

Then I turned and looked where his finger rested. I saw one of the many struggling fiercely amongst his brothers, and I saw great drops fall from his brow, and as they fell, they touched the chain which bound his quivering body, and the chain was as if steeped in blood—but the drops softened it, and seeing it bend, I knew that it must break. And many laughed at him and mocked, and many bade him be still and struggle no more, but none helped him. Then I knew that to obtain freedom he must fight singly. And he burst the chain and was free. I was glad he should stand alone. I gazed upon him. Suddenly from his lips there burst a great cry, the cry of one defeated, and he fell upon the ground. And those behind pressed forward to fill the place he had left vacant, and they stepped on him as he lay, and pressed his body into the sand, nor heeded his cries. And after a while he was still, and I saw him no more.

And I, turning to him who stood near, demanded why this should be.

He replied: "For a brief moment he stood in his new joy, his strength had been spent in gaining it, but the one could not stand against the many who followed the beast! He perished in a noble cause and this is his reward. He fell that others may advance."

I said: "I should like to go to him."

Death said: "You cannot, you would not find him, he has gone to intensify the pain of Nature." And I saw from where his body lay buried, there arose a tall, white flower, and the beauty of it was very great—it drew tears from my eyes. And he said: "This flower which you see is sprung from the decay of man, all nature is but the cloak for decay—great pain underlies it—this is why you weep; for Beauty is born of Pain, otherwise were the world not beautiful. Pain is the birth and the life and the end of . . ."

But I, interrupting him, cried: "Spare me! I also am weak and would fain exist without knowledge of life! Let me but see Beauty, nor know the cause thereof!"

Then I looked at those who were marching onwards, and I saw that they came to the shores of a weary sea, where the waves made perpetual moan and a great wind blew. Then I asked why this should be, and the name of the tossing water.

And the Shadow answered: "The sea is called Perseverance; the wind is but the great breath of many sighs."

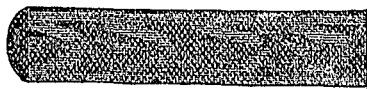
I said: "Must the people enter the water?"

He replied: "All they must enter who seek for the Ideal, some will gain the shore; others will sink."

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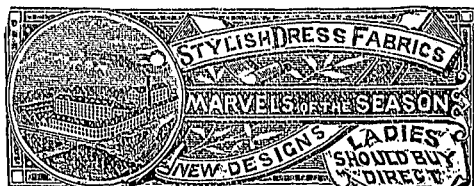
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