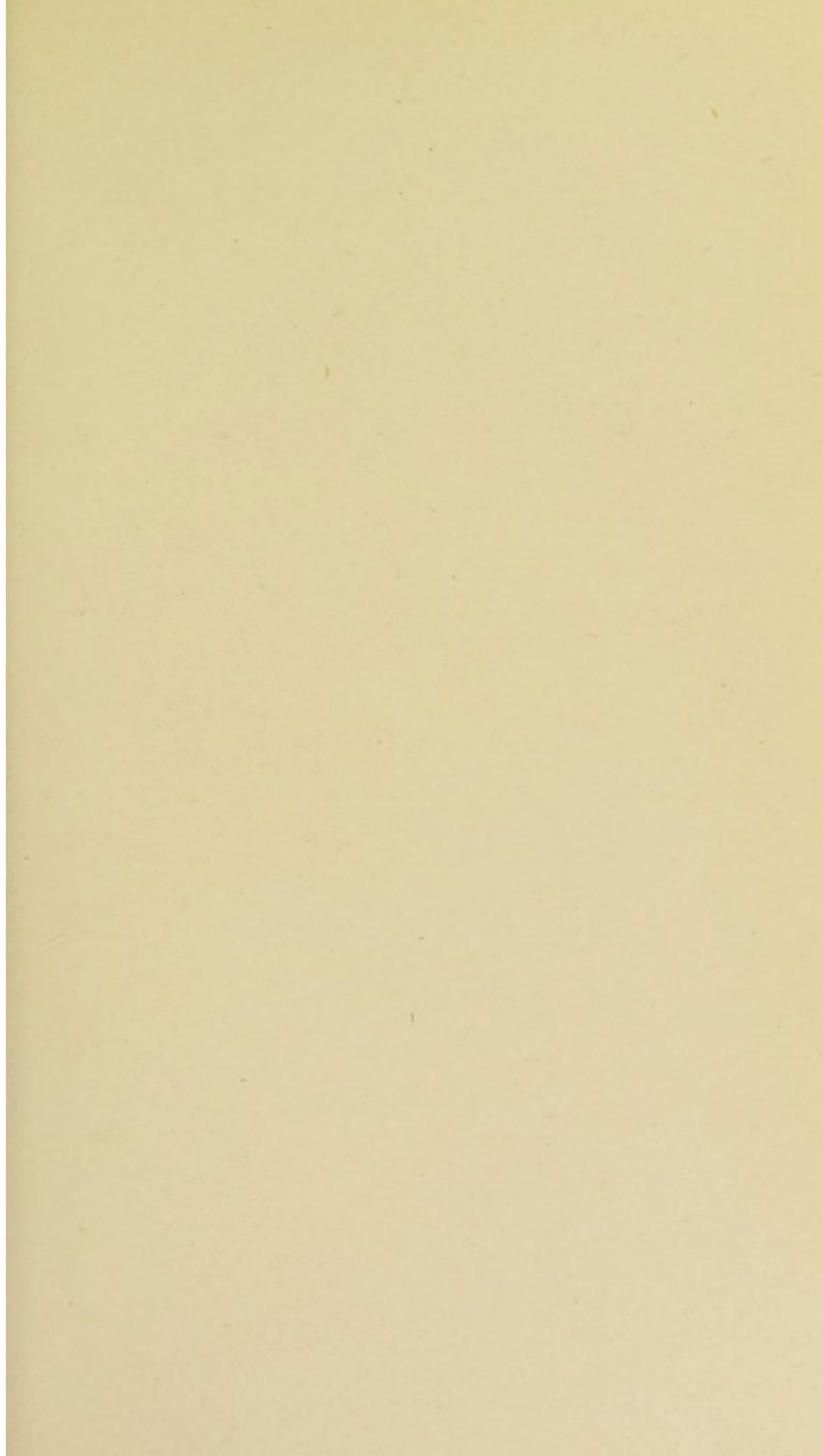
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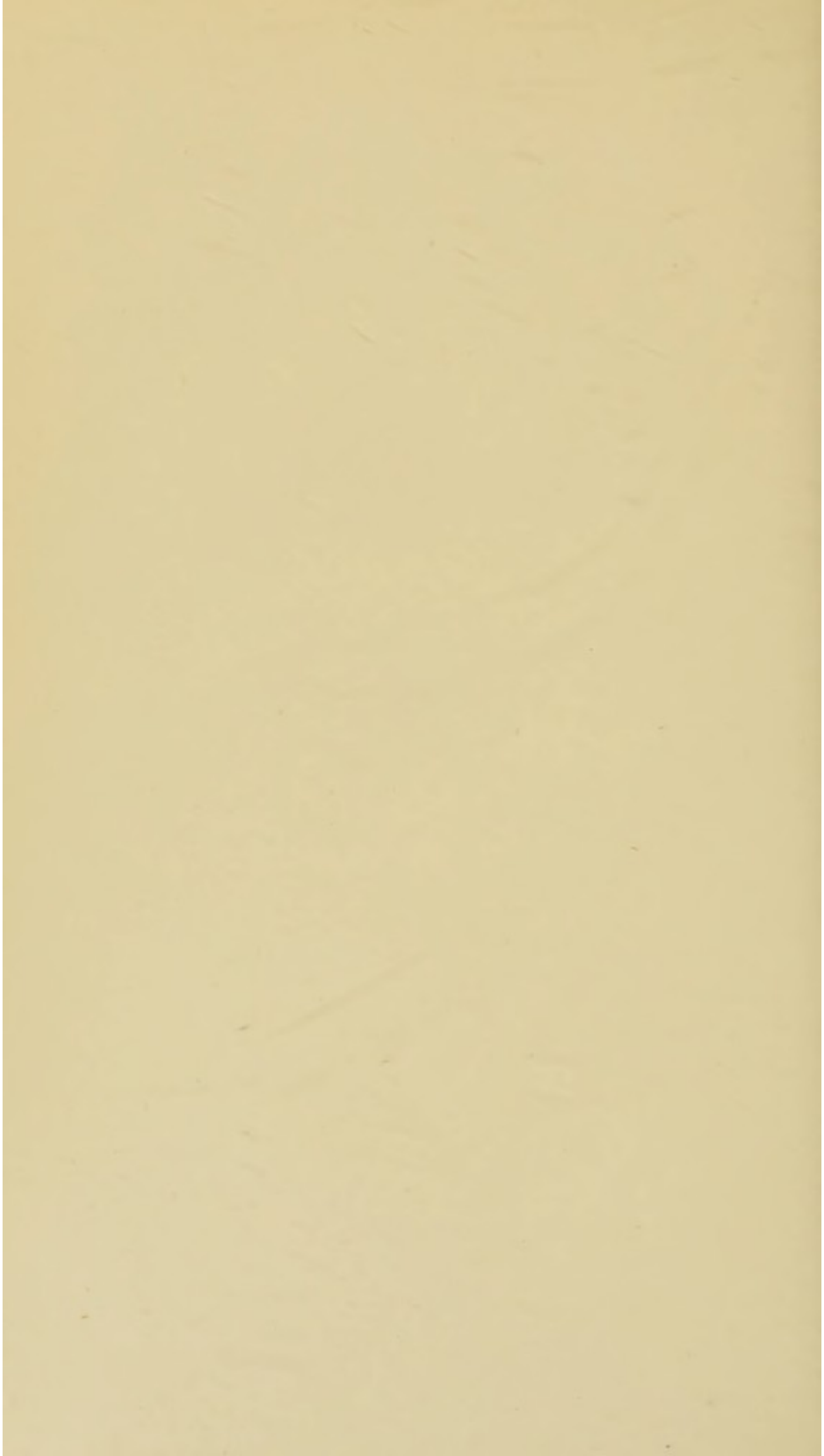


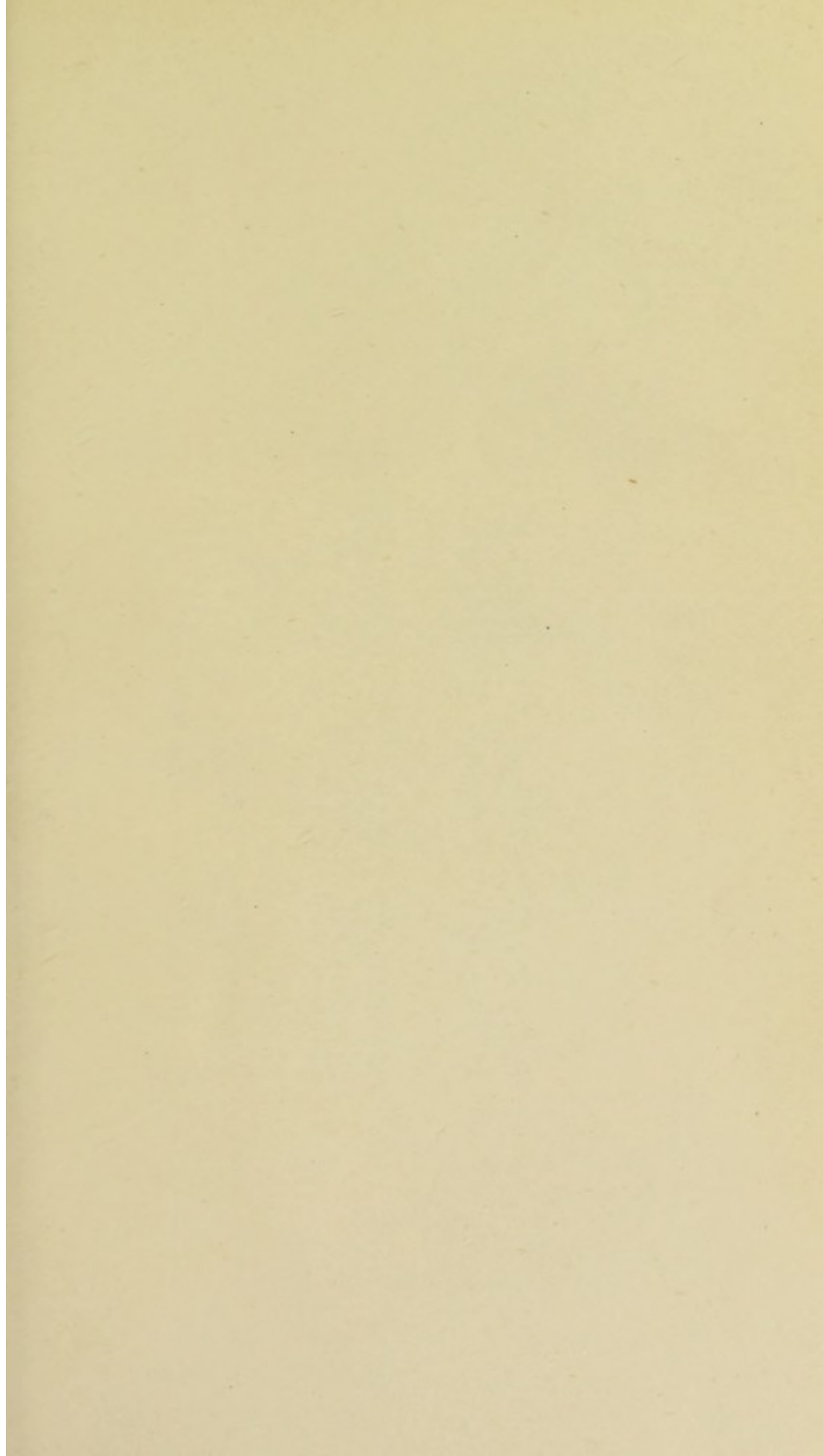




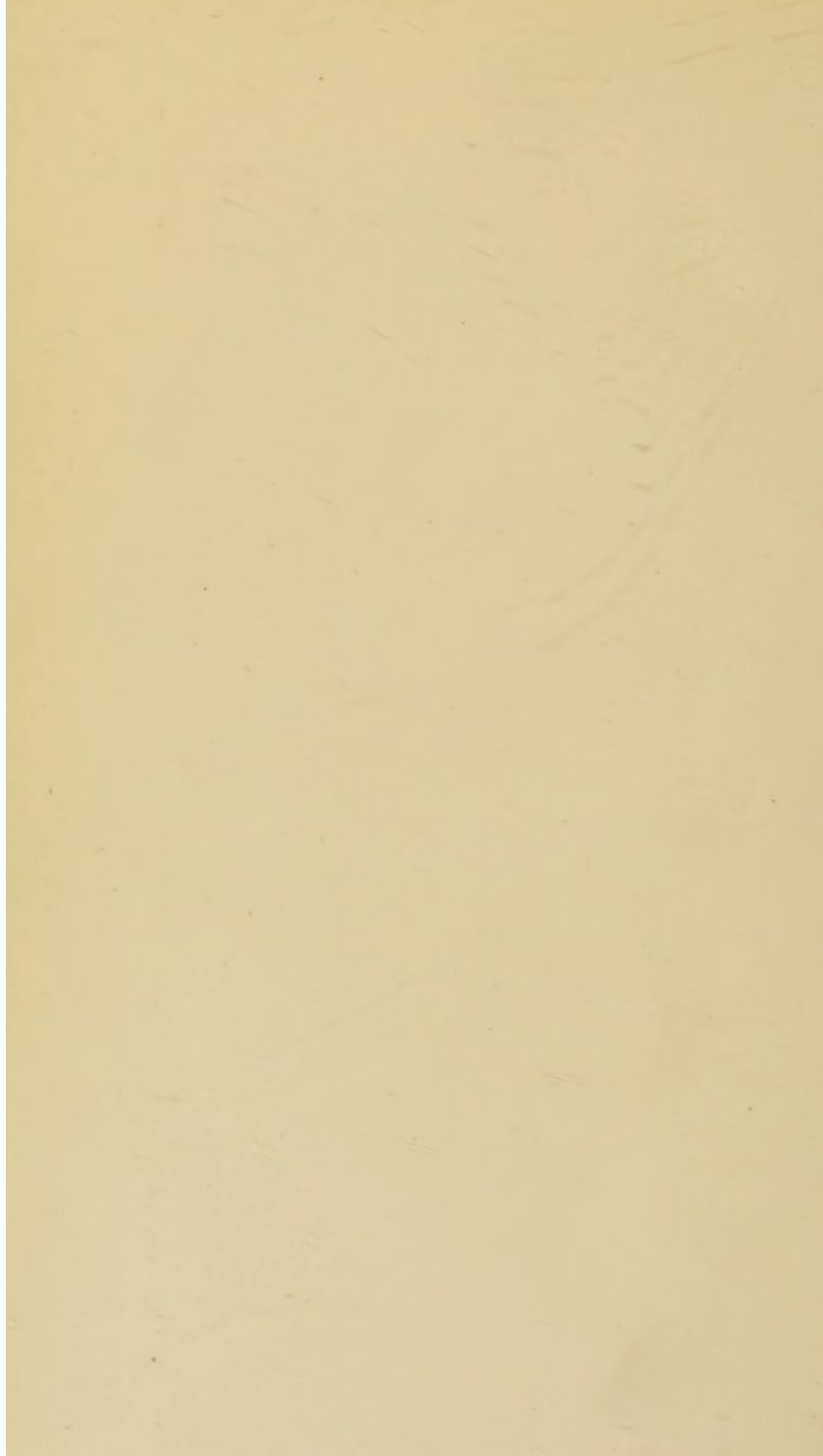












*Dr. Ke*

ORIGIN, AND METHOD OF TREATING,

THE

PUTRID BILIOUS FEVER.

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PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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ORIGIN, SYMPTOMS, AND MOST APPROVED  
METHOD OF TREATING

THE PUTRID BILIOUS FEVER,

VULGARLY CALLED

THE BLACK VOMIT:

Which appeared in the CITY of the HAVANNA, with the  
UTMOST VIOLENCE, in the Months of JUNE, JULY,  
and Part of AUGUST, 1794.

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AS PRACTISED BY

MR. JOHN HOLLIDAY,

An ENGLISH SURGEON resident in that CITY,

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FALMOUTH;

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BRANDER,

LONDON:

REPRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

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1795,





## TO THE PUBLIC.

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WHEN I was lately at the Havanna, the following mode of treating the Yellow Fever, had, by its success, become the theme of general conversation: The ravages this disorder committed in Jamaica, were too recent in my memory, for me to pass unnoticed so interesting an account. I accordingly obtained the Recipes, and with them, most undoubted and authentic testimonies.—The following Letter will shew why I cannot lay the latter before the Public at this time. Humanity induces me to this Publication, and if, on a fair trial, the Medicines are found to be useful in remedying the fatal Malady, the knowledge of having been of service to my fellow-creatures, will prove an ample recompence to

Their obedient Servant,

WILLIAM HUNTER.

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Montego-



*Montego-Bay, 20th June, 1795.*

*MR. WILLIAM HUNTER,*

SIR,

THE Spanish Certificate which you gave me on Friday before the Fire to translate into English, relative to the Medicines made use of at the Havanna, to cure the Yellow Fever is mislaid among my papers, but I can say with truth, that I have read the whole, and it is authenticated by the Governor, a Lieutenant-Governor, a Colonel of the Army, and Mr. Allwood, of the Havanna, who certify the great benefit received from using it, by the Army and Men of War. The Lieutenant-Governor further says, that he gave a copy of the Recipe to an Officer on board the frigate *La Rosa*, bound for Vera Cruz, and that he had the pleasure to say, that it had the desired effect there; and was afterwards requested by this and other Gentlemen,

his

his friends, to procure a full Copy of the said Recipe, mode of treatment, &c. and to send it to them.—It is certain that these Medicines are made use of at the Havanna, and the many Cures performed by them, are certified by the principal Officers and other Gentlemen of that City.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

*DAVID OROBIO FURTADO.*

the friends, as I receive a full copy of the  
the friends, as I receive a full copy of the  
found it to be so. It is a copy of the  
distance are made up of the friends  
the friends, as I receive a full copy of the  
found it to be so. It is a copy of the  
distance are made up of the friends

I and dear Sir,  
I am most humbly  
Yours Obedient Servant



METHOD OF TREATING  
THE  
BILIOUS PUTRID FEVER, &c.

---

IN the month of June, 1794, the ship Lord Stanley, Captain Farquhar, laden with Negroes, and her Crew enjoying the most perfect health, arrived at the Havanna; this felicity was of so little duration, that after a few days of her arrival, she suffered so much from the above disorder, that, in the course of fifteen or sixteen days, she lost nineteen out of twenty-four officers and seamen that fell sick. The disorder successively made its progress not only in the different Men of War and Ships in that harbour, but also in the city and country places, so that in about two months, more than two thousand persons amongst the different ranks of people fell a sacrifice to it; there were ships of three and four hundred

men, which remained with only forty or fifty; and in general, its most baneful effects were among the Marines. On the 27th of August, at night, there arose a most furious Storm, which (though with the loss of many of our Vessels) delivered them from that mournful and deplorable calamity.

The contrary opinions amongst the Faculty has been great, as much in respect to the symptoms, as in the method of cure, and also in recognizing the disorder.

But, as my intention is not to enter into the different opinions of every one, I shall endeavour to give a short, but compendious relation of the symptoms, together with the method of cure, which I adopted with the greatest success on one hundred and fifty persons. The disorder, as I have said, first of all appeared on board the ship Lord Stanley, though I believe, by information which I afterwards had, it originated in a vessel from Philadelphia, where it raged with great violence. On the 6th day of June, there fell sick eleven men of the Lord Stanley, and the  
number



number increased, as I have already mentioned. The symptoms of the disorder were various, and in some, it terminated life in twenty-four hours from the first attack, and with others, it endured until the tenth day. The characteristic symptoms of the disease, as it shewed itself in this City, were as follows : The day preceding its attack, the patient commonly feels a heaviness, weariness, a general debility in the whole body, yawning, and want of appetite ; the day following, or on the night of the first indisposition, the violence of the disorder begins thus : the patient will be found perplexed, uneasy, generally with slight pains in different parts of the body, particularly in the head, loins, &c. accompanied with a small chilliness in the extremities, (although there were many who did not feel this) attributing this to a slight cold, until unexpectedly he is seized with a severe degree of fever, with a great heat all over the body, a flushing in the face, heaviness and redness in the eyes, and a longing after fresh air, the tongue white, and excessive thirst, interior pains of the head, &c. the pulse



quick, full, and hard, at times, feeble and irregular, a nausea, heaviness, and an uneasy sensation in the stomach, from the beginning, and the whole increasing with the disorder, particularly after taking something to quench the thirst ; the anxiety and uneasiness then encreased, with vomiting a great abundance of bilious matter, the skin hot and dry, intense heat, with pain in the region of the precordia, the respiration difficult, and the urine high-coloured and little in quantity : the symptoms continued twenty-four or forty-eight hours, and at times I have seen them endure until the third or fourth day, differing in some of the symptoms, together with the times of its duration, according to the age, constitution, or malignity with which it had increased : When in the midst of these complicated and violent symptoms, there was an apparent cessation, and total relief from them, a slight perturbation and inclination to sleep only remaining.

From such favourable appearances, we prognosticated we had gained the desired crisis, and a total intermission of the disease ;  
but



but, to the misfortune of the unhappy patient, at this time (by a minute examination) we observed on the white of the eyes a slight yellowish tinge, and successively in every other part of the body, accompanied with a perturbation of the intellectual functions, a glossy appearance of the eyes, the anxiousness and vomiting were augmented in such a manner, that they impeded the administration of nourishment or medicine: At this time, instead of experiencing that irresistible and burning heat which was before complained of, the patient feels chilly, and the cutis is alternately dry and moist, the pulse sinking, and very irregular, the urine of an high creaceous appearance, and at times resembling liquid and corrupted blood, depositing, as I have often seen, a black and offensive sediment: The tongue is in some, dry, parched, and discoloured, and in others, it is furred and moist. This stage of the disorder lasted but a few hours in some, and in others, from twenty-four to forty-eight, but seldom longer; and it is in this second stage when the medicines have not produced the desired effects,

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the beginning of the disorder neglected or improperly treated, when we see the direful efforts made between life and death, the pulse diminishing, more irregular and intermittent, nothing can be kept on the stomach, the vomiting increases with repeated efforts, voiding a black corrupted matter, similar to the grounds of coffee, the tongue and edges of the lips black and sticking, cold clammy sweats; the universal yellowness, together with the aggravation of all the symptoms, are demonstrative of the near approach of death: A total suppression of urine, *subfultus tendinum*, a death-like coldness of the extremities, tremblings, delirium, efforts of getting up from bed, a muttering voice, blood oozing from the mouth, nostrils, and many times from the corners of the eyes, ears, &c. black and fœtid stools, livid spots on different parts of the body, particularly on the regions of the precordia; hiccups, coma, and death.

These are the characteristic symptoms of the disorder, according as it shewed itself in  
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the City, varying, as I have already mentioned, in different persons, particularly being observed to act with the greatest violence, and most fatal termination, in men of a robust habit of body, new comers, and those addicted to spirituous liquors ; and very prevalent with the sea-faring people, by their having been much exposed to the rays of the sun, inclemency of the weather, and that neglect of cleanliness too usual among them. The truth is, that the fluids in all who laboured under the complaint, continually demonstrated the greatest tendency to a state of dissolution and putrefaction ; and if those of the Faculty who have written so voluminously on the disorder, would have observed with more attention, that high degree of tendency of the fluids to dissolution and putrefaction, they would not have insisted on the use of such extensive bleeding, which, from experience, we have every reason to believe, has been the cause of so great a mortality.

I shall now describe, in the most concise manner possible, that particular method of cure which I used with the greatest success  
on



on upwards of one hundred and fifty patients labouring under this complaint, without the loss of one. On the 6th day of June, I was called by the Captain of the Lord Stanley, to the assistance of the sick of his crew, whom I thought proper should be sent on shore, as much for the benefit of attendance, air, &c. as to remove them from where they had caught the first infection. Imagining their complaint to have been of the intermittent or bilious fever common to the place, of little importance, and less malignity, according to the custom of fevers of that kind, (and ignorant of the fatal consequences which were about to ensue) I made use of emetics, antimonials, &c. until the result of experience convinced me of my error. Moved with compassion, and always in hopes of future success, I thought, with many others, that by the fullness of the pulse, together with other inflammatory symptoms which the disorder manifested, the patient could probably be relieved by bleeding, which method I immediately put in practice, using it from the lesser to the greatest degree, on a great number of patients,



patients, but without the least probable benefit; rather to the contrary, hurrying on their miserable existence. Although I saw, and remarked these direful consequences, I followed for some time, the common and general method amongst the Faculty, until convinced of my mistake, and very erroneous practice, I desisted from the lancet, and assumed another method widely different, which, by Divine Providence, gained the desired effect.

I am every day more surprized, when I see medical men order bleeding in such quantities, *usque animi deliquium*; and having seen such fatal consequences arising from it, I am obliged to say, and really to believe, that those gentlemen who used it in such disorders to so great an excess, have either not met with that tendency in the fluids to a dissolution and putrid state, which here made itself apparent, or that they had but little practice, or paid but little attention to the different symptoms and termination of the disease. Having already explained the fatal consequences arising



ing from bleeding, experienced from my own practice, and the innumerable ones I had the opportunity of seeing under the care of others, it is my opinion, that whoever has been so fortunate as to escape from this dreadful disease, by the use, or rather the abuse, of blood-letting, it arose from his entire vigour and robust habit of body ; or the little tendency of the fluids to dissolution and putrefaction ; and all those that have survived this method of cure, have been under a state of convalescence for two, three, or four months, and frequently the disorder terminated in remittents, or intermittents of the most difficult cure.

In no stage of this disorder, can emetics or antimonials be administered, owing to the irritable state of the stomach, and its propensity to vomit, that when once stirred up, (that terrible and direful symptom) it is almost out of the power of medicine to moderate it, or even to admit the purgatives so necessary, and the only medicines which, from experience, have been proved to be the  
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principal part of the cure. Any person that has come into these hot climates, and who has exposed himself to either of the causes which produce this Fever, has sufficient warning, if he would attend to it, and sufficient time to cure it by anticipation; because, as soon as the Patient feels any extraordinary heaviness in the body, with weariness, a stretching and yawning, and particularly when followed by a severe attack of the fever, intense pains of the head, &c. he then has very sufficient reasons of being certified that it is the beginning of the disorder, which is coming on with all the violent and customary symptoms: This is the time that the Faculty ought to cut off the arms of the enemy, not by bleeding, (as a greater part of the profession order) but with active and continual purges, until an entire cessation, or total ease, is obtained from all the symptoms. When one of the Faculty is certified of his opinion, either by the disorder being prevalent, or by the symptoms which characterize it, without more delay or loss of time, he should administer the following Medicine in  
three



three parts, with the interval of two hours between each, and the suitable nourishment between one and the other.

RECIPE.----Take best Glauber Salts, one ounce; best Manna, three ounces; mix and dissolve them in a pint decoction of Tamarinds, strained.

This Medicine is administered with intention of effecting an immediate and plentiful evacuation, with the greatest facility, and without the irritation the drastic purges usually cause; for which reason, I have generally adopted this method, not only in the beginning of the disease, but also in different cases, when it reached the terrible stage of the black vomiting; and always with equal success, constantly procuring a total alleviation and entire intermission of all the symptoms; continuing the use of the medicine, according to the age, strength, and violence of the disorder, there having occurred different cases, in which, through the  
violence

violence of the disorder, a difficulty in some to evacuate, and an urgency of the vomitings, I have been obliged to repeat the said quantity twice or three times in twenty-four hours, observing the same regimen until it effected the desired purpose, which it generally did in twenty-four or forty-eight hours, and in very obstinate cases, on the third or fourth day. In these violent cases, when on the first dose of the said medicine an evacuation did not ensue so copiously as was desired, it was then assisted with the common purging clysters, or rather better with a mixture of salt water and oil of olives, which, by the irritation that it created in the *intestinum rectum*, rarely, or never failed of producing the desired effect. The fortunate remission or crisis of the fever being already accomplished, the irritation must in its turn be attended to, as much for whatever it brings along with it, as for the purging medicines so often repeated, though administered with the aforesaid precautions. I ordered what follows:

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RECIPE.



RECIPE.---Take white Decoction, (with Cinchona and Tamarinds) a pound; Nitre in powder, a dram and a half or two drams; Crabs Eyes, two scruples; Syrup of Violets, one ounce, mixed.

And repeated it twice, thrice, and four times, (dividing the said dose into three parts, allowing an intermediate space of three hours between each) until I found the pulse soft, easy, and regular, which it will attain on the second or third day. Finally, to compleat the Cure, to restore and recover the stomach and other viscera from their state of relaxation, and at the same time, to evacuate easily the remainder of the disorder, I used the following

RECIPE.---Take Peruvian Bark, two ounces; Snake-Root, half an ounce; mix and boil them in two pints of water, until there remains one pint and a half, strain, and add Extract of Bark, two drams; Tincture of Rhubarb, two ounces;

In order that the quantity of two or three ounces might be taken every second or third hour, continuing this or any other preparation of the Peruvian Bark, until the Patient is found entirely re-established and free from every incumbrance, which rarely exceeds the sixth, eighth, or tenth day from the first attack. When the symptoms were violent, and apparently about to terminate fatally, after a plentiful evacuation, or on the first remission, I administered the febrifuge mixture of the Peruvian Bark, &c. in a great quantity, and always fortunately, not having failed in one of my endeavours after I put in practice these simple, though powerful Medicines.

During the time this Disorder lasted in Vera Cruz, copies of these Recipes were carried thither; and, I have the satisfaction to add, were used with the greatest success in every case to which they were applied.

F I N I S.



JUST PUBLISHED, PRICE 2s. 6d.

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THE THIRD EDITION

OF

THE MEDICAL POCKET-BOOK:

Containing a short but plain Account of the Symptoms, Causes, and Methods of Cure, of the Diseases incident to the Human Body; including such as require Surgical Treatment: together with the Virtues and Doses of Medicine, Compositions and Simples:

DIGESTED INTO ALPHABETICAL ORDER,

By JOHN ELLIOT, M. D.

Printed for J. JOHNSON, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

