

had asked Jesus, "Suppose I should say to this man, 'Sit down here, and be like unto Him, and He placed them in the furnace, sitting by as a refiner of silver, till they should reflect His image; they had asked to lay hold of His cross, and when He had reached it to them it lacerated their hands. \* \* They were hardly willing to follow on so far, or to draw so nigh to Him. \* \* They found it easier to obey than to suffer, to do than to give up, to bear the cross than to hang upon it. But as they gaze on Him, as they advance, they are changed into His likeness, and His name shines out through them, for He dwells in them. They live alone with Him; alone in unspeakable fellowship; willing to lack what others own, and to be unlike all, so that they are only like Him. Such are they in all ages who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Had they chosen for themselves, or their friends chosen for them, they would have chosen otherwise. They would have been brighter here, but less glorious in His kingdom. They would have had Lot's portion, not Abraham's. If they had halted anywhere, if He had taken off His hand and let them stray back, what would they not have lost! What forfeits in the morning of the resurrection! But He stayed them up even against themselves. \* \* It was good for them to suffer here, for they shall reign hereafter; to bear the cross below, for they shall wear the crown above; and that not their will but His will was done upon them."

Ab! how many of us would fain have the crown without the cross! How many of us would be content with a bare salvation, with even a crownless heaven, just to avoid some of time's trials! I once knew a Christian who used to pray, "Lord, keep me from spoiling my eternity!" So conscious was that soul of its shrinking from God's discipline.

Many have heard of the old woman who was very active in the Lord's service as long as she had health. "But now my Master says to me," she observed during sickness, "'Betty, lie still and cough!'" Adapt the words. To how many does He say by His providence, "Lie still and suffer!"

"They also serve who only stand and wait,"

was a thought which comforted the great poet in his blindness. But other service and most effectual may be rendered to our Lord and Master from a sick chamber. Let your patience be known unto all who come in contact with you. Let your prayers go forth earnestly for every good cause, for every soul that is laid on your heart. And when you get an opportunity of speaking for God—and such will come to you in visitors and friends—O use it as if it were for your life. How glorious thus to be a soul-gatherer!

"When you find yourself with a fellow-immortal, whose best days are perhaps past, whose strong, brave spirit weathers well the ills of life, and yet whose wistful disappointed eye shows that he has just missed happiness, do you not feel that no sacrifice would seem too great to bring him and Christ together? It is one ember from the fire of Christ's love that has fallen into your once selfish soul, and has melted it into the very love wherewith He loves His lost. One drop from the ocean of your Father's love has reached your narrow heart; afar you hear the sounding of those many waters, as they roll and find no shore."

Again the same fervent writer says: "It may have been a wayfarer who crossed your path; her burden was heavy, and Jesus did not bear it. But now she has begun to look towards Him. While you sought to clear the difficulties from her path, the Spirit of Love revealed a clearer sight of Jesus to your soul than you ever got in seeking Him for yourself alone. For eternity you have gained a Friend."

Here is some of the work for God that may be done in a sick room. But chiefest is the work of prayer.

But what lessons has sickness in the house—whether occasional or constant—for other than the sick one! Oftentimes it is God's warning to the healthy, reminding them of days that must surely come, when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves. Likewise does it teach patience and forbearance to those on whom the care of the sick one devolves. Let there be self-denial in the efforts of those who are in good health to soothe and please the ailing person. It is not well that our endeavours to please should be always for those who can please us back again. Bring him good news; store up pleasant things in some pigeon-hole of your mind for the poor ailing one. Don't treat him as if His infirmity put him outside all the interests of the house, and outdoor interests besides; but tell him about them, even where the interests verge on anxieties. For to be delivered from himself is what many a sick one needs—to have his attention diverted from his own aches and pains into the wholesome channel of other people's doings and sayings.

Teach the children to be gentle and quiet, and to sacrifice some of their exuberant spirits to the calm required in a sick room. Indeed, they will generally do so without telling, unless they have the misfortune to be petted overmuch. It will train them for consideration for others, that lovely trait in youthful character.

One of the most useful and practical books ever printed with reference to the sick, is Florence Nightingale's "Notes on Nursing." It ought to be in the hands of every mother of a family; for with all the will in the world, and all the good heart in the world, nursing the sick is not a thing that comes by nature; and she may commit the most grievous errors—nay, even fatal errors—in the very anxiety of her love. And quite as essential to recovery is a good nurse as a good physician.

No house but is occasionally visited with sickness. Every mother lays her account with the usual run of infantile diseases—measles, hooping cough, and the like. God-given science has expunged the most terrible of all, small-pox, from the list. It is painful to think what scores of little lives are lost for want of a slight knowledge of the principles of nursing.