

part, but on ours. He hears the call of any heart, even of one a "long way off." But the soul's sense of God grows dull; the desire to find him is choked by the lust of other things, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. So much comes between the heart and heaven that it seems useless or unnecessary to call. But in all phases of human experience

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

There are times, not when God is nearer or more ready to hear, but when the heart, moved by the Holy Spirit, is more ready to call, and feels in an unusual way his nearness. There are moments of sorrow or danger when we feel our need of God; times when the word of friend, or teacher, or pastor, stirs us to hear the whisper of the Spirit, "Give me thine heart." Especially in times of revival when others are finding God in a new relationship, we hear the Spirit saying, "Come." These are the tides which, taken at their flood, bring the soul over the bar into the harbor of its rest and peace in God.

I remember a story and picture which fascinated me when a child. It illustrates this thought of opportunity. A man had lowered himself by a rope from a cliff overhanging the sea until he was opposite a ledge where sea

birds laid their eggs. By swaying to and fro the extreme inward swing brought him near the ledge, on to which he sprang; but in doing so he lost his hold of the rope. For one awful moment he stood, the dashing sea below, the inaccessible rocks above. The rope, swinging like a pendulum, came, but not so near that he could catch it where he stood. Each time it swayed it would be farther off, until it would hang far beyond his reach. Breathless he waited for its next inward swing, and, knowing his time was now or never, he made a desperate leap, caught the rope, and was saved. So revivals, opportunities, impulses of the Spirit, convictions, come and go. If they are not seized and used they swing out of reach—it may be, in some cases, forever.

The heart-ear is quick to hear in youth; it grows dull with advancing years. Dear member of my class, if you turn away from the voice which to-day says, "Come," it may never again seem to you so clear and so sweet. If you will only listen you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree. Is it not wise to heed the call of One who can make such a transformation in the heart and in the life? The rope is swaying; do not let it swing beyond your reach.

The Lesson in Literature and Art

1.

A man's best things are nearest him—
Lie close about his feet.—*Milnes.*

2. Verse 1.

But what or who are we, alas!

That we in giving are so free?

Thine own before our offering was.

And all we have we have from thee.

—*George Wither.*

3. Verse 2.

We look before and after

And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

—*Shelley.*

4. Some people grow terrified when thrown upon their own resources, and feverishly resort to all manner of expedients to beguile the time. They seek the ends of the earth in order to escape the emptiness and loneliness of their own lives. What is one to gain by fleeing his environment? Himself he cannot flee. Upon whatever distant sea his ship may sail, by whatever charming companions he may be surrounded,

whatever lavish gifts fortune may shower upon him, he still finds himself shadowed by the same unwelcome, inexorable self. Wherefore should we spend our "money for that which is not bread," and our "labor for that which satisfieth not"?

5.

Daughters of Time, the hypocrite Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.

I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

—*Emerson.*

6. Verse 7. God's love precedes all reformation. And there is no man—not a drunkard, not a gambler, not a thief, not a person that is filled full of passions and appetites—who has not a right, to-day, now, here, in his heart, to look up and say, "God help me!" Your sinful-