

EVEN THIS SHALL PASS AWAY

BY: THEODORE TILTON.

ONCE in Persia ruled a king
Who upon his signet ring
'Graved a motto true and wise,
Which, when held before his eyes,
Gave him counsel at a glance
Fit for any change or chance.
Solemn words, and these were they:
"Even this shall pass away."

Trains of camel through the sand
Brought him gems from Samarkand;
Fleets of galleys through the seas
Brought him pearls to rival these.
Yet he counted little gain
Treasures of the mine or main.
"Wealth may come, but not to stay;
Even this shall pass away."

'Mid the revels of his court,
In the zenith of his sport,
When the palms of all his guests,
Burned with clapping at his jests,
He, amid his figs and wine,
Cried: "Oh, precious friends of mine,
Pleasure comes, but not to stay —
Even this shall pass away."

Lady, fairest ever seen,
Was the bride he crowned his queen.
Pillowed on his marriage bed
Softly to his soul he said:
"Though no bridegroom ever pressed
Fairer bosom to his breast,
Mortal flesh must come to clay —
Even this shall pass away."

Fighting in a furious field,
Once a javelin pierced his shield,
Soldiers with a loud lament
Bore him bleeding to his tent.
Groaning, from his wounded 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 status grand in stone;
And the king, disguised, unknown,
Gazing on his sculptured name,
Asked himself: “And what is fame?
Fame is but a slow decay —
Even this shall pass away.”

Struck with palsy, sere and old,
Standing at the gates of gold,
Spake him this, in dying breath:
“Life is done, and what is death?”
Then, in answer to the king,
Fell a sunbeam on the ring,
Answering, with its heavenly ray:
“Even death shall pass away.”

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