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NARRATIVE

OF THE

DREADFUL SUFFERINGS

OF

SIX MEN,

Who left the Island of St Helena in a Whale Boat and putting to Sea were tossed about for 29 days, in which time they were so hard put to for provisions that they cast Lots who should die for the sustenance of the rest, when the Lot fell on one M Kinnon who bled himself to death, on which the rest subsisted for several days, when three of the six arrived at a Portuguese Settlement in South America.

The whole delivered upon Oath, by
JOHN BROWN, one of the Survivors

STIRLING:

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SUFFERINGS OF SOME DESERTERS.

Letters lately received from St. Helena, give a most singular and affecting narrative respecting six deserters from the Artillery of that Island. Their extraordinary adventures produced a Court of Inquiry on the 12th of December last, when John Brown, one of the survivors delivered the following account upon oath, before Captain Desfontain President; Lieutenant B. Hodson. and Ensign Young:

“ In June, 1799, I belonged to the first Company of Artillery in the service of this Garrison, And on the 10th of that month, about half an hour before parade time, M. Kinnon gunner and orderly of the 2d company asked me if I was willing to go with him on board of an American ship called the Columbra, Captain Henry Lelar the only ship then in the roads; after some conversation I agreed and met him about seven o'clock at the playhouse, where I found one M'Quin of Major Scale's company, another man called Brighthouse, another called Parr, and the sixth Matthew Conway.

“ Parr was a good seaman and said he would take us to the island of Ascension or lay of the harbour till the Columbra could weigh anchor and come out. We went down about eight o'clock to the West Rocks, where the American

boat was 'waiting for us. manned with three of the American seaman which took us along side the Columbra—We went on board—Parr went down into the cabin and we changed our clothes after having been on board half an hour

“ Brighthouse and Conway proposed to cut a whale boat from out of the harbour, to prevent Columbra from being suspected, which they effected, having therein a coil of rope and five oars, with a large stone she was moored by—this happened about eleven at night.

“ We observed lanthorns passing by the line towards the sea Gate and hearing a great noise thought we were missed and searched for. We immediately embarked in the whale boat, with about twenty-five pounds of bread in a bag and a small keg of water supposed to contain about thirteen gallons, one compass and one quadrant, given to us by the Commanding Officer of the Columbra—but in our hurry the quadrant was either left behind or dropped overboard.

“ We then left the ship, pulling with two oars only to get a head of her—the boat was half full of water, and nothing to bale her out—in this condition we rowed out to sea, and lay off the Island, a great distance, expecting the American ship hourly.

“ About 12 o'clock the second day, no ship appearing by Parr's advice we bore away. Steering N. by W. and then N. N. W. for the Island

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of Ascension, using our handkerchiefs as substitutes for sails, We met with a gale of wind which continued two days—the weather then became very fine, and we supposed we had run about ten miles an hour. M'Kinnon kept a reckoning with pen, ink, and paper, supplied by the Columbra as also charts and maps.

“ We continued our course till about the 18th in the morning when we saw a number of birds, but no land. About twelve that day Parr said he was sure we must be past the Island accounting it to be 800 miles from St Helena. We then each of us took our shirt, and with them made a small spirt-sail and laced our jacket and trowsers together at the waistband to keep us warm and then altered our course to W. by N thinking to make Rio de Janeiro on the American Coast. Provisions running very short we allowed ourselves only an ounce of bread for twenty-four hours and two mouthfuls of water.

“ We continued until the 20, when all our provisions were expended. On the 27th M Quin took a piece of bamboo in his mouth to chew, and we all followed the example. On that night it being my turn to steer the boat, and remembering to have read of persons in our situation eating their shoes. I cut a piece off one of mine; but it being soaked with salt water, I was obliged to spit out, and take the inside soal, which

eat part of, and distributed to the rest, but found no benefit from it.

“ On the 1st of July Mr Parr caught a dolphin with a gaff that had been left in the boat, we all fell on our knees and thanked God for his goodness to us. We tore up the fish, and hung it to dry: about four we eat part of it, which agreed with us pretty well. On this fish we subsisted till the 4th, about eleven o'clock, when finding the whole expended bones and all Parr, myself, Brighthouse, and Conway, proposed to scuttle the boat and let her go down, to put an end to our misery, the other two objected, observing that God who made man, always found him something to eat.

“ On the 5th, about eleven, M'Kinnon proposed that it would be better to cast lots for one of us to die in order to save the rest; to which we consented. The lots were made. William Parr being sick two days before with the spotted fever, was excluded. He wrote the numbers out and put them in his hat, which we drew out and unfolded, and put them in our pockets. Parr then asked whose lot it was to die?—none of us knowing what number we had in our pocket—each one praying to God that it might be his lot. It was agreed that No 5 should die, and the lots being unfolded M'Kinnon's was No. 5.

“ We had agreed that whose lot it was should sacrifice himself to death; for which purpose we

had provided ourselves with nails sharpened, which we got from the boat. M'Kinnon with one of them cut himself in three places, in his foot hand and wrist, and praying God to forgive him died in about a quarter of an hour.

“ Before he was quite cold, Brighthouse with one of those nails cut a piece of flesh off his thigh, and hung it up leaving his body in the boat. About three hours after, we all eat of it; only a very small bit. This piece lasted us until the 7th. We dipped the body every two hours into the sea to preserve it. Parr having found a piece of slate in the bottom of the boat he sharpened it on the other large stone and with it cut another piece of the thigh, which lasted us until the 8th, when it being my watch, and observing the water, about break of day to change colour, I called the rest thinking we were near shore, but saw no light it not being yet day light.

“ As soon as day appeared, we discovered land right a head, and steered towards it. About eight in the morning we were close to the shore, there being a very heavy surf, we endeavoured to turn the boat's head to it, but being very weak we were unable: soon after the boat up'd. Myself Conway, and Parr got on shore, M'Quinn and Brighthouse were drowned.

“ We discovered a small hut on the beach, in which were an Indian and his mother who spoke Portuguese, and understanding that language,

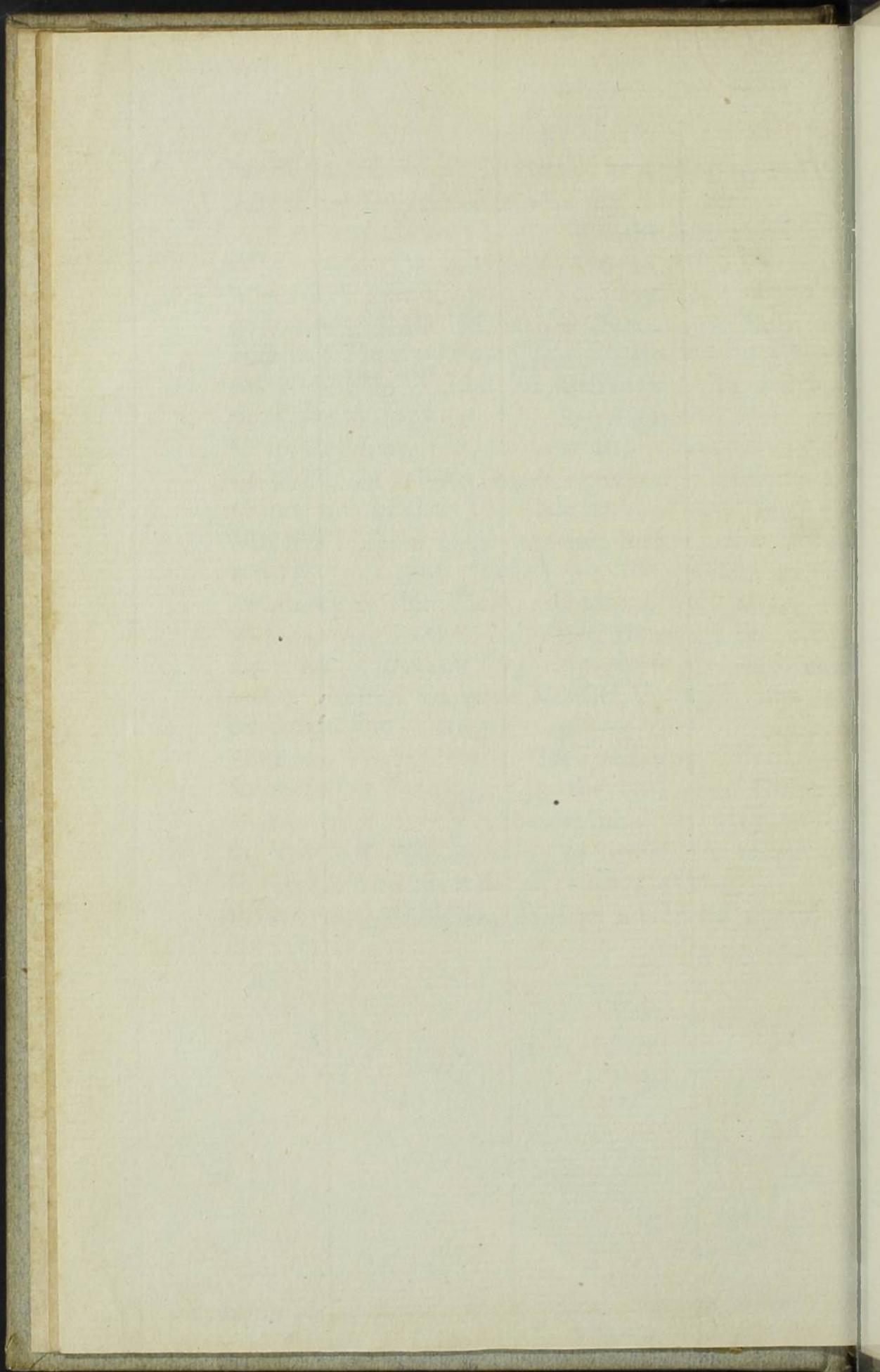
went that there was a village about three miles
 distance called Belmont—this Indian went to
 the village, and gave information that the French
 had landed and in about two hours the Govern-
 or of the village, a Clergyman with several
 armed men took Conway and Parr prisoners,
 binding them by their hands and feet, and flinging
 them on a bamboo stick, and in this manner
 took them to the village. I being very weak,
 remained in the hut but was afterwards taken.

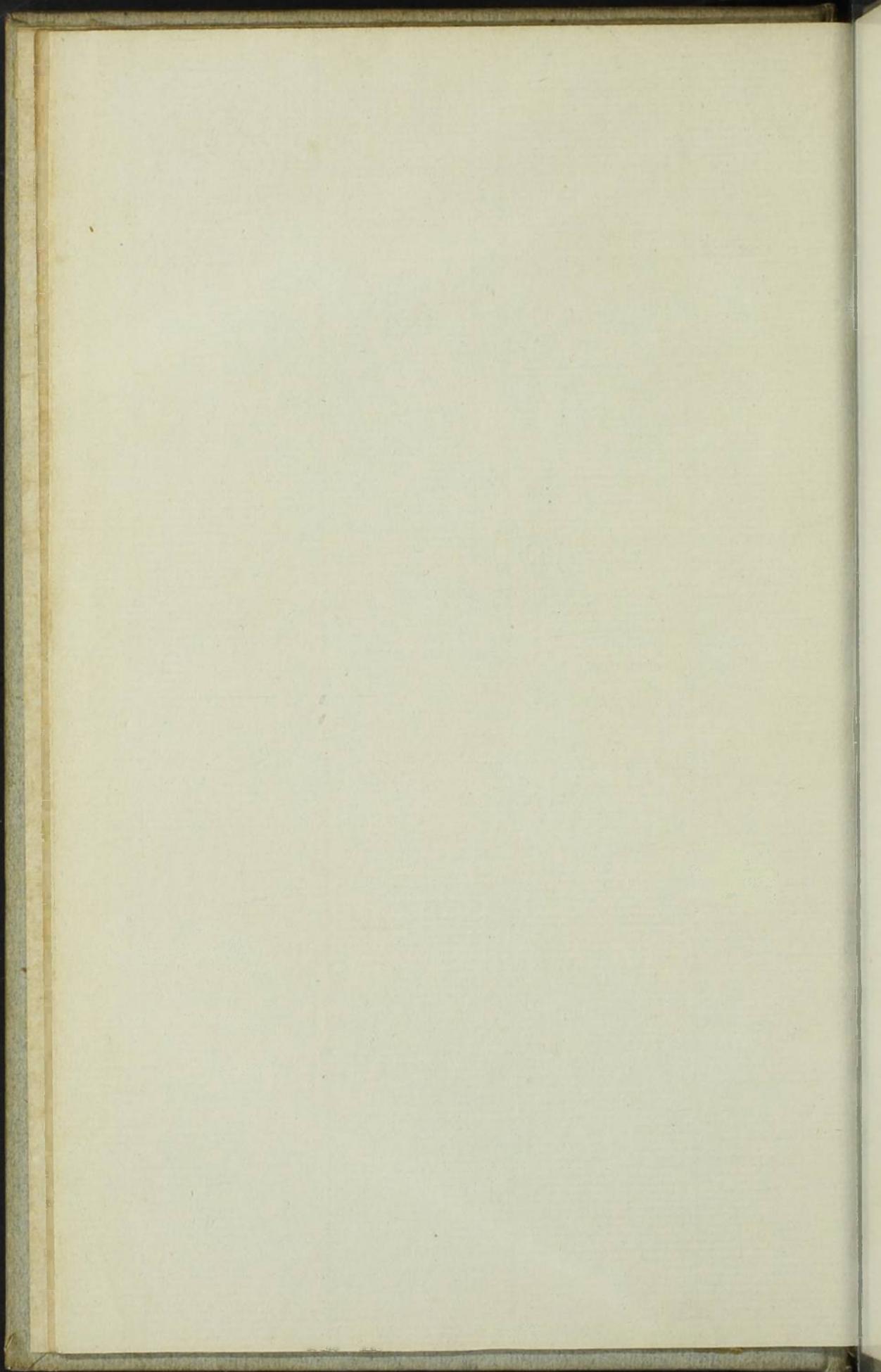
On our telling them that we were English,
 we were immediately released, and three ham-
 mocks provided—we were taken in the night to the
 Governor's house who let us lie on his own bed,
 and gave us milk and rice to eat; but not having
 eaten any thing, for a considerable time, we
 were locked jaw'd and continued so till the 2^d,
 during which time the Governor wrote to the
 Governor of St Salvador who sent a small
 schooner to a place called Porto Sejuro to take
 us to St Salvador. We were conducted to Por-
 to Sejuro on horseback passing through Santa
 Troix, where we remained about ten days, af-
 terwards we embarked, and on our arrival at St.
 Salvador, Parr on being questioned by the Go-
 vernor, answered, that our ship had foundered
 at sea, and we had saved ourselves in the boat;
 that the ship's name was the Sally of Liverpool,
 and belonged to his father, and was last from
 Cape Corse Castle, on the Coast of Africa, to

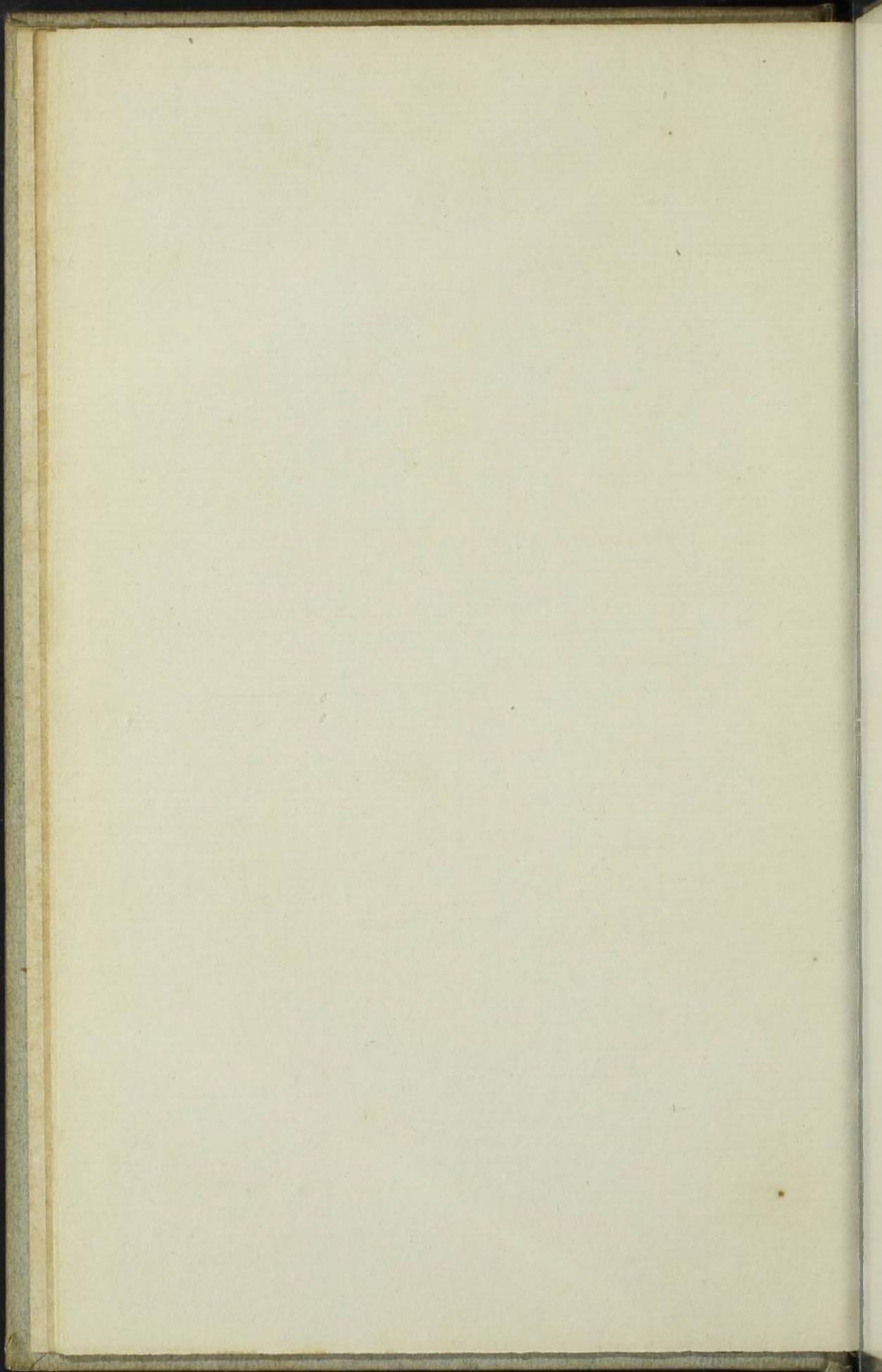
touch at Ascension for turtle, and then bound for Jamaica—Parr said he was the Captain.

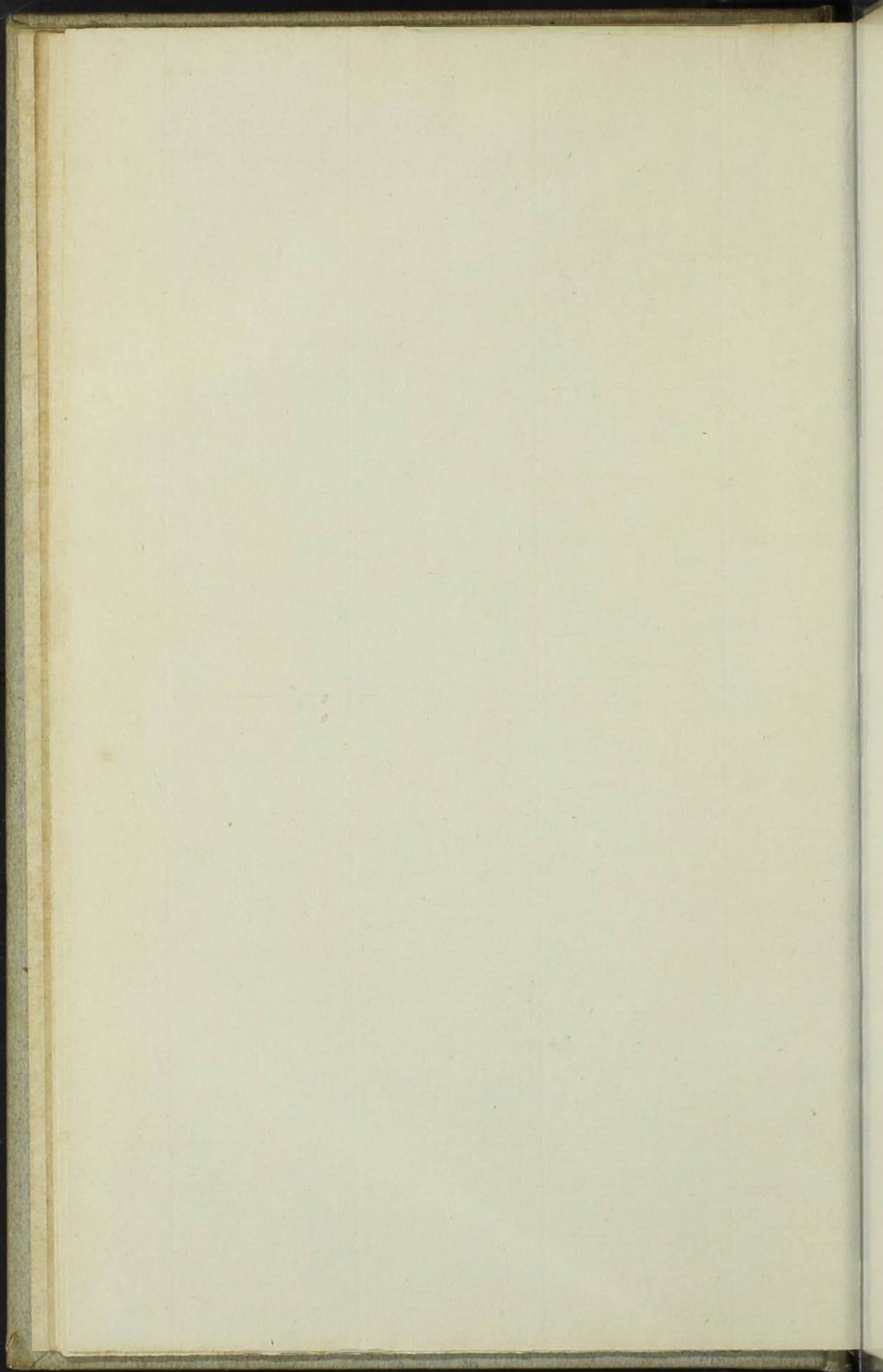
“ We continued at St. Salvador about thirteen days during which time the inhabitants made up a subscription of 200l each man. We then embarked in the Maria a Portuguese ship for Lisbon; Parr as Mate Conway Boatwain's Mate myself being sickly, as passenger. In thirteen days we arrived at Rio de Janeiro. Parr and Conway sailed for Lisbon, and I was left in the hospital; in about three months. Captain Elphinstone of the Diomedé pressed me into His Majesty's service giving me the choice of remaining on that station, or to proceed to the Admiral at the Cape. I chose the latter, and was put with seven suspected deserters on board the Ann, a Botany Bay ship, in irons with convicts. When I arrived at the Cape, I was put on board the Lancaster, of 64 guns. I never entered. I at length received my discharge since which I engaged in the Duke of Clarence as a seaman: I was determined to give myself up the first opportunity, in order to relate my sufferings to the men of this garrison to deter them from attempting to make a scheme again.

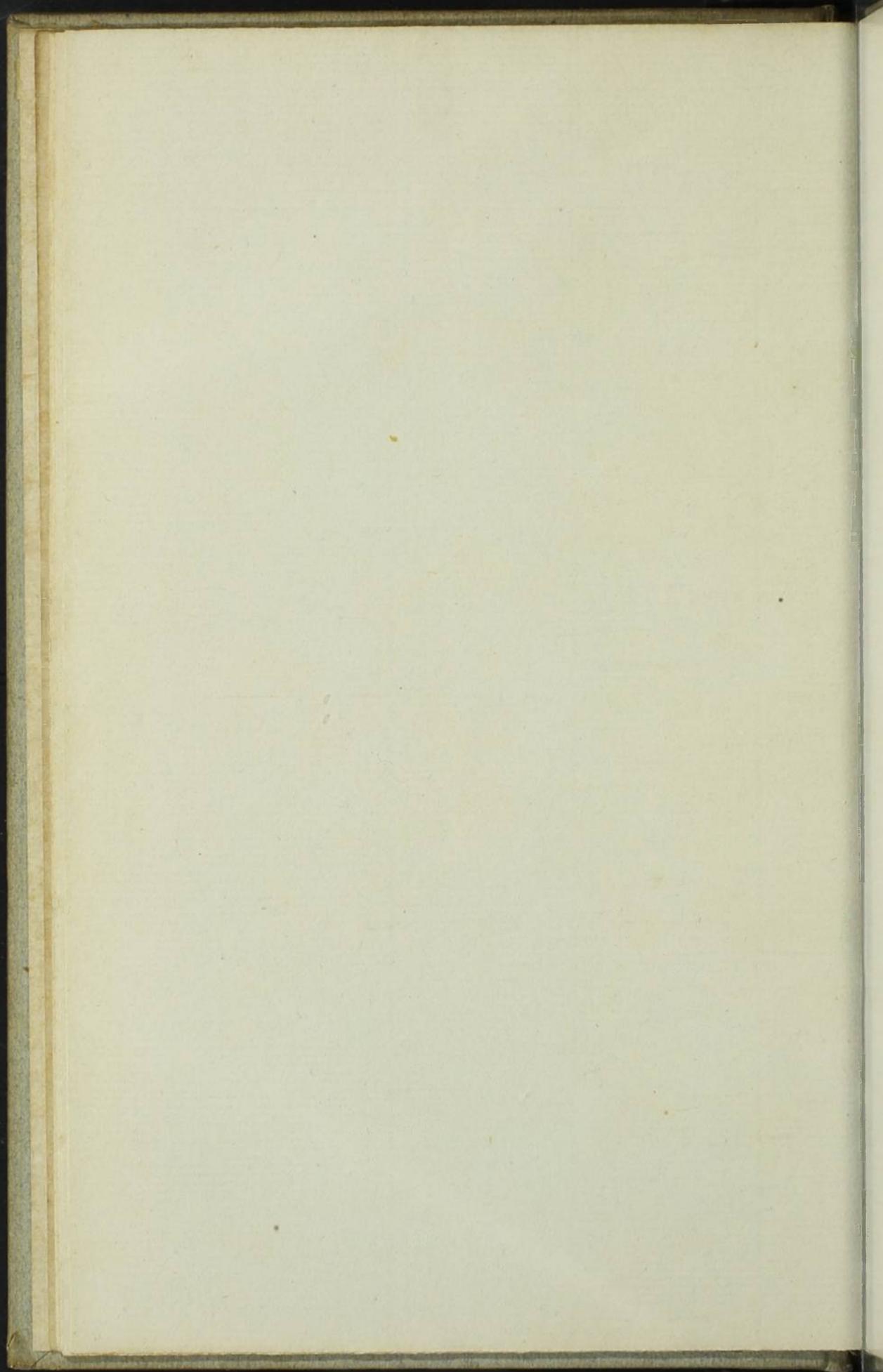
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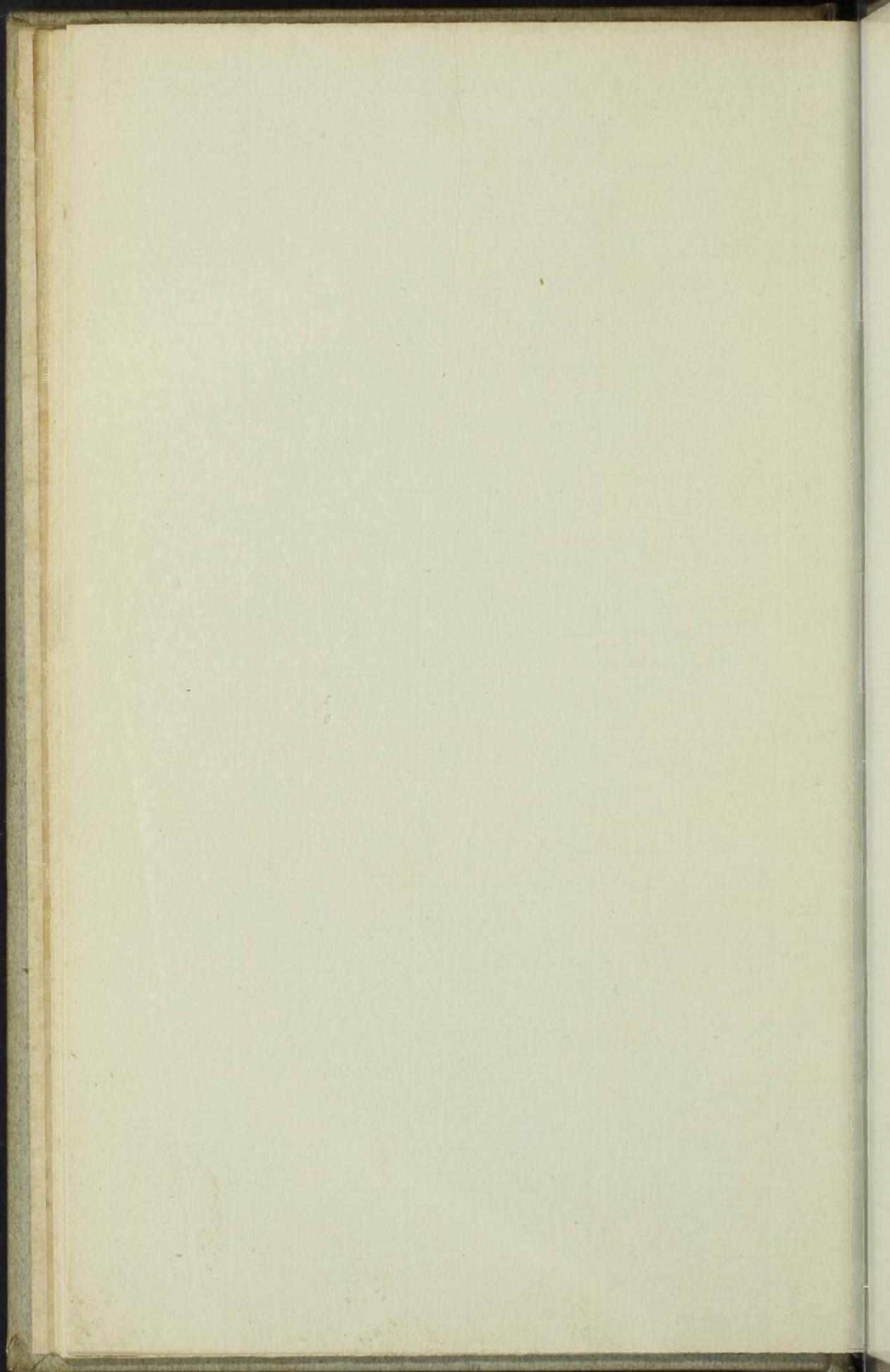


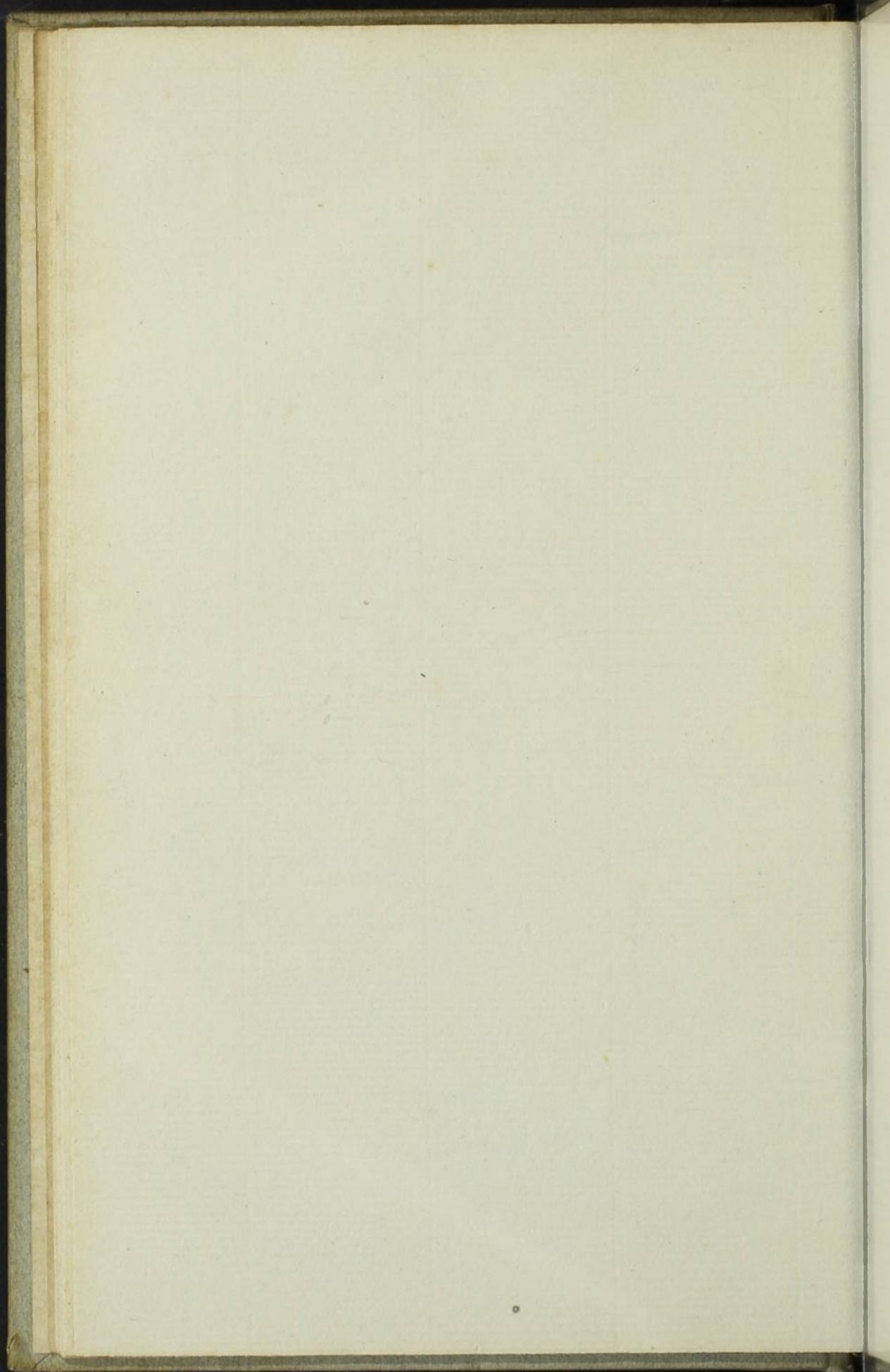


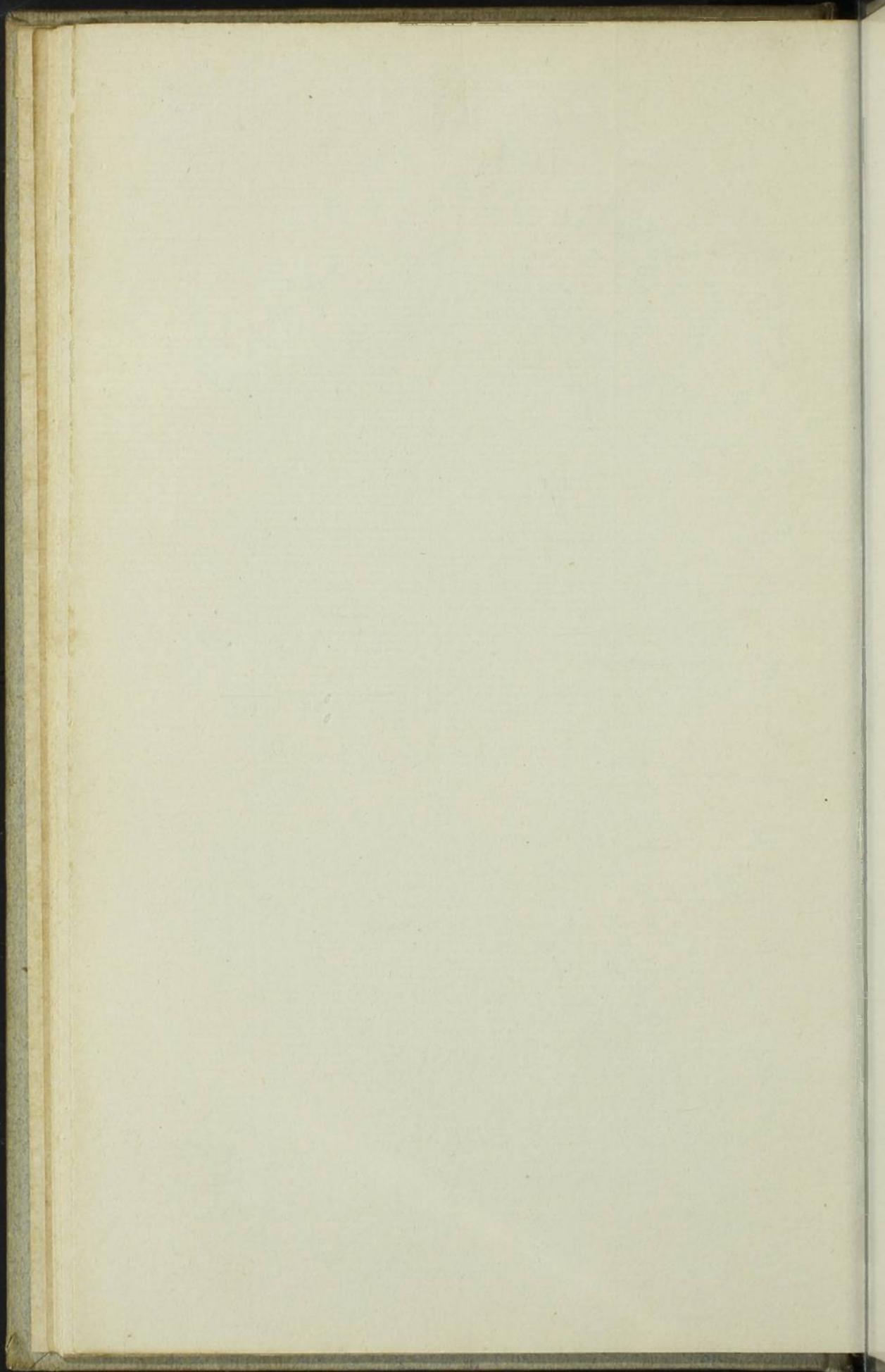












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