

# **THE DARK RIVER: AN ALLEGORY**

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The Dark River: an Allegory by Edward Monro

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**EDWARD MONRO**

**THE DARK RIVER:  
AN ALLEGORY**



# THE DARK RIVER:

An Allegory.

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BY THE

REV. EDWARD MONRO,  
PERPETUAL CURATE OF HARROW-WEALD,  
AUTHOR OF "TRUE STORIES OF COTTAGERS."



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## PREFACE.

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THESE allegories were written to be read to the children of a village school. They contained a point, from circumstances, to them, which they will not have to the public. Besides which, the fact of their having been read at different times and after intervals, prevented a sameness in the case of the children which they will present to others. But as they seemed useful to those they were written for, and as all allegory is singularly adapted to the young, they have been published under the hope that they may do good.

The Author has been given to understand, since they were written, that in some points they re-

semble "The Shadow of the Cross," and "The Distant Hills;" if so, it was unintentional, as he had never read those books.

HARROW-WEALD,  
Nativity of St. John the Baptist,  
1845.



## The Dark River.

### CHAPTER I.

I WAS dreaming; and I stood by a river which was flowing by the side of a vast Wilderness. It was a winding water, and slow in its course. Through the wilderness were many paths which led down to the river's bank, and all ended there. The bank was sometimes rugged, sometimes smooth, but I saw that every path was lost in the stream: whether they passed under the water and continued their course on the other side, I could not tell, for a dark heavy shadow was cast upon the other bank—so dark and dull that I could not see it clearly or any thing beyond it. But few flowers grew where I stood; it was a dry, barren bank, and the waters dull and heavy which rolled along it. As far as my eye could stretch along the River, it was always the same: a dull water, a barren bank, and a dark shadow on the other side. I could see it a long way, till it was hid among hills; then I saw its waters again beyond them, like a faint twilight in a cloudy night.

Now there were many figures I saw standing here and there along the edge, some in groups, some alone; but each and all were in some one of the pathways which ran down from the wilderness. Many figures, too, I saw coming down the paths; some were far off and some nearer; but they always trembled at sight of the water—at least, but few did aught else—and I noticed that they always left one of each little party behind them: as it seemed to me, they entered the water, and were seen no more. I was much touched with the earnestness with which some seemed to look after their departed one, but it was always vain, the water rolled on slow and silent as before, and the dull dark shadow hung on the other side. I was told they reached it, but I never saw them. It was scarce likely I should, if the straining eye of their dearest friends could not.

Being much interested in the scene, I began to watch the parties more closely, and I saw that they all set out from a very distant part of the wilderness, far out of sight of the river. Trees and hills, and many windings of the paths, hid the stream from them. Sometimes they did not see it till they came close to it, and sometimes they saw it from a greater distance.

I saw, too, that each person had a light thread, finer than gossamer, which clung close to him, and seemed closely connected with the place from which he had started; indeed, it seemed to have been drawn out after him along all his wanderings until he reached the Dark River. It was like the threads

of the finest net, and shone with very beautiful colours whenever the sun broke out on the desert.

Now, as my attention was very much drawn to these parties, and as my reflections on them were many, I will give a short description of what I discerned in different groups, which moved along some of the paths to the water's edge.

I noticed a larger group than usual approaching the river's bank. There were many, young and old, who formed it. It was plainly one family. I first saw them far up one of the paths of the wilderness, and they were all together. Their way lay through a richer portion of land than usual, and many flowers bloomed on many grassy banks by which they walked and lingered. I saw that, owing to the falls of the trees in this part, they often caught a distant view of the Dark River, as its calm waters moved heavily along here and there in the distance. When they saw it, I remarked it had a peculiar effect on them. They did not pass it unnoticed, as some, or shudder, as others, but all drew nearer together, and pointed out its water to one another. "See here, my brothers," cried a tall fair youth of the party, "see yon river through the trees, surely we advance nearer it; it bounds our view. 'Tis a dark water, and I see no way to pass it," said he, his voice slightly faltering.

"There is no way to pass it, Adeodatus," said an elder one; "I have heard of that river. Those who cross it enter it."

Adeodatus was silent and thoughtful, and they went on together.