

IMMORTALITY.

Are they looking down upon us,
Loved ones who have gone before?
In a world of light and glory,
Do they love us as of yore?
Are the bright eyes, closed in slumber,
Open and gazing from on high,
Beaming with a clearer vision,
Watching o'er us—yea, for aye?

Do they know our thoughts and feelings,
Know our inmost hearts to read?
Do they mourn when we are tempted?
When we fail to sow good seed?
Are they watching, are they waiting
For the coming of our feet?
Will the same fond hearts receive us?
Will the same sweet voices greet?

Who shall say they are not with us?
Men of science and of lore!
Can you tell us with your wisdom,
As you o'er your volumes pore,—
If the heavens are far beyond us,
If those realms are high above?
Or a region all around us,
Where God's messengers of love

Are uplifting human creatures,
Helping them each day and hour
Better to sustain their burdens,—
Better yet to know His power?
Or is it a world of glory,
All divided from our own,
Where no influence can mingle
With the trials earth hath known?

Oh, for hope that comes to gladden!
Oh, for faith that doth assure
That our lov'd ones have not left us,
Though immortal now and pure—
They are still beside us walking,
Though unseen by mortal eye!
They are working in His vineyard,—
They are with the Father, nigh!

THE WATCHMAN AND THE STRANGER.

BY HELEN PEARSON BARNARD.

When the hum of business had ceased, the evening shadows had fallen, and the city lamps were lighted,—then began the duties of Captain Earnshaw, a private night watch. Every one in the square of which he had charge will remember the stately man of military bearing, who was so vigilant and faithful; no unlocked door, no gas left burning by careless clerk, escaped his eye.

"If Earnshaw owned the square, he wouldn't be more careful," was often said. The captain's heart glowed with pride at the compliments he received,—very substantial ones at Christmas from some of the merchants whom he served.

Late one summer evening as he was pacing the square, he heard footsteps approaching. It was seldom that anyone passed through these business streets at night, except an officer or some drunken person mistaken in his way. The captain paused in the shadow. Soon a tall figure passed under a lamp, a little distance off, but the keen eye of the watch had scanned his dress and knew that he was not an officer. He was a stranger, apparently, for he was looking from right to left as if doubtful of his course. When he reached the Captain he paused.

"Are you an officer, friend, and will you direct one who was never before in your city?"

The quaint address and deep rich voice were peculiarly winning. He appeared like a clergyman, but his shabby dress and sailor-like bundle puzzled Captain Earnshaw.

"What do you want at this time of night?" was the gruff response.

"I came on a coasting schooner," returned the stranger, adding with great simplicity, "Do you know Andrew Smith? I go to his house to-night."

Captain Earnshaw would have smiled, but could not before that benign countenance with the flowing patriarchal beard. He told him respectfully that he did not know Andrew Smith, but if he had the street and number, the stationed police would show him the way.

"Will you permit me to rest a bit on these steps?" asked the old man. "I am too weary to go on."

"Certainly," said the watch. "You should have left the schooner earlier, sir; this is no time to enter a strange city."

"I landed before dark," was the reply, "But my Master's business kept me. That is always my first concern."

"I took you to be on your own hook," said the captain. "I should not think he'd expect one of your age to be about wharves after dark. It isn't safe. Desperate characters are there, who come out with the rats and the darkness."

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

The stranger repeated this slowly, with mournful emphasis.

"That's Scriptur, I s'pose," said Captain Earnshaw, who had never heard a text when on duty, "but it's true."

He thought this a pious reflection, but his strange visitor did not seem satisfied, for he said earnestly,—

"I trust that you believe in the Holy Scriptures, friend; all that is written therein is 'upright, even words of truth.'"

The watchman suddenly thought he had "better be moving on." When he came on again he found the old man was asleep.

"Why, sir, you'll be robbed and murdered yet!" cried the captain, arousing him.

"My Master cares for me," was the calm reply. "I sleep unharmed among the violent. They care not for my treasures,—my Bible and these tracts," lifting his bundle, "but sometimes they listen a moment, so I go among them. On the sea-coast I am well known. They call me Father Gwynn. When they are in trouble I comfort them with God's word. I preach on land and sea to those who do not go to church. I have no home, but there is always a place to lay my head, and that is more than my blessed Master had, for it is written, 'The Son of man hath not where to lay His head.'"

Captain Earnshaw was silent.

"I talked on the wharf to-night with men that had never heard of Christ. Perhaps good seed was sown. In a few days I hope to return to the coast," then suddenly raising his eyes to the motionless guard, he said, "I must ask after your soul's welfare, friend! The Lord led me to you for some wise purpose."

All the unbelief in his listener's heart burst forth.

"So you think it's the Lord's doings? Now I say, you chanced to cross my beat when I was civil. But we all look at things differently; it'll be the same in the end!"

"My friend, you are greatly mistaken!" returned Father Gwynn. "It makes an eternity's difference whether one has the right belief or not. You are a watchman, I presume?"

This introduced the captain's favourite topic. With visible pride he told how he had guarded the square for twelve years.

"There's millions o' property here, sir, and the buildings are all in my charge. Nothing has happened since I took the position!"

"Have you had no robberies?"

"No, sir," said the night-watch, with emphasis. "They've had them in other parts of the city, but I keep on the move, and if any suspicious persons appear, I call the police."

"Have there been no fires in all these years?"

"Not here. I'm on the watch, you see!"

The stranger's next question was solemn and searching.

"Have you returned thanks for this long season of prosperity?"

"Why should I?" replied Captain

Earnshaw almost angrily. "Haven't I been careful and faithful, never sleeping at my post? Why should I thank the Lord for my own prudence?"

Father Gwynn was silent, but his sad, shocked face subdued the other, for he added, kindly,—

"But you and I won't quarrel about this. It is now time to go if we would meet the police."

When they parted Father Gwynn said,—

"We may never meet again, friend. I wish I could convince you that God directs the smallest affairs of life. 'Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit,' saith the Lord of hosts.' O my friend, will you not look into this matter?"

"And remember this," he continued, with the majestic severity that the old prophets might have shown, "it is written in God's Word, and He will yet prove it,—'Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain.'"

Father Gwynn repeated the passage again, impressively, and went away.

"He'd give the Lord the credit of everything!" muttered Captain Earnshaw, "but there'd be queer doings if it wasn't for us watchmen!"

But it was long before he ceased to think of his midnight visitor and the text that rang in his ears like a prophecy.

Some months later, as Captain Earnshaw was on guard, a gust of wind suddenly swept the square. Thinking it might betoken rain, he lifted his eyes to the sky. The blood leaped into his bronzed face; there was a lurid gleam in Warrenton, Power and Co.'s store,—fire in his own square! The captain instantly gave the alarm. The firemen were soon on the spot. But the building was so secured by bolts and iron shutters that they could not get inside, and the fire was in the upper story.

"I'll go to Warrenton for the key," cried Captain Earnshaw, starting on the run.

But he had not gone far before something new occurred to the athletic man,—terrible in the present crisis. His step faltered, his feet would scarce support his trembling frame; like one in a nightmare, no effort of will hastened his progress. He met no one whom he could send ahead; he could only go slowly on, knowing that each moment was an advantage to the fire fiend. He groaned aloud as he thought of the property he had so proudly guarded. He reached Mr. Warrenton's house too exhausted to pull the bell.

The Captain says he was insensible about twenty minutes. When he came to himself he heard the clang of bells, and as distinctly as if he were beside him, the stranger's words,—

"Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

He realized that at his midnight visitor was right.

The square burned that night. It is rebuilt. Captain Earnshaw does not grieve. The story of that terrible war was not believed; forgotten were the twelve years of faithfulness under the smart of the calamity; he was dismissed with a severe rebuke.

The old watchman bears his bitter punishment patiently, for he has learned to rely upon the Lord whom he once despised. He earns his bread by watching in an obscure store near the scene of his former labours; but every night he visits the old square, hoping to aid if there is trouble, and perhaps regain his reputation. And often as he goes the rounds in the silent night, he repeats,— "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."—*Boston Watchman.*

It is a maxim among us Christians that we cannot possibly suffer any real hurt if we cannot be convicted of doing any real harm. You may kill, indeed, but you cannot hurt us.

THE SHUT-IN SOCIETY.

"The Shut-in Society" was formed nearly three years ago and has for its object the cheering and comforting of afflicted ones; "to relieve and cheer the monotony of the sick room." The Band now comprises nearly three hundred names, and by joining it "these afflicted ones may be brought together, and their lives cheered by the interchange of thought and feeling and varied gifts."

A dear sister, whom the Lord had "shut-in" for three years, said, "I am going to pray that I may find some one else who is shut-in, some one to write to, to do good to, and to receive good from." She first gave the name of "Shut-ins, to those who thus began to make the acquaintance of each other by written communications."

There are no rules or laws governing the society, and once introduced, as already intimated, "united prayer holds all together." Concerts of prayer have been agreed upon—one on Tuesday mornings at ten o'clock, and another at the twilight-hour. Thus two prayer-meetings are held, a daily and a weekly, "at which, 'though sundered far,' these afflicted ones, bound in the fellowship of suffering, by faith meet to implore blessings on one another, and gather strength, hope, and cheer for themselves." It should be added that "the society is in no way designed to be a charitable association," and that any one may become a member by sending name to Mrs. H. E. Brown, 29 East 29th St., New York.

It should also be stated that it is not necessary to be an invalid to become a member of the society. Many prominent men and women are contributing with pencil and pen to make happy the hearts of the members. Few persons realize how much good a few lines written on a postal card (it may be but a verse of a familiar hymn), or a flower sent in an envelope, will do to some poor sufferer in a hospital ward, or a remote sombre chamber. And so oftentimes when we are weak and weary, if we would only think "of some one else as weak and weary as ourselves, and bring to themselves a draught from the wells of salvation," we should ourselves be refreshed, and perchance hear the Master saying "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."—*George Quinan, in Evangelist.*

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in spite of differences, in spite of faults, in spite of the excesses of one or the defects of another. Love one another, and make the best of one another, as He loved us who, for the sake of saving what was good in the human soul, forgot, forgave, put out of sight what was bad—who saw and loved what was good even in the publican Zaccheus, even in the penitent Magdalen, even in the expiring malefactor, even in the heretical Samaritan, even in the Pharisee Nicodemus, even in the heathen soldier, even in the outcast Canaanite. Make the most of what there is good in institutions, in opinions, in communities, in individuals. It is very easy to do the reverse, to make the worst of what there is of evil, absurd and erroneous. By so doing we shall have no difficulty in making estrangements more wide, and hatreds and strifes more abundant, and errors more extreme. It is very easy to fix our attention only on the weak points of those around us, to magnify them, to irritate them, to aggravate them; and by so doing we can make the burden of life unendurable, and can destroy our own and others' happiness and usefulness wherever we go. But this is not the new love wherewith we are to love one another. That love is universal, because in its spirit we overcome evil simply by doing good. We drive out error simply by telling the truth. We strive to look on both sides of the shield of truth. We strive to speak the truth in love, that is, without exaggeration or misrepresentation; concealing nothing, promising nothing, but with the effort to