

The Joy of the Lord
by Elizabeth Clephane

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,
But one was out on the hills away,
Far, far 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: “One 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.
Far out in the desert He heard its cry
Fainting and helpless, and ready to die.

“Lord, whence are these blood drops all the way
that mark out the mountain's tract?”

“They were shed for one who has gone astray,
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back.”

“Lord, why are Thy hands so rent and torn?”

“They were pierced tonight by many a thorn.”

But 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 sang around the throne,

“Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!”

