

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.



HERE were ninety and nine that safely lay
 In the shelter of the fold,
 But one was out on the hills away,
 Far off from the gates of gold ;
 Away on the mountains wild and bare,
 Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

“ Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine ;
 Are they not enough for Thee ? ”
 But the Shepherd made answer : “ This of Mine
 Has wandered away from Me ;
 And although the road be rough and steep,
 I go to the desert to find My sheep. ”

But none of the ransomed ever knew
 How deep were the waters crossed ;
 Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed
 through
 Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
 Out in the desert He heard its cry—
 Sick, and helpless, and ready to die.

“ Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way
 That mark out the mountain's track ? ”
 “ They were shed for the one who had gone astray
 Ere the Shepherd could bring him back. ”
 “ Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn ? ”
 “ They are pierced to-night by many a thorn. ”

And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
 And up from the rocky steep,
 There rose a cry to the gate of heaven,
 “ Rejoice ! I have found My sheep ! ”
 And the angels echoed around the throne,
 “ Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own ! ”

ANON.