

"Even this shall Pass Away."

Once in Persia reigned a king
Who upon his signet-ring
Graved a maxim true and wise,
Which, if held 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."

Trains 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!
Pleasure comes, but not to stay;
Even this shall pass away."

Fighting on a furious field,
Once a javelin pierced his shield.
Soldiers, with a loud lament,
Bore him bleeding to his tent.
Groaning from his tortured side,
"Pain is hard to bear," he cried,
"But with patience, day by day,
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 Harbor Master's Lesson.

BY H. C. PEARSON.

It was a bitter cold night. The ferry boats, fearing the arctic ice, had ceased running. An occasional tug, white with frozen spray, crossed from one pier to another carrying belated passengers, or bearing messages that would not admit of delay. The wind swept around the deserted storehouses and down the long reaches of wharf, rattling the blocks and whistling through the rigging of the vessels lying in the harbor. The few who were on the wharves transacted their business as rapidly as possible, and hurried away with stinging ears and half-frozen faces. Loafers, "water rats," hawkers, and curiosity seekers had long since left the piers. The watchmen trotted their rounds, and settled themselves between times before blazing fires, glad that they had shelter on such a night. Suddenly, above the howl of the wind, came a cry, a loud, despairing cry, from the water. The harbor master, with his small crew, heard the call and listened. Again it came.

"Help! Help!"
Running to the side of the pier from whence the call came, the men looked down to the black waters. The thick darkness that had settled like a cloak over the harbor basin covered any floating object from view. Peering through it, intently listening, they first heard a faint splashing that was altogether different from the regular hiss and shock of the waves against the piles, and then one of the keen-eyed among them descried the figure of a man clinging to an ice-coated pile, and faintly calling to them for help.

Although near, the wind swooping under the wharf snatched the words from the quivering lips, and confusing them with its own wild shrieks, swept them out to sea.

Bred to constant peril, the gray-haired "master" gave brief, energetic directions for the rescue. Swiftly the men hurried to execute his orders. With the surface of the water full twenty feet below the icy wharf, with the eager waves caused by the wind and the incoming tide leaping up and covering the massive piles, till the icy columns looked like great columns of alabaster, there was no slight risk in descending to the help of the drowning man. Yet no one hesitated. A ladder brought from a storehouse not far away was lowered to the water's edge. The "master," his gray hair blowing in the wind, had been leaning over the edge of the platform, calling down into the darkness words of encouragement and hopefulness, and receiving back occasional moans and shivering cries that told of rapidly weakening powers. —of the fast approaching death chill.

"Boys, we must save him," said the old man, the tears raining down his cheeks. "Oh, that pitiful, pitiful voice!"

Among the crew was one, a giant in size, a man noted for his muscular strength. Winding his sinewy legs about a granite "stay" he held the ladder in a grip of iron, close to where the periled soul faintly struggled to keep his head above the icy waters. Only a man of marvellous endurance could by any means have kept alive in that freezing element, swift though his rescuers were.

When the ladder was in position, the harbor master, motioning the rest away, threw aside his heavy coat, and bare-headed and bare-handed, in his shirt sleeves, descended into the blackness. Straining every nerve the giant stood holding the ladder, knowing that two lives hung on his endurance. The biting cold numbed his fingers till it seemed as if they grew big and unwieldy, yet still he held on; the ladder rocked too and fro by the exertions of the rescuer, and seemed as it alive and struggling to free itself from his grasp. With prayer on his lips he clung the more firmly, the blood starting from under the nails of his frost-bitten fingers.

Below, half in the freezing water, half in the cutting air, was the harbor master. He had reached out just in time to grasp the sinking man by the collar and draw him to the ladder. Then came the struggle. Amid the leaping waves that wet him with their stinging spray that stiffened on his clothing till he was clad with a cumbersome armor of ice, he put forth all his energies to raise the now unconscious man and carry him up to safety. A powerful man had the master been in his youth, and now that occasion demanded, his former strength seemed in a measure to return. Echoing the petition that his helper at the top had uttered, he raised the drooping figure in his arms, and step by step bore him up to the eager, outstretched hands of the crew.

Around the blazing fire in the watch-room they gathered, trying by every possible means to resuscitate the figure that lay without the least motion on the floor. Forgetful of their own frost-bites, they worked and rubbed to bring back life and warmth. At length they were successful. A faint,

tremulous sigh announced the return of breath to the body.

"Thank God!" murmured the master.

Before long the rescued man, a thick-set, robust fellow, rapidly recovering, sat up and looked around. At first he seemed confused and said nothing. When he did speak it was to break out into frightful curses at those who had saved him. With returning strength came such torrents of blasphemy that the crew, though accustomed to the roughest language, were fain to cover their ears. At length, seeming perfectly well, and attired in dry clothing, he started for home, accompanied by one of the crew.

"Boss," said one of the men, "if you had known what a vile, drunken scoundrel that feller was, never even thanking you for risking your life, cursing Walter for holding the ladder, swearing at us all as though we had done him an injury rather than good,—if you had known all this, would you have saved him?"

"Ingratitude is a mean trait, Jack," replied the old man.

"The meanest," was the emphatic assertion.

"The least that a man can do is to thank one for such a risk as we ran," continued the master.

"Thank one! Thank one! What do thanks amount to? That wretch owes his life to you. Why, had it not been for your risk, your exertions, he would at this minute have been thirty feet under water, a dead man. Talk of thanks! he owes more! Anything that he can do would not pay the debt, let alone a few words of thanks."

"Jack," replied the master, a flush rising to his cheek, still pale with over-exertion, "there was One who years ago ascended the cross at Calvary and died for you; have you thanked Him? Are thanks enough to cancel that debt? The life of the soul, infinitely more precious than the life of the body, is made yours by the Saviour's death. Your whole life spent as His servant cannot begin to discharge that obligation. All He asks is your heart, and you refuse it. All that He claims is your affection, your service, and you make no response. Is not this ingratitude much greater than that we have just witnessed? You wonder that I was not angry with this poor drunken wretch. Was the Lord angry with me when for years I went my way, refusing His love, crucifying Him afresh? O lad, when I reflect on what the Lord has done for us, and how little we appreciate it, my heart bleeds with a sorrow that my tongue cannot express. To-night I have had a lesson; so have you. Let us each take it home to ourselves. Let us awake and give our lives to Him who suffered and died for us."

In the silence that followed, a silence in spite of the noisy wind and the dashing waves, one heart at least ceased its rebellion, crushed its selfish ingratitude, and became reconciled to God.

DR. BOYNTON recently related that, wishing to explain to a little girl the manner in which a lobster casts his shell when he has outgrown it, he said: "What do you do when you've outgrown your clothes? You throw them aside; don't you?" "O no!" replied the little one; "we let out the tucks!" The doctor confessed that she had the advantage of him there.

Do You Think to Pray?

Ever you left your room this morning,
Did you think to pray?
In the name of Christ, our Saviour,
Did you sue for loving favour
As a shield to-day?

When you met with great temptations,
Did you think to pray;
By His dying love and merit
Did you claim the Holy Spirit
As your guide and stay?

When your heart was filled with anger,
Did you think to pray?
Did you plead for grace, my brother,
That you might forgive another
Who had crossed your way?

When sore trials came upon you,
Did you think to pray?
When your soul was bowed in sorrow,
Balm of Gilead did you borrow
At the gates of day?

—Presbyterian.

The New Year's Call.

A YOUNG man called, in company with several other gentlemen, upon a young lady. Her father was also present to assist in entertaining the callers. He did not share his daughter's scruples against the use of spirituous drinks, for he had wine to offer. The wine was poured out, and would have been drunk, but the young lady asked, "Did you call upon me or upon papa?"

Gallantry, if nothing else, compelled them to answer, "We called upon you."

"Then you will please not drink wine; I have lemonade for my callers."

The father urged the guests to drink, and they were undecided. The young lady added: "Remember, if you called upon me then you drink lemonade; but if upon papa, why, in that case, I have nothing to say."

The wine-glasses were set down with the contents untested. After leaving the house one of the party exclaimed: "That is the most effectual temperance lecture I have ever heard."

The young man from whom these facts were obtained broke off at once from the use of strong drink, and is now a clergyman. He still holds in grateful remembrance the lady who graciously and resolutely gave him to understand that her callers should not drink wine.—Selected.

Hard to be a Christian.

HARD to be a Christian! Of course it is. But whether you will believe it or not, it is a great deal harder not to be one—that is to say, you have a harder time than if you were. You have at least as many cares and trials as if you were a Christian, and as many temptations. Every sad and trying element of human life is manifested in your experience as often and as signally as it would be if you were one of Christ's followers; you thrust yourself inevitably upon many sharp points of evil habits which you might in that case escape; and you lack what a Christian, however feeble and imperfect his success as yet may be, always possesses—the consciousness that his Creator and he are no longer working at cross-purposes; that he is in harmony with God's will and plan for him; that Omniscience, and Omnipotence, and Infinite Love are occupied in shaping his circumstances, so that, however painful they may be to-day, they are sure to be full of blessing in the end. You may not think this consciousness a very solid advantage, but if you had it in the sense that a Christian has it, you would.