

"Even This Shall Pass Away."

Once in Persia reigned a king  
Who, upon his signet-ring,  
Carved a maxim true and wise,  
Which, if hold before his eyes,  
Gave him counsel at a glance  
Fit for every change and chance,  
Solemn words, and these are they:  
"Even this shall pass away."

Frains of camels through the sand  
Brought him gems from Samarcand;  
Fleets of galleys through the seas  
Brought him pearls to match with these.  
But he counted not his gain,  
Treasures of the mine or main.  
"What is wealth?" the king would say—  
"Even this shall pass away."

In the revels of his court  
At the zenith of the sport,  
When the palms of all his guests  
Burned with clapping at his jests,  
He, amid his figs and wine,  
Cried: "Oh, loving friends of mine,  
I leave you comes, but not to stay;  
Even this shall pass away."

Towering in the public square,  
Twenty cubits in the air,  
Rose his statue carved in stone.  
Then the king, disguised, unknown,  
Stood before his sculptured name,  
Musing meekly: "What is fame?  
Fame is but a slow decay—  
Even this shall pass away."

Struck with palsy, sore and old,  
Waiting at the gates of gold,  
Said he with his dying breath,  
"Life is done, but what is death?"  
Then, in answer to the king,  
Fell a sunbeam on his ring,  
Showing by a heavenly ray—  
"Even this shall pass away!"

## THE OLD ORGAN

OR

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

By Mrs. O. F. Walton.

### CHAPTER III.—ONLY ANOTHER MONTH.

OLD TREFFY did not regain his strength. He continued weak and feeble. He was not actually ill, and could sit up day after day by the tiny fire which Christie lighted for him in the morning. But he was not able to descend the steep staircase, much less to walk about with the heavy organ, which even made Christie's shoulders ache.

So Christie took the old man's place. It was not always such pleasant work as on that first morning. There were cold days and rainy days; there was drizzling sleet, which lashed Christie's face; and biting frost which chilled him through and through. There were damp fogs, which wrapped him round like a wet blanket, and rough winds, which nearly took him off his feet. Then he grew a little weary of the sound of the poor old organ. He never had the heart to confess this to old Treffy; indeed he scarcely liked to own it to himself; but he could not help wishing that poor Mary Ann would come to the end of her troubles, and that the "Old Hundredth" would change into something new. He never grew tired of "Home, sweet home," it was ever fresh to him, for he heard in it his mother's voice.

Thus the winter wore away, and the spring came on, and the days became longer and lighter. Then Christie would go much farther out of the town, to the quiet suburbs where the sound of a barrel-organ was not so often heard. The people had time to listen in these parts; they were far away from the busy stir of the town, and there were but few passers-by on the pavement. It was rather dull in these outlying suburbs. The rows of villas, with their stiff gardens in front, grew a little monotonous. It was just the kind of place in which a busy, active mind would long for a little variety. And so it came to pass that even a barrel-organ was a welcome visitor; and one and another would throw Christie a penny, and encourage him to come again.

One hot spring day, when the sun was shining in all his vigour, as if he had been tired of being hidden in the winter, Christie was toiling up one of the roads on the outskirts of the town. The organ was very heavy for him, and he had to stop every now and then to rest for a minute. At length he reached a nice-looking house, standing in a very pretty garden. The flower-beds in front of the house were filled with early spring flowers; snowdrops, crocuses, violets, and hepaticas were in full bloom.

Before this house Christie began to play. He could hardly have told you why he chose

it; perhaps he had no reason for doing so, except that it had such a pretty garden in front, and Christie always loved flowers. His mother had once bought him a penny bunch of spring flowers, which, after living for many days in a broken bottle, Christie had pressed in an old spelling-book, and, through all his troubles, he had never parted with them.

And thus, before the house with the pretty garden, Christie began to play. He had not turned the handle of the organ three times, before two merry little faces appeared at a window at the top of the house, and watched him with lively interest. They put their heads out of the window as far as the protecting bars would allow them, and Christie could hear all they said.

"Look at him," said the little girl, who seemed to be about five years old; "doesn't he turn it nicely, Charlie?"

"Yes, he does," said Charlie, "and what a pretty tune he's playing!"

"Yes," said the little girl, "it's so cheerful. Isn't it, nurse?" she added, turning round to the girl, who was holding her by the waist to prevent her falling out of the window. Mabel had heard her papa make a similar remark to her mamma the night before, when she had been playing a piece of music to him for the first time, and she therefore thought it was the correct way to express her admiration of Christie's tune.

But the tune happened to be "Poor Mary Ann," the words of which nurse knew very well indeed. And as Mary Ann was nurse's own name, she had grown quite sentimental whilst Christie was playing it, and had been wondering whether John Brown, the grocer's young man, who had promised to be faithful to her forever and evermore, would ever behave to her as poor Mary Ann's lover did, and leave her to die forlorn. Thus she could not quite agree with Miss Mabel's remark, that "Poor Mary Ann" was so cheerful, and she seemed rather relieved when the tune changed to "Rule Britannia." But when "Rule Britannia" was finished, and the organ began "Home, sweet home," the children fairly screamed with delight; for their mother had often sung it to them, and they recognized it as an old favourite; and with their pretty, childish voices, they joined in the chorus: "Home, sweet home, there's no place like home, there's no place like home." And as poor Christie looked up at them, it seemed to him that they, at least, did know something of what they sang.

"Why have not I a nice home?" he wondered. But the children had run away from the window, and scampered downstairs to ask their mamma for some money for the poor organ boy. A minute afterwards two pennies were thrown to Christie from the nursery window. They fell down into the middle of a bed of pure white snowdrops, and Christie had to open the garden gate, and walk cautiously over the grass to pick them up. But for some time he could not find them, for they were hidden by the flowers; so the children ran downstairs again to help him. At last the pennies were discovered, and Christie took off his hat and made a low bow, as they presented them to him. He put the money in his pocket, and looked down lovingly on the snowdrops.

"They are pretty flowers, missie," he said. "Would you like one, organ-boy?" asked Mabel, standing on tip-toe, and looking into Christie's face.

"Could you spare one?" said Christie. "I'll ask mamma," said Mabel, and she ran into the house.

"I'm to gather four," she said, when she came back; "organ-boy, you shall choose."

It was a weighty matter selecting the flowers; and then the four snowdrops were tied together and given to Christie.

"My mother once gave me some like these, missie," he said.

"Does she never give you any now?" said Mabel.

"No, missie, she's dead," said Christie, mournfully.

"Oh!" said little Mabel, in a sorrowful, pitying voice, "poor organ-boy, poor organ-boy!"

Christie now put his organ on his back and prepared to depart.

"Ask him what his name is," whispered Mabel to Charlie.

"No, no; you ask him."

"Please, Charlie, ask him," said Mabel again.

"What is your name, organ-boy?" said Charlie, shyly.

Christie told them his name, and as he went down the road he heard their voices calling after him:

"Come again, Christie; come again another day, Christie; come again soon, Christie."

The snowdrops were very faded and withered when Christie reached the attic that night. He tried to revive them in water, but they would not look fresh again; so he laid them to rest beside his mother's faded flowers in the old spelling-book.

Christie was not long in repeating his visit to the suburban road, but this time, though he played his four tunes twice through, and lingered regretfully over "Home, sweet home," he saw nothing of the children, and received neither smiles nor snowdrops. For Mabel and Charlie had gone for a long country walk with their nurse, and were far away from the sound of poor Christie's organ.

Treffy was still unable to get out, and he grew rather fretful sometimes, even with Christie. It was very dull for him sitting alone all day; and he had nothing to comfort him, not even his old friend the organ. And when Christie came home at night, if the store of peace was not so large as usual, poor old Treffy would sigh, and moan, and wish he could get abut again, and take his old organ out as before.

But Christie bore it very patiently, for he loved his old master more than he had loved anyone since his mother died; and love can bear many things. Still, he did wish he could find someone or something to comfort Treffy, and to make him better.

"Master Treffy," he said, one night, "shall I fetch the doctor to you?"

"No, no, Christie, boy," said Treffy; "let me be, let me be."

But Christie was not so easily put off. What if Treffy should die, and leave him alone in the world again? The little attic, dismal though it was, had been a home to Christie, and it had been good to have someone to love him once again. He would be very, very lonely if Treffy died; and the old man was growing very thin and pale, and his hands were very trembling and feeble; he could scarcely turn the old organ now. And Christie had heard of old people "breaking up," as it is called, and then going off suddenly; and he began to be very much afraid old Treffy would do the same. He must get someone to come and see his old master.

The landlady of the house had fallen downstairs and broken her arm; a doctor came to see her, Christie knew; oh, if he would only step upstairs and look at old Treffy! It was such a little way from the landlady's room to the attic, and it would only take him a few minutes. And then Christie could ask him what was the matter with the old man, and whether old Treffy would get better.

These thoughts kept Christie awake a long time that night; he turned restlessly on his pillow, and felt very troubled and anxious. The moonlight streamed into the room, and fell on old Treffy's face as he lay on his bed in the corner. Christie raised himself on his elbow, and looked at him. Yes, he did look very wasted and ill. Oh, how he hoped Treffy would not go away, as his mother had done, and leave him behind!

And Christie cried himself to sleep that night.

The next day he watched about on the stairs till the landlady's doctor came. Old Treffy thought him very idle because he would not go out with the organ; but Christie put him off with one excuse and then another, and kept looking out of the window and down the court, that he might see the doctor's carriage stop at the entrance.

When at last the doctor came, Christie watched him go into the landlady's room, and sat at the door till he came out. He shut the door quickly after him, and was running down the steps, when he heard an eager voice calling after him.

"Please, sir; please, sir," said Christie. "Well, my boy, what do you want?" said the doctor.

"Please, sir—don't be cross, sir, but if you would walk upstairs a minute into the attic, sir; it's old Treffy, and he's ever so poorly."

"Who is old Treffy?" asked the doctor.

"He's my old master; that's to say, he takes care of me—at least, it's me that takes care of him, please, sir."

The doctor did not quite know what to make of this lucid explanation. However, he turned round and began slowly to ascend the attic stairs.

"What's the matter with him?" he asked, kindly.

"That's what I want to know, sir," said Christie; "he's a very old man, sir, and I'm afraid he won't live long, and I want to know, please. But I'd better go in first, please, or; Master Treffy doesn't know you're coming, Master Treffy!" said Christie, walking bravely into the room, "here's the landlady's doctor come to see you."

And to Christie's great joy, old Treffy made no objection, but submitted very patiently and gently to the doctor's investigations, without even asking who had sent him. And then the doctor took leave, promising to send some medicine in the morning, and walked out into the close court. He was just getting into his carriage, when he felt a little cold hand on his arm.

"Please, sir, how much is it?" said Christie's voice.

"How much is what?" asked the doctor.

"How much is it for coming to see poor

old Treffy, sir? I've got a few coppers here, sir," said Christie, bringing them out of his pocket; "will these be enough, sir; or, if not, I'll bring some more to your house to-morrow."

"Oh," said the doctor, smiling, "you may keep your money, boy; I won't take your last penny, and when I come to see Mrs. White I'll give a look at the old man again."

Christie looked but did not speak his thanks.

"Please, sir, what do you think of Master Treffy?" he asked.

"He won't be here long, boy—perhaps another month or so," said the doctor, as he drove away.

"A month or so! only a month!" said Christie to himself, as he walked slowly back, with a dead weight on his soul. A month more with his dear old master—only another month, only another month. And in the minute which passed before Christie reached the attic, he saw, as in a sorrowful picture, what life would be to him without old Treffy. He would have no home, not even the old attic; he would have no friend. No home, no friend; no home, no friend! that would be his sorrow. And only another month before it came! only another month!

It was with a dull, heavy heart that Christie opened the attic door.

"Christie, boy," said old Treffy's voice, "what did the doctor say?"

"He said you had only another month, Master Treffy," sobbed Christie, "only another month; and whatever shall I do without you?"

Treffy did not speak; it was a solemn thing to be told he had only another month to live; that in another month he must leave Christie and the attic and the old organ, and go—he knew not whither. It was a solemn, searching thought for old Treffy.

He spoke very little all day. Christie stayed at home, for he had not heart enough to take the organ out that sorrowful day; and he watched old Treffy very gently and mournfully. Only another month; only another month! was ringing in the ears of both.

But when the evening came on, and there was no light in the room but what came from the handful of fire in the grate, old Treffy began to talk.

"Christie," he said, uneasily, "where am I going? Where shall I be in a month, Christie?"

Christie gazed into the fire thoughtfully.

"My mother talked about heaven, Master Treffy; and she said she was going home. 'Home, sweet home,' that was the last thing she sang. I expect that 'Home, sweet home,' is somewhere in heaven, Master Treffy; I expect so. It's a good place, so my mother said."

"Yes," said old Treffy, "I suppose it is; but I can't help thinking I shall be very strange there, Christie, very strange indeed. I know so little about it, so very little, Christie, boy."

"Yes," said Christie, "and I don't know much."

"And I don't know anyone there, Christie; you won't be there, nor anyone that I know! and I shall have to leave my poor old organ; you don't suppose they'll have any barrel-organs there, will they, Christie?"

"No," said Christie, "I never heard my mother speak of any; I think she said they played on harps in heaven."

"I shan't like that half so well," said old Treffy, sorrowfully; "I don't know how I shall pass my time."

Christie did not know what to say to this, so he made no answer.

"Christie, boy," said old Treffy, suddenly, "I want you to make out about heaven, I want you to find out all about it for me; maybe, I shouldn't feel so strange there, if I knew what I was going to; and your mother called it 'Home, sweet home,' didn't she?"

"Yes," said Christie, "I'm almost sure it was heaven she meant."

"Now, Christie, boy, mind you make out," said Treffy, earnestly; "and remember there's only another month! only another month!"

"I'll do my best, Master Treffy, said Christie, "I'll do my very best."

And Christie kept his word.

(To be continued.)

A LITTLE bit of patience often makes the sunshine come.  
And a little bit of love makes a very happy home;  
A little bit of hope makes a rainy day look gay,  
And a little bit of charity makes glad a weary way.

"I fear you don't quite apprehend me," as the gaol-bird said to his baffled pursuers.