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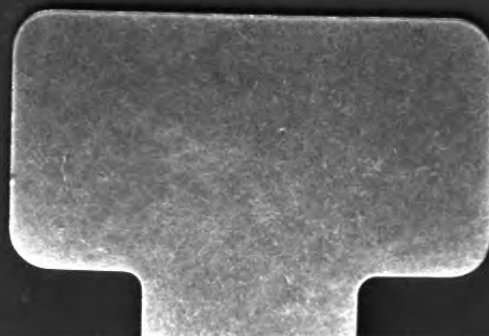
THE
CHAIN OF PEARLS

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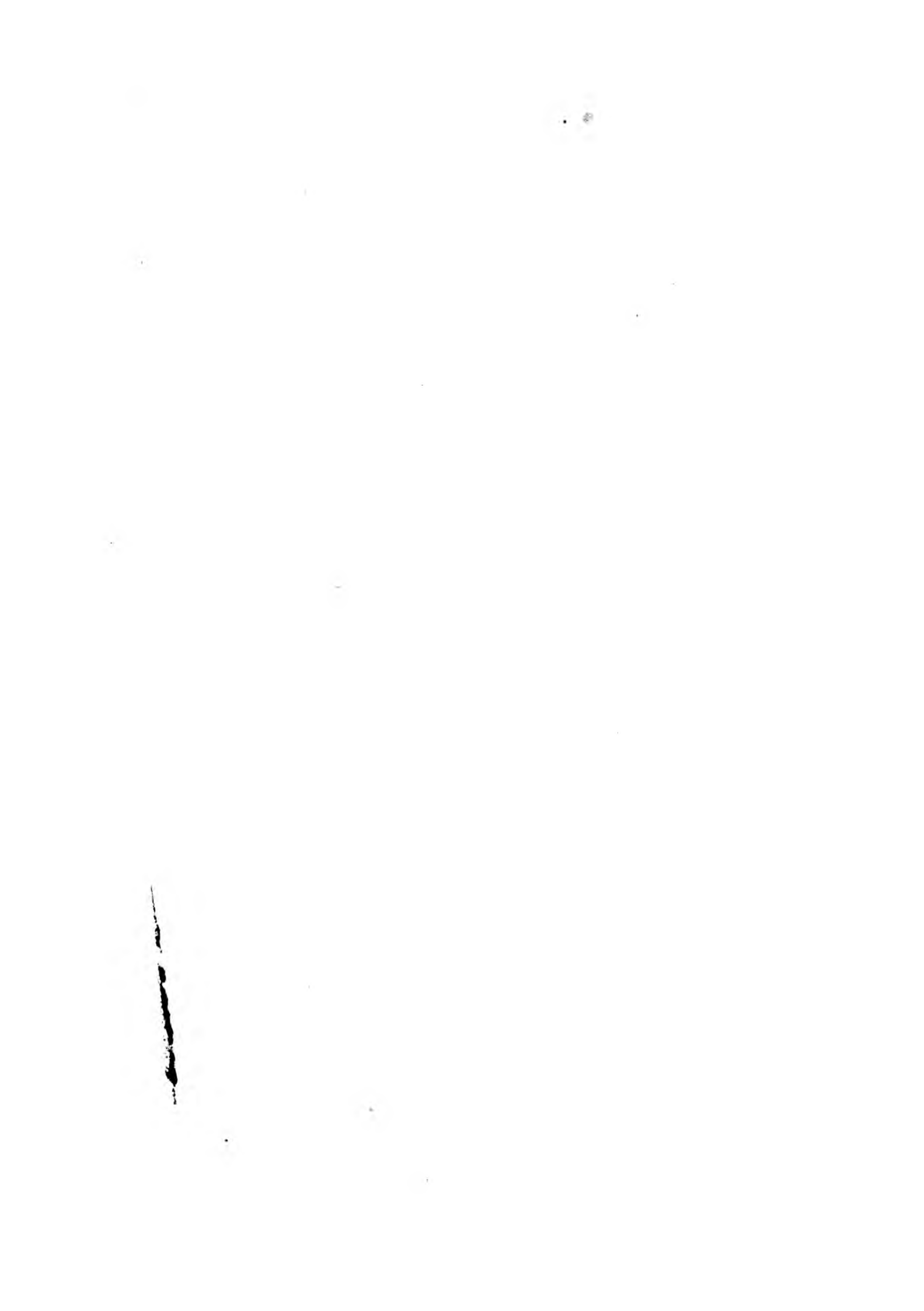
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THE
CHAIN OF PEARLS.



THE
CHAIN OF PEARLS:

AN ALLEGORY.

BY

A. B.

~~~~~  
"Something of mystery there surely dwells,  
Waiting thy touch in our bosom cells;  
Something that finds not its answer here,  
A *Chain* to be clasped in *another sphere*."  
~~~~~

DUBLIN:
GEORGE HERBERT,
117, GRAFTON-STREET.
1859.

[The right of Translation is reserved to the Author.]

270. C. 23.



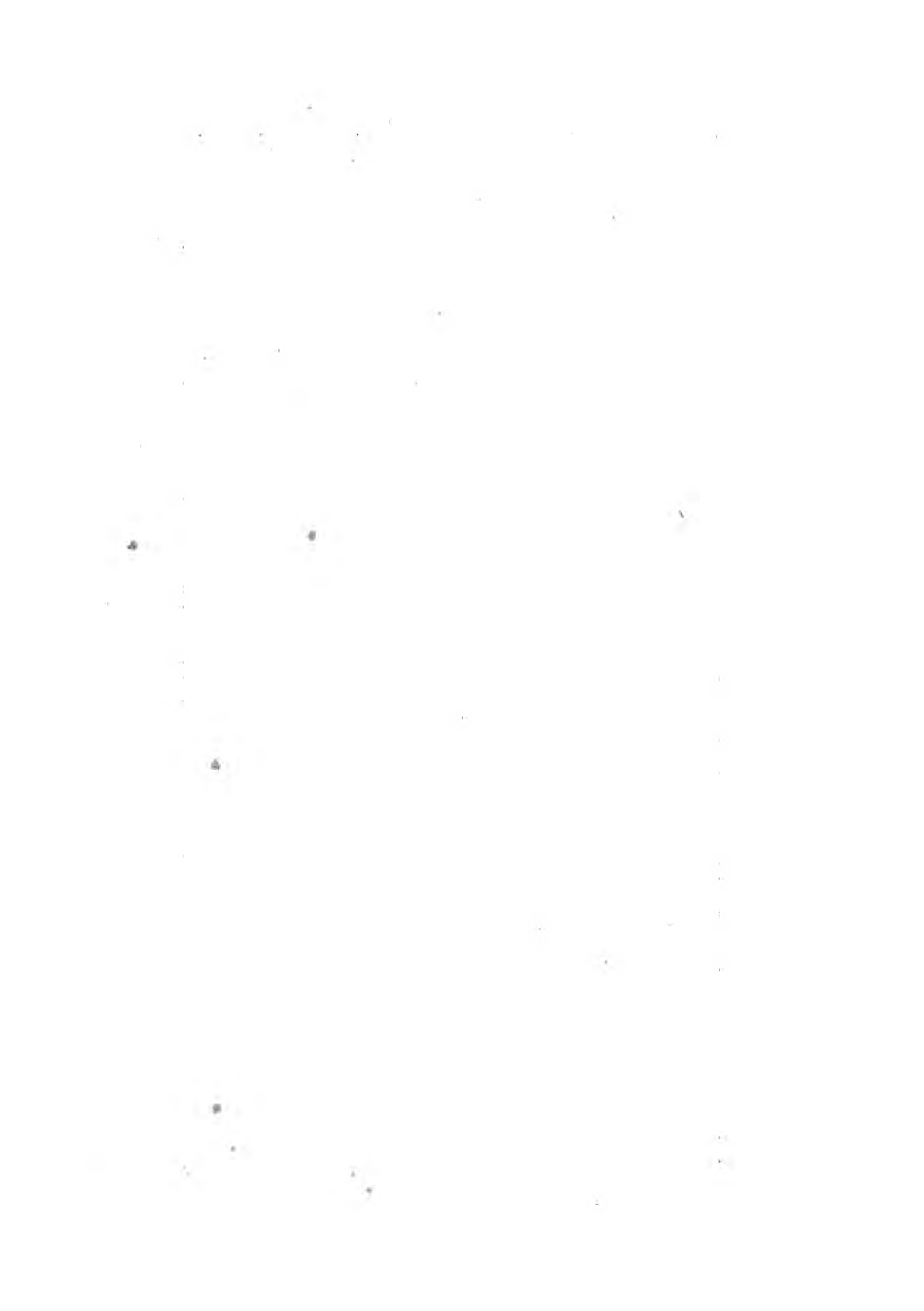
Dublin: Printed by GEORGE DROUGHT, 6, Bachelor's-walk.

DEDICATED

TO



"Did not thy spirit ever lift
The trust of mine to heaven."



“The Chain of Pearls.”

~~~~~  
“Cheer up, faint heart, that hearest this tale, and tho' thy lot may seem  
Contemptible, yet not of it as nothing worth esteem ;  
Nor deem that thou exempt from care of Providence shall be,  
An undistinguishable drop in Nature's boundless sea.

“The power that called thee into life, has skill to make thee live,  
A place of refuge can provide, a better being give ;  
Renew thy perishable form with beauty rich and rare,  
And when ' He makes His jewels up,' give *thee* a station there.”

~~~~~

WEARIED by a long walk, under the hot sun of
an August day, I turned towards a path
leading down to a small mountain-river, the wind-
ings of which I expected would lead me to some
spot where I would find both shade and rest. Nor
was I disappointed. After following the streamlet
for a short distance, the ground became broken and
undulating, and gradually the path I was treading
opened into a woodland glade of such rare beauty,
that I stood gazing, forgetful alike of the previous
weariness, and the journey that was still to be ac-
complished. It was indeed a fair scene that lay
before me. In the opening of the valley, fields of
ripening corn spread far as the eye could reach,
glowing with golden lustre in the declining rays

of the sun; while the rich green tints of the topmost boughs of the trees grew brighter, as though they sought to express *gratitude*, while their branches caught the life-giving rays, and the lengthening shadows fell with a softened beauty on the green sward, reminding one of a *holy old age*. I turned towards a noble lime-tree that offered a luxurious shade, and stretched myself beneath its branches to enjoy the sights and sounds around me. Close by, the little river sparkled on its course, with a voice of gladness in its rippling water; above, the hum of wild bees was blending with the song of birds; and the *incense thanks* of innumerable sweet wild flowers rose up to mingle with the hymn of praise, Nature's many-toned voices uttered with such joyous thankfulness to *Him* whose unsearchable wisdom and love made them all.

I lay for some time dreamily enjoying this beautiful scene, when I was roused by the sound of approaching footsteps. On looking round, I saw the new comer was a girl about seventeen, her slight figure barely reaching middle height. She had gathered many of the wild flowers that grew in her path, and was weaving them into a graceful wreath, and her pleasant task was accompanied by merry snatches of songs, proving she possessed that *wealth of riches*, a heart unclouded by care, and a spirit unwarped by worldliness.

I was able to see all that passed from my resting-place under the linden-tree, without being observed, and I noticed she went on apparently unconscious of everything round her, save the progress of her wreath. While I wondered much at this, she suddenly looked up from her work, and, for the first time, seemed aware of the loveliness of the scenery, which was still further heightened by the glowing tints of the sky, promising a sunset of unusual beauty. The child-like, thoughtless expression vanished from her features, her eyes brightened with intelligence and intense pleasure. The wreath fell from her hands, and after gazing long and earnestly, she murmured—"How gloriously lovely!"

Just then I saw another form drawing near, pure, fair, and graceful-looking. Her dark eyes had a tranquil depth in their earnest glance. Her step was calm and dignified, and a smile of singular sweetness gave her features almost a heavenly expression. Indeed for a few moments I thought this was one of the glorious beings sent to minister to the children of earth; but I soon discovered that though she was the best and fairest of earth's spirits, yet *still* she was of the "*earth, earthy.*" She spoke a few words to the girl, and listened, well pleased, while her companion expressed her delight in glowing terms of all around. And then turning towards her with one of those strangely-witching

smiles, said—"I have watched thee long with especial favour; thou art one of those I call my friends, and I visit thee now to entrust to thy keeping some of my most precious gifts." Thus saying, she took from her girdle a golden box, which she presented to the maiden, who uttered an exclamation of delight to find, on opening, that it was filled with large and costly *pearls*. "And are all these precious gems for *me*?" she asked. "Not as *gifts*," replied the spirit, "but as *LOANS*; and accordingly as thou usest them, they will become sources of happiness to thyself, and enable thee to give pleasure, and be of use to others; or they will become means of injury, nay of *destruction* to thee, and those within thy influence." Then I saw that the maiden seemed fearful to take charge of gifts, the misuse of which involved such deadly consequences. But the voice of the Spirit was heard again, in mild, gentle words of encouragement. She told her if she would bear in mind her words of caution, she need not be afraid to take this charge.

These pearls were peculiar in their nature, and required careful daily watching to keep them bright, and free from earth-stains, which they had a remarkable tendency to contract. The Spirit earnestly bade her never forget this—for she would incur the displeasure of the King, the owner of the pearls, who required each person to whom He lent them to

keep them bright and "meet" for His use, any moment He should demand their service, or choose to recall them. She told her further, how the good King, who entrusted these gems to her care, knew she could not keep them bright unaided, and so He also sent her His Word, to be a "Light to her feet, and a lamp to her path." And it was to be her charge to bring these pearls to the full light of this lamp, and she would know that all was well, when she saw each gem reflect on its polished surface—"To thy great name give the glory."

This singular gift, and the remarks that accompanied it, made me anxious to know more about it, and I ventured to ask the Spirit as she glided by me, to tell me her own name, and what the end of this would be. She paused and replied, "I am called 'Intellect;' but I am not permitted to read the events of the future—that knowledge is hidden from me, as from thee. And though I bring these pearls to many a gifted child of earth, it is only according to the use they make of them, that I can tell whether I have been the messenger of joy or sorrow. I bring them with the wish to add to their happiness; but too often I have to mourn over their perverse and wilful misuse; and I have been driven from the friendship I sought, to become the enemy and accusing angel of those I would gladly have served. But though I cannot answer thy question, I can

give thee a robe which will hide thee from every eye, and thou canst follow the maiden's steps, and note, unobserved, what degree of value she places on these goodly pearls."

With these words, the Spirit placed in my hands a mantle, and then slowly vanished. Eager to test its powers, I wrapped it round me, and drew near to the girl, who was seated on a mossy bank, intently examining her treasures, quite unconscious that there were other eyes looking on with interest nearly equal to her own.

They were good-sized gems, fair to look on, and the glad young eyes could see in them neither fault nor flaw. Each pearl had a name engraven on it, and the first she took from the box was called— "*The Love of the Beautiful.*" Then, similar in size, colour, and shape, came three pearls, called "Music," "Poetry," and "Painting." Next came a gem of most delicate beauty, named "*Imagination*;" and as she held it, methought it caught and reflected back the glowing tints of the bow of heaven that was then spanning, with the grandeur and majesty of eternal Truth, the broad expanse of sky. The next pearl was the "*Poetry of Religion,*" fair to the outward eye; but, as I looked more closely, I saw it had less substance than the others, and a slight, *very* slight, thread-like mark, told how unfit it was to bear any heavy stroke, for it

would then become crushed and useless by the blow. Next came seven pearls, called *Reason, Thought, Energy, Influence, Mental Refinement, Cheerfulness, and Memory*. One pearl still remained in the casket—it was much smaller in size, its colour was duller, and in both respects formed a great contrast to those I have already noticed; but, though it looked so unattractive, it had more *real* substance than any of the other fairer-looking gems. And, notwithstanding its extreme smallness, its solid nature would enable it to bear stroke after stroke, without fear of its splintering, or becoming starred and broken, as I saw would be the fate of the others. This small pearl was called “Heart Religion.” And as she looked on it, I saw her lip curl, and she said—“Surely this poor-looking thing has been put in the box by mistake; no one could for a moment think of giving *it* a place with these other jewels, it does not look worth keeping.” She seemed on the point of throwing it away. And I trembled, for I had seen much of the mournful realities of life, and I knew well that the pearl she slighted was the *only* one of the entire chain that could give true peace and comfort, as well as *strength, and power of endurance*, in the great battle of the soul against sin and the world. It was all but thrown aside, when the pearl of Memory, which she also held, began to cast its electric spell around her. It

brought her back to the time when she stood a little child at her mother's knee, she heard her again speak of Heaven, and all holy things. And the tones of the loved voice became more earnest, as she told her with what watchful care she must cherish *Heart Religion*; that it must be her oasis in the desert world; that she must make it the source from whence to draw perpetual freshness of mind and spirit, and *it alone* would enable her—

“ Through the world's sad day of strife,
To chaunt her morning song.”

And then Memory reminded her of many a time in which “Heart Religion” enabled that mother to surmount the storms and angry waves that threatened to engulf her. And though, in her ignorance, she fancied that *she* would not need its help as much as her mother had done, yet the power and undying influence of the deep love of a mother, who, though “dead,” yet “speaketh,” made her look with reverence on the little pearl; and, with a quivering lip, she laid it carefully back in the golden box. Then taking up her wreath of wild flowers, she prepared to return home, for evening was fast drawing near, to herald the approach of night. I also went on my way, musing on what I had seen.

I watched from time to time, with much curiosity, the pearls, and how their owner would bear in mind

the warnings that accompanied the Spirit's gift. I saw the task of keeping them bright gave her especial pleasure; all were carefully tended, except "Heart Religion;" and I grieved to see her care of this pearl was not that it should become brighter in her keeping, but merely that it should not grow more dull.

Thus time passed on, and one day as I approached the lime-tree, whose refreshing shade had made it my favourite retreat, I saw the girl looking anxiously, as if she were watching for some one. I soon found she sought the fair Earth-Spirit from whose hands she had received the casket; and a few moments after "Intellect" herself drew near, and inquired, in low, sweet tones, "Why she was wanted?" Then the girl told her how much she wished to string the pearls, but she could not find anything on which to trust such precious things. "And so," rejoined Intellect, "thou wantest me to help thee. Then meet me here to-morrow, and I will see what can be done." She came according to the appointment the following day, and soon I saw the friendly Spirit gliding towards us, holding a beautiful golden thread of most exquisite workmanship, which was clasped by a diamond that sparkled with unusual brilliancy. I drew near to look, and I saw engraven on the golden thread the name of "*Home Happiness*." And I discovered the diamond clasp itself

contained a *living soul*, from which the clear, deep light shone with a steady radiance. The Spirit then asked for the casket, and as she examined each bright gem, seemed well pleased at the care bestowed on them. But the smile vanished as she took up "Heart Religion;" and she looked with grave reproof on the girl, who sought to excuse herself by saying how hard it was to brighten, and the same care that would burnish the others, was only sufficient to keep *it* free from daily dust. Intellect's grave look deepened as she strung the pearls, nor did it lessen when all were fastened on the golden thread, and she held up a chain of surpassing beauty, with which she seemed almost fearful to part. At length she spoke with most thrilling earnestness, and reminded her of the counsel that had been given, when the pearls had been entrusted to her keeping; the watchful care that had been enjoined *then* was doubly needed now that the pearls were about to be brought into contact with the dulling, rough, soiling cares of daily life. The Spirit again urged the great necessity of keeping "Heart Religion" bright; for, from that brightness, it would possess a controlling power over the other gems, to keep each in its proper place; and her words became more solemn as she told of the responsibility the care of the chain involved. It was but LENT to be used in the King's service; and she

warned her, if she ever looked on it as her own property, or gave the diamond the first place in her heart, its light would become dimmed, and it would be taken from her. The Spirit then returned the pearls; and I saw by the silent joy with which they were received, how much the caution was needed—the very *voicelessness* of the joy proved how deeply the wish to possess the chain had sunk into the spirit within.

My musings under the shade of the lime-tree were from henceforth undisturbed by the sound of human voice, for the Lady came no more to weave the dreams of childhood and youth with the wild flowers that grew on the streamlet's banks. I missed her quick footsteps, and at last I determined to follow, and learn something more about the clasp and its Chain of Pearls. As I walked with slow steps up the path that led to her home, I saw that one of them, "The Love of the Beautiful," had had a full share in fixing its bounds, for the scenery on all sides amply repaid by its beauty the toil of the steep ascent.

The door was open, I walked in, and saw that everything looked happy in the mild brightness the diamond had cast around it. I then turned into a walk, bordered on each side by flowers, and while enjoying their fragrance, I heard the joyous laugh of children's voices; and two light-hearted

little beings came playing along the walk, and the younger shewed that he inherited his mother's love of weaving flowers with her thoughts, for he looked admiringly at his dress, and called it "his snowdrop frock." But how fared the pearls all this time? Alas! they were daily losing their bright beauty, and dull earth-stains were already showing on some of them. But the Lady seemed not to notice this, and she lived her glad summer-life, as if no change could come near her.

I thought of the warnings that had been given years before, and watched in sadness.

The change I feared soon came. The Lady was tending some favourite plants one day, when a strange, sudden chill passed through the air. She shivered before what *she* thought was the east wind; but I felt my heart grow faint, for *I* knew there was a dread presence in that chill air, colder than any east-wind that ever blew. I saw a cloud in the distance, scarcely larger than that the Prophet's servant saw of old. It drew near, and the power which the mantle gave me of seeing things that were hidden from others, showed me the Angels of "*Justice*" and "*Death*" were in that cloud. Often did the chill air from the waving of their wings come on the garden; but, though the Lady felt its coldness, she saw not *whence* it came, and I longed to warn her, but I was not permitted to speak.

Slowly the shadow of the cloud advanced, and the dread Angels stood at length on the walk; they came nearer—nearer—close to her; her eyes were opened *now*, and *she saw them*.

With heartfelt misery she listened to the stern Angel, as he accused her with unsparing severity of negligence, selfishness, covetously trying to keep talents that were not her own, and making use of them to gratify pride and vanity. No pity beamed in the eyes of either Angel, nor did one word of compassion fall from their lips, as the fearful command was given, to *yield up the diamond*. She turned imploringly to Justice; but the piercing glance that met hers, froze the words on her lips, and the Angel answered her supplicating look by unfolding a scroll on which she read her own name, and the sentence, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." Despair now gave her courage to plead with Death; but he told her it was *too late*, the debt was due to him, and must be paid.

Again she implored PITY; but with a mocking laugh, he answered, "Daughter of Earth, if thou canst show me *one* instance in which I turned aside my glittering spear, in pity to a prayer from mere mortal lips, I will spare thee now." Then she spoke of the King of Judah, for whose sake the sun retraced his course; but Death answered, that it was not mortal strength that had wrestled with him,

and prevailed, but the Lord of Life had forbidden the stroke to fall, and, in proof, the sun was turned back in his course by Him who "ruleth over all." Justice again unrolled a scroll, and pointed to the testimony borne of that King, "that he did right in the sight of the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments." And sternly asked, "If such testimony could be given in *her* behalf?" She was speechless.

In the solemn pause that followed, I looked at the diamond, and it shone with a beauty and radiance I had never before witnessed.

Strange, that while all around seemed paralysed at the Angel's presence, the diamond should shine so calmly bright. But I did not wonder long, for I saw the brightness came from a Cross of living light that rested on the soul within the gem, and over the Cross was written a message, sent and signed by the King himself, "Fear thou not, for *I* am with thee. I am thy God, and will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness!" Death also saw the Cross, and he knew it was the signet of the Great King who had conquered him, and broken his power. He *dared* not touch one of *that King's children*; all he could do was to mar the outer form. And slowly raising his hand, he touched the gem—the golden thread instantly loosed and broke, the pearls fell to the earth, and the diamond itself

shivered to atoms, and became dust and ashes, under the withering touch of the inexorable Angel.

* * * * *

Sorely stricken was the Lady by this crushing blow ; and there were moments in which I feared life itself would fail. But I watched still, in hopes of helping to bring peace to her troubled mind. And one day as I followed, I saw her turn into the path where she had lost the diamond. She had scarcely reached the spot, when the sharp sound as of something suddenly broken met her ear. She stooped to see what it was, and uttering a low cry, she picked up the fragments of the once beautiful-looking but fragile pearl—"The Poetry of Religion." She now proceeded to look eagerly for the others, and some of them she found ; but they seemed quite spoiled from stains, by lying so long on the earth ; all, except "Heart Religion," and the damp that had injured the others, had helped to soften its stains, and made it easier to clean. With many sighs, the Lady put the pearls she had picked up back in their box, and then she tried to brighten "Heart Religion" once more ; but it was no easy thing to remove the stains of years, and, at last, when the encrusted earth was removed, I saw it had shrunk to the size of the smallest seed pearl.

From this time the Lady frequently came to this spot ; but I grieved to see the repining spirit was

still unsubdued ; and she was sitting wrapt in gloomy thoughts, when again I saw two Angels drawing near, but very different from those who had come at the first. There was no feeling of sickening terror caused by *their* presence ; even the very flowers seemed to rejoice, as those pure and holy beings approached. But the Lady was looking so intensely at her darkened spirit, that she knew not the Angels of "Truth and Mercy" were standing by her. And it was not till Mercy spoke, and asked her, "Why she wept so hopelessly?" that she was aware of their presence. The Angel listened with deep pity to her tale of sorrow, and then told her how the King had seen her try to brighten the small seed-pearl of "Heart Religion," and He sent His two gentlest messengers with words of peace and good-will to her. Truth then told her how the King had sent a golden cord to replace the broken one, for "He did not willingly grieve the children of men." He showed her it was "a threefold cord, not easily broken," and on it was engraven, "*God is love.*" The ends of the cord were fastened by a *cross*, which was plain, and without any outward beauty ; but Truth told her if she tried to do the King's will, and believed His Word, she would see light and glorious beauty beaming from the Cross. Then Mercy took the golden cord, and placed it in the Lady's hands, and told her in the treasury of

the King's Word there were "goodly pearls," and if she sought she would find enough to make another chain. She also told her she might know each gem was true, when it was brought to the light of the King's Word, and reflected the form of His Cross. Mercy then took the earth-stained pearls, and told her she might still get many of them bright again; and, though they would be much smaller, yet they would be fit to use in the King's service. I now heard the Lady ask "Truth" to tell her where the Spirit was that had dwelt in the diamond, and Truth fixed his clear eyes on her, with a look that made her tremble, and think of the glance of Justice; but Mercy told her she need not fear, when *she* was the fellow-messenger of Truth; and then the Angel pointed to a golden-fringed cloud, high in the heavens, that looked intense light, and said, "It is there." "Oh!" replied the Lady, "I cannot see." "No," answered Truth, "*you* cannot see; but *it* IS THERE." And Mercy asked if she could not see, through all her sorrow, beams of heavenly brightness resting on her path. "Oh! no," rejoined the sufferer, "I see nothing bright—the diamond was precious to me beyond everything—I loved and lost it. And now it is all darkness, 'darkness that may be felt.'" And the mourner rested her aching head against the Angel, like a weary child. The pitying seraph wound her

arm round the weeper, to give support and comfort, as Truth unrolled a scroll, for the Lady thought of that Justice had shown, and she closed her eyes with a shudder, feeling she could not endure such a sentence again. Nor did she look up till the voice of Truth was heard, telling of the angry, fretful Prophet, and how mildly the King had reasoned with him, asking, "Doest thou well to be angry?" The forbearing love the King had shown then was "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and therefore had He sent His messengers to "reason" with her (not against feeling *natural* sorrow, for he knew too well the capability of the human spirit to feel deep friendship and mourn its loss, to *chide that*), but against *indulging rebellious* grief.

And then the angels bade her come with them, and she could judge herself of the graciousness of the King's dealing with her.

I followed, and soon we stood by the quiet resting-place where the diamond had been laid, and there, shining in its holy brightness, was the King's signet, marking the spot where *His Son* slept, and showing that the *sleeping dust* was as much an object of *His care*, as the *living spirit* before His throne. Truth then told how the King remembered His own sorrow at the grave of His friend, and He had sent many promises to her; the first of them the angel placed over the grave, the light from the

signet fell clearly on it, and the Lady read—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave." Again Truth unrolled another, to tell that the Spirit of the Diamond was in a land where "the inhabitant shall not say I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity, and the King was to him a crown of glory," and "a Diamond of Beauty." And the Angels asked her, with *such* promises, could she still say all was dark? Were not the King's "everlasting arms" round the Spirit of the Diamond, to keep him in "perfect peace," in life's last journey, for the King knew well—

"This is the *woe of woes*,
The one o'er mastering agony,
To watch the sleep of those who die,
And feel 'tis NOT *repose*."

And in great love He had taken that bitterness from her lot. And Truth bade her remember, that the Spirit of the Diamond was—

"The loved, *but not the lost*,
In heaven's own panoply arrayed,
He met the conflict undismayed,
He counted *well* the cost
Of battle. *Now* His crown is won,
And He has joined the heavenly host.
Why *hopeless* weep for Him?—*the loved*,
But not the lost.
The spirit was but born,
The soul unfettered, when He fled
From earth, the *living* NOT the *dead*,
Why should'st thou hopeless mourn?"

I may not, continued Truth, tell thee aught of the glories that surround that "heavenly host," save this, "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man to conceive, the things the King has prepared for those who love Him."

Mercy's gentle voice now told her these promises had been sent, that she should not "sorrow as those that had no hope;" but besides this, the King, "before whose eyes all hearts were open," knew that many an hour of loneliness of spirit would be her's; and but one thing on this side the grave could allay the anguish of an aching heart, or still the wild wailing cry of woe, uttered by the desolate human soul. He knew it from *experience*, for He had felt desolation of soul in its fullest and most unmitigated form; and so dreadful was its agony even to Him, that His "orphaned cry" rang through the world His power had created, in measureless anguish, that "His Father had forsaken Him." This gracious King would not that *His children* should feel orphans and desolate, He knew no human sympathy could satisfy all her need, and those deep inner tones of her soul, of which she was often so painfully conscious, had been wrought by Him into her nature, that she might be capable of communion with Him, and might be driven to Him by finding, short of Him, no perfect rest. These

deep wants, and wondrous mechanism of the mind, were recognised by the King, He had respect to the work of His hands, and He sent her this promise—“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” And the Angels told her when the lonely heart and aching spirit combined to cast her down, to *lean* on the King’s promise, and His presence would dispel the night-clouds of doubt and sorrow, and enable her to see the stars of His mercy shining brightly round her path. Then the Angels led her back to the spot where they had met her first, and Mercy told her, when Death destroyed gems like the Diamond, small splinters were sometimes left, which might be polished for the King’s use. And when she saw how helpless and weak she was, she went herself to aid the Lady in her search.

They had not looked long, when *two* small splinters were found, and the Angels told her to take good care to have them made “meet” jewels for the King’s service. And with parting words of encouragement and peace, “Mercy and Truth” passed on their way, to bring the message of comfort to other mourning children of earth.

After they were gone, the Lady sunk down again, and seemed more “utterly alone” from the brief brightness that had lit her path. At last I said softly, “Oh, will you not do what the Angels bade?”

And the summer breeze caught the words, and seemed to whisper them as it floated by. She listened, and soon began to think over the words the Angels had spoken. Then she took the King's long-neglected Word, and as she opened it said, "*Lord, I believe.*" And her eye caught a faint light in the Cross, and she felt it shone into the deepest recesses of her own heart, and brought healing with it. As she read, I saw tears fall fast for her own exceeding sinfulness, and she breathed an earnest prayer, that a trusting, child-like faith might be given her. As she rose from her knees, I saw two beautiful pearls lying on the leaves of the King's Word, and the light from the holy book formed a cross on each. They were called "Repentance" and "Faith;" and the Lady took them, and thankfully strung them on the golden cord.

From time to time she continued to find most precious pearls; and I saw on the chain "Submission," "Humility," "Meekness," "Charity," "Hope," "Peace," "Patience," "Benevolence," "Contentment," "Thankfulness," and the no longer despised pearl of "*Heart Religion*;" and as each was found and strung, a happier feeling seemed to revive in her own mind. But who can tell her joy when she found the crowning pearl of all, called "*The Sure and Certain Hope of a Joyful Resurrection to Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" She

fastened it into a groove in the clasp, and the beautiful pearl rested *securely* and *firmly* on the Cross; and then she knelt to join "with angels, and arch-angels, and all the host of heaven," in ascribing praise to Him who suffered the painful death of the Cross, that this hope of glory might be hers.

The veil was again withdrawn from the invisible world, and I saw the presence of the King Himself, standing beside her, and near Him the four angels, "Mercy," "Truth," "Justice," and "Death." The King then asked Justice what could be urged now against the wanderer, since *He* had satisfied all demands from the *fulness* of *His riches*? The Angel came with lowly reverence, and gave up the handwriting that was against her; and the King took it, and nailed it *Himself* to His Cross. Justice sheathed his sword, and laid it down before the King's signet, which Mercy and Truth raised, and placed on the sword of Justice; and though he was one of those mighty angels that excelled in strength, yet he was *powerless even to move the sword in its sheath*, BECAUSE the signet of the KING'S LOVE rested on it. Then Death came and broke his barbed arrow, and laid it at the King's feet; and the ear of Faith heard the King's voice telling the Lady that she need not shrink at the thought of meeting Death, for he should not come to her as a *foe to strike*, but a *friend to lead* the way to HOME, and

she would be able to follow his footsteps through the dark valley, by the rays of immortality that would gleam from his robe, fringing it with light. Nor should she go *alone*. The King *promised* He would go with her every step of the way, and she should come up from the wilderness leaning on His arm. And the Angels said one to another, "Behold, what manner of love the King hath bestowed on HER, that *she* should be called *His daughter*;" and they worshipped in lowly adoration. Then the King told them to go and tell His friends to rejoice with Him, for He had found another wanderer, an erring child was brought back to her Father's love, and a rebel had returned to renew her vows of allegiance to her King. And as the angels rose in glad obedience, their song was reverberated by the echoes of the limitless air, again and again—

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!"

* * * * *

My story is told. And as I turned towards my distant dwelling, I thought long on that "better land" that was now the home of the Spirit that had dwelt in the diamond. *He* had fought well, and conquered in the great battle of life, and was now one of "the *victorious*," in the *highest* and *holiest* sense of

the word. And with these thoughts, my heart
breathed the words of the poet :—

“ Brother, thou art gone before us,
And thy saintly soul is flown
Where tears are wiped from every eye,
And sorrow is unknown.
From the burden of the flesh,
And from care and fear released,
Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at *rest*.

“ And when the Lord shall summon us,
Whom thou hast left behind,
May we, unspotted by the world,
As sure a welcome find.
May each, like thee, depart in peace,
To be a glorious guest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest.”

THE END.





